



AATSP

¡TODOS A UNA! • TODOS POR UM!

American Association
of Teachers
of Spanish & Portuguese
Est. 1917

107th AATSP Annual Conference

Marriott Albrook Hotel

Panama City, Panama

AWARDS CEREMONY

Saturday, June 28, 2025

18:00 - 19:15

Contadora IV

Event Program

I. Welcome

II. Recognition of Friends of the AATSP

III. Recognition of 2025 AATSP Study Abroad Scholarships and Conference Travel Stipends

IV. SHH and SHA Awards Summary

V. University of Salamanca Awards

VI. Presentation of 2025 AATSP Awards

Outstanding Scholarly Publication

Outstanding Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Outstanding Service

AATSP Chapters of the Year

Teachers of the Year

Elementary (PreK-8) Level

Secondary (9-12) Level

Two-Year Community College Level

Four-Year College/University Level

Mario Vargas Llosa Sigma Delta Pi and AATSP Joint Award

The Klett World Languages Award in Leadership and

Program Innovation in Spanish and Portuguese

Honorary Fellows Award

VII. Recognition of Outgoing Board Members

Friends of the AATSP

María Jesús Abilleira, Klett World Languages

Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents (ALAS)

Carlos V Education

Jesús Joaquim Cerdá Tortosa, Education Office, Embassy of Spain

Mark P. Del Mastro, Executive Director, Sigma Delta Pi

Federación Española de Asociaciones de Escuelas de Español para Extranjeros (FEDELE)

Kim Haas, Travels with Kim Haas

Idioma Education & Consulting

Lillian Jones, AATSP SIG for Program Directors

Alex Marrero, Denver Public Schools

Ulysses Navarete, ALAS

Javier Odriozola, Instituto Cervantes

Panamá TESOL

Luis Javier Pentón Herrera, University of Warsaw, Poland

Quality Leadership University

University of Salamanca (Cursos Internacionales del USAL)

Vista Higher Learning

Xperitas

Study Abroad Scholarship and Conference Travel Stipend Recipients

Leonardo Chelin, KIPP San Jose Collegiate, San Jose, CA; Study Abroad Scholarship Recipient; Centro Mundo Lengua

Mackensie Heath, The Dunham School, Baton Rouge, LA; Study Abroad Scholarship Recipient; Latino Schools

Heidi Letitia, Ayer Shirley Regional High School, West Boylston, MA; Study Abroad Scholarship Recipient; Santiago de Compostela

Gloria Monzon, Aims Community College, Greeley, CO; Higher Ed Conference Travel Stipend Recipient (Vista Higher Learning)

Samara Spielberg, Allen-Stevenson School, New York City, NY; K-12 Conference Travel Stipend Recipient (Vista Higher Learning)

Kelsey Tanner, St. John's Preparatory School; Study Abroad Scholarship Recipient; Celas Maya

SHH Awards

Mario Fierros Award for Excellence, Mary Durbin, Jorge Bergoglio Chapter, Billy Ryan High School, Denton, TX

Park-Sihocky Award for a New Chapter Sponsor, Angela Barrera, Roberto Clemente Chapter, East Jordan High School, East Jordan, MI

Chapter of the Year Award (Sponsored by The Pulsera Project), El Guaraní Chapter, Whiteland Community High School; Sponsored by Mizraim Lorenzo-Aguliar

Chapter of the Year Award, Cristo del Otero Chapter, Stony Point High School; Sponsored by Alexis Martinez Brito

Chapter of the Year Award, Los Jalapeños Chapter, The Steward School; Sponsored by Marina Escámez Ballesta

Chapter of the Year Award, Los Lobos Chapter, KIPP San Jose Collegiate; Sponsored by Leonardo Chelin Uribe

Chapter of the Year Award, Rigoberta Menchú Chapter, Northside College Prep; Sponsored by Robert Blease and Janet Torres

Short-Term Activity of the Year (First Place), Sueño Latino Chapter, The Lehigh Valley Charter High School; Sponsored by Sophia Betancourt and Jasmine Leonor-Hernandez

Short-Term Activity of the Year (Second Place), Rigoberta Menchú Chapter, Marlboro High School; Sponsored by Shane Murphy

Short-Term Activity of the Year (Third Place), Esther Forero Chapter, Eastside High School; Sponsored by Marbel Tamayo

Long-Term Activity of the Year (First Place), Durango Chapter, Tokay High School; Sponsored by Eugenia Hernandez

Long-Term Activity of the Year (Second Place), Conde de Galvez Chapter, Ball High School; Sponsored by Eva Purcell

Long-Term Activity of the Year (Third Place), Eduardo Escalante Gomez Chapter, Opelousas High School; Sponsored by Loreto Cerna Cruz

SHA Awards

Pamela Wink Chapter of the Year Award, Los Halcones Dorados Chapter, River Dell Middle School; Sponsored by Miriam Gargulio

Activity of the Year Award, Todos Iluminados Chapter, Glen Ridge High School; Sponsored by Maria Dessipris

University of Salamanca Awards

Chapter Leadership Awards

María Consuelo Díaz Martin, AATSP Kentucky Chapter

Ryle High School, Union, KY

Laura Graebner Shepin, AATSP Chicago Chapter

Rolling Meadows High School, Rolling Meadows, IL

Pilar Gomez, AATSP Kentucky Chapter

Anchorage Public School, Anchorage, KY

Theresa Jensen, AATSP Nebraska Chapter

Millard North High School, Omaha, NE

Alondra Pacheco, AATSP Ohio Buckeye Chapter

University School, South Euclid, OH

Soledad Toriello, AATSP Texas-Brazos Chapter

Episcopal High School, Bellaire, TX

Study Abroad Awards

Brian Crouch, Valwood School, Hahira, GA

Sara Jordan, Millwood School, Midlothian, VA

Jennifer Jue Mattle, Delran High School, Delran, NJ

Sabrina Laroussi, Virginia Military Institute, Lexington, VA

Argelia Meza, Trimble Tech High School, Fort Worth, TX

Pam Starkey, St. Paul Academy & Summit School, Edina, MN

Outstanding Scholarly Publication Award



Ester Hernández Esteban

Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL

The AATSP Outstanding Scholarly Publication Award is given annually to an article published in *Hispania*. The focus of the award alternates on an annual basis. The focus for all odd-numbered years is literature, film, and culture, while the focus for even-numbered years is linguistics and language science/pedagogy.

The 2025 Outstanding Scholarly Publication Award goes to Ester Hernández Esteban of Florida State University. Her article, titled “Pero habla(n): Las heridas de los hijos de los inmigrantes en la poesía de Paloma Chen” is freely available on the AATSP website.

The members of the Selection Committee recognized how the article examines themes of cultural fluidity, racialized discrimination, and identity crises, offering deep insights into the challenges of belonging.



The runner up for 2025's Outstanding Scholarly Publication Award is “Black Epistemologies and Music: A Dialogue with Emerica’s *Sobre crianças, quadris, pesadelos e lições de casa*” by Mariana Abreu of the Universidade de Brasília in Brazil.

As noted by the Selection Committee, Abreu provides an alternative way of determining Black epistemologies [...that...] involves intertextuality and interdiscursivity, and argues that music offers a useful resource for the processes of theorization.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Award



John T. Maddox

University of Alabama at Birmingham, Birmingham, AL

The AATSP Award for Excellence in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion is sponsored by Klett World Languages. The award reflects AATSP's values to embrace diversity and strive for a more equitable, inclusive future, through language education.

Professor John T. Maddox is the 2025 recipient of the AATSP Award for Excellence in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI). Professor Maddox teaches at the University of Alabama at Birmingham in Birmingham, Alabama.

As noted in one of his letters of recommendation, Dr. Alejandro Lee, former AATSP board member and 2024 DEI Awardee writes: "John's service and mentoring stand out... His involvement in the DEI Hispanic Heritage Month Committee at his institution and extensive outreach to the Alabaman community speak to his dedication and commitment to social justice." .

John T. Maddox writes:

We live in confusing times. "Diversity. Equity, and Inclusion" seemed only yesterday like shared American values. Now, these signifiers have been hollowed out and refilled with a resentment-tinged signifier to censor teachers and mislead future generations. I commend the AATSP for maintaining its nonpartisan mission of supporting all teachers and students, not in spite of, but because of our varied backgrounds.

Outstanding Service Award



Rachel Mamiya Hernandez

University of Hawai'i, Honolulu, HI

The AATSP Outstanding Service Award is given to a member in good standing of the Association who has made outstanding service contributions to the Association, such as holding leadership positions within the AATSP and/or one of its chapters, serving as a chair or member of important AATSP committees, and representing the AATSP in a national or international capacity.

This year's recipient of the AATSP Outstanding Service Award is Rachel Mamiya Hernandez from the University of Hawai'i in Honolulu, HI. Rachel's dedicated contributions to both national initiatives and local efforts have made a lasting impact on the AATSP community. As former AATSP Executive Director, Dr. Sheri Spaine Long notes: "Dr. Mamiya has led in big ways such as her ongoing work as chairperson of the Task Force on the Portuguese edition of the World-Readiness Standards. She planned and launched the AATSP's inaugural National Teach Portuguese Week (NTPW 2020) and was a key planner of NTPW every year during her service on the board."

Rachel Mamiya Hernandez writes:

I am both honored and humbled to receive this award. I would like us to take a moment to pause and appreciate that we are all part of something that is bigger than ourselves... I sincerely believe that each of us has something meaningful to give. Serving on the AATSP Board has been one of the greatest honors of my life. I'm truly grateful to all of those that I have had privilege to serve alongside. In the words of Mother Teresa, "Love has to be put into action, and that action is service".

Large Chapter of the Year Award



New Jersey Chapter

The AATSP Large Chapter of the Year Award is presented to the chapter that demonstrates outstanding chapter activities along with membership participation.

The New Jersey Chapter is this year's recipient of the *Large Chapter of the Year Award*. This chapter promotes the teaching of Spanish and Portuguese languages, culture and literature at all educational levels. It offers workshops and seminars and also focuses on facilitating information about the National Spanish Examination. They also hold an annual Poster Contest K-12 and Spanish essay contest for high school seniors.

The New Jersey Chapter notes:

This year, we strengthened our community through social events like Coffee Meet and Bowl Painting, alongside a meaningful service initiative. Our participation in state conferences and local workshops fostered connections among educators and students. Additionally, our Sociedad Honoraria Hispanica, Sociedad Honoraria Amistad, and National Spanish Exams Informative Virtual Sessions provided essential guidance for scholars and exam participants... Beyond competitions, we remain committed to professional development, collaboration, and cultural enrichment. The passion of our members—educators, students, and language advocates—continues to drive our success and impact.

Among those ways, the New Jersey Chapter's **Virtual Workshops** offer a steady source of support for language teachers looking to gain new skills.

Small Chapter of the Year Award



West Virginia Chapter

The AATSP Small Chapter of the Year Award is presented to a small chapter that demonstrates outstanding chapter activities along with membership participation.

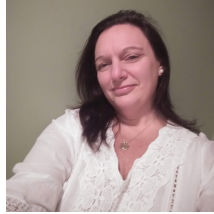
The West Virginia Chapter is this year's recipient of the *Small Chapter of the Year Award*. This dynamic chapter promotes the Seal of Biliteracy, and different AATSP programs. Additionally, they also stay updated on member activities and present at various events, including the WVFLTA conference and West Virginia Hispanic Heritage Community Event.

The West Virginia Chapter notes:

The West Virginia Chapter is honored to receive the AATSP Small Chapter of the Year award. Our chapter may be small, but we are passionate, committed, and mighty in our efforts to promote world language education. We are active in our communities, running language camps, hosting immersion weekends, celebrating heritage nights, and organizing student trips abroad. While our state is largely rural and facing a decline in population, we continue to see growth and vitality in areas closer to Washington, D.C., where the demand for certified language teachers is on the rise.

Notably, the West Virginia Chapter's Spanish Immersion Weekend offers a chance for teachers to immerse themselves in the Spanish language and culture while connecting with fellow educators and enthusiasts.

AATSP Teacher of the Year Award Elementary Level (PreK-8)



Maria Dessipris

Glen Ridge High School, Glen Ridge, NJ

Maria Dessipris is the 2025 recipient of the AATSP Teacher of the Year Award for the PreK-8 level. Maria Dessipris is a Grade 7-12 Spanish Teacher at Glen Ridge High School in Glen Ridge, NJ.

As noted in one of her letters of recommendation for this award: *Mrs. Dessipris creates immersive and meaningful learning experiences through hands-on projects deeply rooted in cultural context. Her efforts offer students not only linguistic proficiency but also an appreciation of diverse practices and perspectives. She has further expanded these horizons by organizing student trips to Costa Rica, including community service initiatives with Xperitas, and integrating her experiences into impactful professional development sessions for educators.*

Maria writes:

Cultural and global awareness is part of my classroom instruction through sharing my own background and experiences as well as those of my students', exposing them to authentic artifacts and field trips as well as intersections of art, literature, history around the world. I also engage students in SEL (social emotional learning) activities in the 5 main competencies (self-awareness, self-management, responsible decision making, social awareness, and relationship skills).

AATSP Teacher of the Year Award

Secondary Level (9-12)



Marisol Garcia-Mitchell

Greenbrier High School, Evans, GA

Marisol Garcia-Mitchell is the 2025 recipient of the AATSP Teacher of the Year Award for the Secondary Level (9-12). Professor Garcia-Mithcell teaches Spanish at Greenbrier High School in Evans, GA.

As noted in one of her letters of recommendation for this award: *Ms. Garcia-Mitchell's ability to balance rigorous academics with an enjoyable and interactive classroom atmosphere keeps students consistently engaged and eager to learn. Her exceptional classroom management skills ensure a structured yet welcoming space where students thrive. She holds multiple certifications and endorsements in Gifted and ESOL education, further demonstrating her commitment to meeting the diverse needs of her students.*

Marisol writes:

In my first teaching position, I realized the importance of connecting with students and inspiring them to learn a second language. I shared my personal story, explaining that I came from a home similar to theirs, maybe in worse conditions. I created an environment where they felt comfortable and unafraid to make mistakes...I shared how learning a second language opened many opportunities and how learning about other cultures was important to understand their practices without making assumptions and creating unnecessary prejudices.

AATSP Teacher of the Year Award

Two-Year Community College Level



Daniel Hopkins

Tarrant County College, Fort Worth, TX

Professor Daniel Hopkins is the 2025 recipient of the AATSP Teacher of the Year Award for the Two-Year Community College level. Professor Hopkins teaches Spanish at Tarrant County College in Fort Worth, TX.

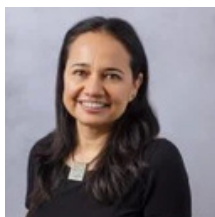
Daniel Hopkins is present in his community and the field of language education, as seen through his Hispanic Heritage Month activities and sessions with other professors at the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) conferences. Hopkins is also known for his teaching philosophy, which focuses on communicating effectively in an interconnected global community.

Daniel writes:

Whenever I sit down to plan a lesson, I always ask myself two questions. The first is, "What do I want my students to achieve by the end of this unit?" The goal may be as simple as introducing themselves to others or as complex as thinking critically about an article they have read in Spanish. The second, and most important question, is, "Why would they want to learn this?" My hope is that the lesson can be applied to their experiences in their current community or in the communities into which they will integrate in the future.

AATSP Teacher of the Year Award

Four-Year College/University Level



Claudia R. Fernández, Ph.D.

University of Illinois Chicago, Chicago, IL

Professor Claudia R. Fernández is the 2025 recipient of the AATSP Teacher of the Year Award for the Higher Education level. Dr. Fernández is the Director of the Spanish Basic Language Program at the University of Illinois Chicago in Chicago, IL.

As noted in her letter of recommendation:

Claudia's teaching strategy and enthusiasm for each individual students' progress is exactly what inspires them to pursue a degree in Spanish... It is important to honor educators that possess such great passion for broadening students' worldviews through language learning.

Claudia writes:

My approach to inspiring students to speak Spanish and develop proficiency in other language skills is rooted in creating an immersive and engaging learning environment where Spanish is used for anything and everything in class...Students quickly realize that I am genuinely interested in what they want to say and not necessarily how they say it. Such an approach gives them confidence, and it's a way to inspire them into trying and use their incipient Spanish to both understand and to start expressing their ideas either orally or in writing.

Mario Vargas Llosa Sigma Delta Pi and AATSP Joint Award



Micah Koppang

Valparaiso University, Valparaiso, IN

The Mario Vargas Llosa Award is a joint award of Sigma Delta Pi, the National Collegiate Hispanic Honor Society, and the AATSP. It is granted yearly to one undergraduate Spanish major or minor who has demonstrated outstanding achievement in all upper-division courses completed and exemplary involvement in extra-curricular activities as related to Spanish.

Micah writes:

I feel fortunate that membership in Sigma Delta Pi has allowed me to develop my language abilities and to also expand my understanding of different Spanish cultures. I cherish the relationships that I have cultivated through this society, and I thank both the AATSP and Sigma Delta Pi for this honor.



The Klett World Languages Award in Leadership and Program Innovation in Spanish and Portuguese



Indiana University Bloomington
Bloomington, IN



Davidson College
Davidson, NC

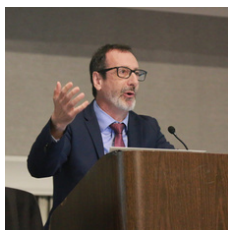
The Klett World Languages Award in Leadership and Program Innovation in Spanish and Portuguese aims to recognize higher education programs that utilize innovative approaches to meet the needs of today's learners and advance the study of Spanish and Portuguese.

The two recipients of this award are the **Department of Spanish and Portuguese at Indiana University Bloomington** and the **Hispanic Studies Department at Davidson College**.

Indiana University Bloomington is recognized for its dynamic Experiential Learning Programs, which place students in real-world settings such as dual language immersion schools, libraries, senior centers, and local government offices. These opportunities not only foster meaningful community engagement but also inspire students to pursue careers as educators, interpreters, translators, and immigration lawyers focused on serving the Latine community.

The Hispanic Studies Department at Davidson College is recognized for its Spanish in the Elementary School program (SiDES). This program stands out for its innovative hybrid model that reaches thirty-four K–4 classrooms each semester. By introducing Spanish during children's most receptive years for language learning, SiDES builds a strong foundation for cognitive flexibility and global awareness.

Honorary Fellows Award



Jesús Fernández González

Counselor of Education, Embassy of Spain in the U.S. and Canada

Dr. Jesús Fernández González is the 2025 recipient of the AATSP Honorary Fellows Award. Dr. Fernández is a Counselor of Education for the Embassy of Spain in the U.S. and Canada.

Celebrating his passion for the Spanish language, culture, and teaching, Jesús writes:

There is not just one love of your life. There are many of them. And it's good. Love should pervade us as probably the most profound emotion we should feel, experience, enjoy, breathe. As for myself, I love languages, and I love teaching. I truly do. I find languages so fascinating, so enticing, so full of mysteries, so rich in nuances, so rich in untranslatable beautiful words, that my dream would be to be able to speak all of them... And I love teaching. To be in front of a class of curious students, and make them think, make them see things from a different perspective, make them dive into uncharted waters, terra incognita, and, at the same time learn from them, from questions I had never imagined, from challenges I had not thought of, from insights I had not anticipated. Isn't that the best job? That is why I am so honored by the AATSP acknowledgement. There is no better recognition than the one given by language teachers, by those who, like me, love languages and teaching.

The AATSP's Honorary Fellow Award honors individuals who have distinguished themselves and received recognition for outstanding services or contributions in the field of Hispanic and Afro-Luso-Brazilian languages, literatures, cultures, linguistics, and cinema.

Outgoing Board of Directors Members

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College of Southern Nevada
Henderson, NV



Mary Risner

Past President
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Dieter Waldvogel

College/University Representative
Samford University
Birmingham, AL



Jenniffer Whyte

Secondary (9-12) Representative
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College/University Representative
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Brockton, MA

Jenniffer Whyte

Secondary (9-12) Representative
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Anniston, AL



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108TH AATSP ANNUAL CONFERENCE

July 8 - 11, 2026



DoubleTree by Hilton

At the Entrance to Universal Studios



Orlando, Florida



Thank You to Our Sponsor



Carlos V
EDUCATION

**The AATSP sincerely thanks
Carlos V Education for sponsoring our
Awards Ceremony.**