

Every few weeks, the AATSP “spotlights” one of its members in an attempt to recognize the many ways in which AATSP members promote the study and teaching of Spanish and Portuguese at all levels of education. This time, we are pleased to present a group spotlight that welcomes the new members of the AATSP Board of Directors. The AATSP is grateful for the extraordinary service of these individuals and congratulates them on their new positions.

President Elect



Bill VanPatten

*Michigan State University
East Lansing, MI*

Bill VanPatten is an international scholar of second language acquisition research with an emphasis on Spanish. He has published 6 books, 8 edited volumes, over 120 articles and book chapters, and the bestselling college-level texts *Sol y viento* (with a movie), *¿Sabías que...?*, and *Destinos* (also a telecourse and telenovela for students). He has won national, local, and university awards for his teaching, mentoring, and scholarship. He is currently Professor of Spanish and Second Language Studies at Michigan State University where he teaches courses in language acquisition, linguistics, and conversation. He also directs the Spanish and French language programs. Bill has lectured and presented papers and conducted workshops all over the United States. He has also lectured in Australia, Mexico, the Caribbean, and Western Europe. He is the host of the popular radio show/podcast “Tea with BVP,” available through iTunes and Sound Cloud. “Tea with BVP” is an interactive talk show focused on language acquisition and language teaching that takes a fun look at serious issues.

[Read Bill VanPatten’s CV \(PDF\)](#)

College / University Representative



John Thomas Maddox IV
University of Alabama-Birmingham
Birmingham, AL

John Maddox is Assistant Professor of Spanish at the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB). He holds a combined PhD in Spanish and Portuguese from Vanderbilt. He has taught college Portuguese, and he has taught college Spanish from 101 to graduate literature courses for 8 years. He taught high school Spanish 1 through literature for 5 years. He has led studies abroad to Spain and Puerto Rico. Maddox has published 12 articles and a book translation. He serves on the *Afro-Hispanic Review* editorial board. A reader for *Hispania*, Maddox won the 2015 Outstanding Scholarly Publication Award, and he will be featured in the Centenary issue on the future of teaching. He has helped organize and led four workshops for K-12 teachers on Brazil and Afro-Hispanic culture. He has also served as Vice President and President of the Alabama Chapter of AATSP. He has presented in scholarly panels at the AATSP conference (2014, 2015), served on the 2015 AATSP Travel Award Committee (2014 Award Winner), and participated as a member of the 2016 Higher Education Committee. Maddox helped organize the Alabama AATSP Conference in 2016 as part of the Alabama World Language Association. He won a UAB Service-Learning Grant and a Teaching Innovation Grant (with Ling Ma). He also implemented a Skype conversation program between UAB and the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México.

[Read John Maddox's CV \(PDF\)](#)

Secondary (9-12) Representative



Cynthia Flax
Retired
Clifton Park, NY

Cynthia Flax is excited to start her service as the new Secondary (9-12) Representative on the AATSP Board of Directors. Below is a brief summary of some of her career highlights related to her affiliation with the AATSP, along with other professional accomplishments:

- Member of AATSP for seventeen years
- Former SHH sponsor of chapter Mrs. Concetta Creaser for fifteen years
- Former SHH Regional I Director for four years
- Founding President and now Past President of AATSP Upstate New York Chapter for two years
- Multi-Cultural Grant recipient to study for a summer in Salamanca, Spain
- National Endowment for the Arts Grant recipient to study for a summer in Mexico
- Past President of NYSAFLT Capital Organization of Language Teachers
- Recipient of the Educational Advocate Award by Centro Civico, Amsterdam, NY

[Read Cynthia Flax's CV \(PDF\)](#)

Community College Representative



Irma Bjerre

*Clackamas Community College
Oregon City, OR*

Irma Bjerre has been teaching Spanish for twenty years and at Clackamas Community College full time for sixteen years. She served as Department Chair, and worked closely with a consortium of seven colleges to create and promote study abroad programs. Bjerre helped coordinate the yearly Skills Contest with high schools. She also collaborated with the Advanced College Credit Department to provide articulations with high schools. She writes mini-grants to fund cultural activities for the department. She also coordinates yearly a four-day International Celebration. She taught at Truckee Meadows Community College in Reno and was a Teaching Fellow at the University of Nevada.

Bjerre is a member of AATSP, ACTFL, and COFLT, and she represented OATSP on the COFLT Board. She was elected Vice-President and then President of COFLT, organizing two State Conferences and a Bi-State Conference with WAFLT. She is good at organizing events and conferences and capable of working with others to promote the teaching of Spanish. Her passion is to provide students with the opportunity to study and travel abroad in Spain and Latin America. She has led four groups of students to study Spanish at International House, Barcelona.

Bjerre has an MA in Spanish and a BA from the University of Nevada. She has extensive training in Spanish Teaching Methods and the Communicative Approach in Barcelona, Spain. She studied Italian in Torino and Perugia in Italy. She came to the United States from Colombia as a Student Teacher's Aide with the Amity Program.

[Read Irma Bjerre's CV \(PDF\)](#)