Editor’s Message:  
Focusing on the Scholarship of Community Engagement 

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Hispania 96.2 (2013): 201

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Welcome to our Special Focus Issue on “The Scholarship of Community Engagement.” Foreign language learning has undergone a notable transition from an elite pursuit to one that is actively linked to real-world activities. Therefore, our approaches to language learning have changed significantly over the last several decades from instructor-centered to learner-centered, and we are becoming more and more community focused. Language instructors of all levels have reconsidered many practices. The benefit of emphasizing community engagement is irrefutable because it provides linguistic relevance and cultural context.

The AATSP Executive Council and the Hispania Editorial Board agreed that this topic is of timely interest to our membership and readership and the academic/teaching community at large. Besides this Special Issue, the AATSP recently approved its first Special Interest Group to provide a discussion forum on the topic of the Scholarship of Community Engagement. This publication, therefore, is only the beginning of a continuing scholarly conversation hosted by the AATSP.

I am proud that this issue contributes significantly to the body of knowledge—both in theory and practice—about the Scholarship of Community Engagement. Definitions of community engagement in language education are present. Included are qualitative and quantitative research and case studies. Over the last two years, I have had the distinct pleasure of collaborating with several leading experts in our discipline, including Dr. Josef Hellebrandt and Dr. Ethel Jorge (see bios on the following page), who served as our Guest Editors. They did a stellar job shaping the issue. I thank them for reading, editing, and exchanging ideas about this important topic to develop the volume conceptually. I experienced the breadth and depth of their knowledge and steadfast work ethic. I invite you to read the words of our Guest Editors in “The Scholarship of Community Engagement: Advancing Partnerships in Spanish and Portuguese,” where they describe the articles and share their observations about the development of the Scholarship of Community Engagement in the context of Spanish and Portuguese studies.

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Hispania