President’s Message
August 2018
Bill VanPatten

We are all back from Salamanca and hopefully rested and ready for the rest of this sizzling summer. After all, the school year is around the corner. Many thanks to everyone who went to Salamanca, presented, attended sessions, and otherwise participated in what was one of the biggest and best meetings the AATSP has had. Special thanks are due to Debra Nigohosian and Emily Spinelli for all of their work in pulling off a complicated endeavor as we worked with other organizations to share space and time slots. It was, by all accounts, a great meeting.

As you all know, Emily Spinelli has retired as Executive Director after thirteen years of excellent service. We sent her off with a bang at the Awards Banquet in Salamanca knowing that she will continue to serve and work with the AATSP as an active member. On July 1, Sheri Spaine Long assumed her duties as the new Executive Director. We know that Sheri will do great things for the organization so I ask you to join me in welcoming her and wishing her all the best as she takes up the helm and embarks on this new part of her own life.

The AATSP is a complicated organization with not only national but also international ties. Its membership is diverse, with instructors at all levels and in a variety of disciplines and sub-disciplines. Sometimes it may seem hard to see yourself in the organization. Rest assured that there are people just like you in the AATSP—interested in the very things you are interested in. The Board of Directors is just as diverse as the membership and it assists the President and the Executive Director in articulating the needs of almost 10,000 members of the organization. With that said, I am hoping to see the organization grow over the next few years. I am asking you to think about what the AATSP has to offer and what it can offer that it currently does not. As you ponder that, I am asking you to invite colleagues—especially younger ones—to join. I would like to see a 10% increase in membership by the end of 2019. Increased membership keeps costs down and allows us to tap more great minds for sessions, presentations, innovations and new paths. So go out there and recruit. Grab those new teachers and professors who aren’t members and ask them to join the biggest family they’ll ever know. No matter what their interests or backgrounds are, no matter what their professional goals are, no matter how they identify, there’s a place in the AATSP for them. Our theme this year is “Looking Forward/Forward Looking” and next year’s theme is “Stronger Together”—and both of these themes reflect what the AATSP is and should be about. The future is brilliant and I, for one, am hoping to be around for a while to see what it brings. Join me in making that future happen.

Before I sign off, I want to remind you about our next annual meeting. The venue is San Diego—where Spaniards made their first footprints into Alta California, the state with one of the richest histories of Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking peoples. As a native Californian, I grew up in a school system in which Lexington, Concord and Valley Forge are alien stories—a state where the Spanish flag flew long before Betsy Ross could pick
up a needle and thread, a state where the Mexican flag fluttered on the fresh breeze of the Pacific while thousands of miles away the White House burned in 1812. As school kids, we learned of Spaniards, Mexicans, and Native Americans populating and laying their cultural imprints on this part of the North America long before English-speakers began their Westward conquest of the continent. This is the state of cities with names like Los Angeles, San Francisco, San José, Sacramento, Santa Clara, Vallejo, Monterey, and of course San Diego. It is a state where Hispanic roots—in every sense of the word *Hispanic*—run deep and thick like those of the redwoods and sequoias that greeted the Spaniards centuries ago. San Diego is a great city for the members of AATSP to gather and celebrate what we do. So be thinking about your proposals and get them ready ahead of the late-October submission deadline. Let’s make San Diego as great as Salamanca!

Best to all,

Bill VanPatten