Rachel Mamiya Hernandez, Ph.D.
Instructor of Portuguese, Spanish, and Latin American and Iberian Studies
University of Hawaii at Manoa

Statement
My very first teaching job was as an English teacher in a small, dusty town in Northeastern Brazil with only one paved road and one traffic light. While it had its rewards, it definitely had its challenges as well. I soon realized that while I had been an avid language learner, I actually knew very little about language learning or teaching. This experience pushed me to pursue a Master’s degree in Second Language Studies with a focus on language pedagogy at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa. Shortly after I finished my MA, a friend introduced me to Dr. Paul Chandler, who was Chair of the Spanish Division, and was looking for someone to teach in their fledgling Portuguese language program. I happily accepted and have been a Portuguese and Spanish language instructor at UH for 10 years now. I also owe a debt of gratitude to Paul, because he was the person who introduced me to the AATSP. For several years I was a member, but not a very active one; however, after I attended my first conference in San Antonio, that all changed. I was inspired and energized by the presentations I saw and the connections I made. For those of you who have never been to an annual conference, my advice is go! Invest in yourself and your professional development—you won’t regret it. Going to the annual conference actually reignited my intellectual curiosity. After my MA I kept teaching, but had taken a break from academic pursuits and research. Participating in the conference reawakened this part of me and actually inspired me to pursue my PhD. I am both honored and excited to be on the Board of Directors as the Portuguese Representative. Indeed, there are many things I love about the AATSP, but perhaps the one that stands out to me now is how the organization truly encourages and develops leadership opportunities for women.

Biography
Rachel Mamiya Hernandez is an instructor of Portuguese, Spanish, and Latin American and Iberian Studies at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa. She holds a BA in Latin American Studies, an MA in Second Language Studies with a concentration in Language Pedagogy and is pursuing a PhD in Learning Design and Technology. Some of her interests include L2 acquisition and pedagogy, project-based learning, online intercultural exchanges, gamification, and instructional design. In her free time, she enjoys practicing yoga, dancing, and spending time with her family and friends.