Diana Ruggiero, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of World Languages for Specific Purposes
University of Memphis

STATEMENT:
Growing up in Buenos Aires, Argentina, I had no idea that one day I would be living in Cordova, TN and be an associate professor at the University of Memphis, teaching World languages for specific purposes: Spanish for healthcare (medical interpreting and translation), Spanish for commerce and Community engagement. Both of my parents (now deceased) were medical doctors, and after high school I followed their footsteps and began medical school. After my father became sick, I dropped out to help pay the bills, but I promised myself that one day I too would become a doctor. I began working at a cybercafé in downtown Buenos Aires, which enabled me to practice English with the tourists who came to use the internet. I created an international community of the tourists who came by, gathering them on Fridays to take them for a tour of Buenos Aires while I taught them Spanish. This was my first experience with cultures and languages from around the world, and it had an important impact on shaping my future. I realized then my true love: teaching Spanish language and culture. While I may not be a “doctor” in the same sense that my parents were, I still have fulfilled my promise. As a professor of world languages for specific purposes, especially Spanish for healthcare, I continue my passion for teaching and writing about culture at the professional level.

I am thankful beyond words can explain to many colleagues, especially Dr. Sheri Spaine Long who was a mentor to me during my early career and introduced me to the AATSP. This organization truly inspires us to connect and to create community and understanding among language teachers.

This year I am the new Chair of the AATSP SIG (Special Interest Group) on Community Engagement and I am very thankful, honored and excited about it. I do hope to help connect you to your fellow colleagues in the AATSP and to your local communities; this is what I have been doing all of my life. I encourage you to attend our meeting at the next conference so that we can get to know one another and start planning for the future.
DIANA RUGGERIO

BIOGRAPHY:
Diana Ruggiero is currently an associate professor at The University of Memphis. Diana specializes in world languages for specific purposes and focuses on linking the University of Memphis with the local Latino community through her research, teaching, and service. She is currently offering courses that combine community-based learning with Spanish for the professions, such as Spanish for healthcare, Spanish for Commerce I and II, and Spanish for community engagement. She also offers a graduate course on how to teach Spanish for the professions. Topics covered in her classes range from community service learning, intercultural sensitivity, and heritage language learners to the National Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) in Health and Health Care and interpreting and translating (consecutive, simultaneous, and sight).

In her free time, she teaches AQUALINDA, a bilingual fitness program of water aerobics she developed for her own community at the local YMCA, Pound Fitness, and dancing. She also enjoys engaging in meditation and mindfulness with her family.