

ATA Board Elections: Candidate Statements

ATA will hold its regularly scheduled election at the upcoming 2008 ATA Annual Conference in Orlando, Florida, to elect four directors (three three-year positions and one one-year position).



Director
(three-year term)
Lois Feuerle
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I have been an ATA member for approximately 20 years, and have watched and been a part of the growth of the Association as it has expanded from under 3,000 members to over 10,000 members. For me, joining ATA was the first, and perhaps most important step in building my translation career. I became an accredited translator—that is what it was called in those days—shortly after joining the organization. Now, of course, it is called certification, so I am an ATA-certified German→English translator.

Over the years, I have served on a number of committees, i.e., Dictionary Review Committee, Ethics Committee, and the Honors and Awards Committee (which I now chair). I have presented and co-presented at the national and regional conferences, a professional development seminar, and, in the 1990s, was

honored to be able to represent ATA at the Frankfurt Book Fair while I was in Germany for another purpose.

As ATA continues to grow, I would like to have a more active role in that growth. In particular, I am especially interested in being involved in the Interpreters Division decision-making as it charts the course for the development of an ATA certification examination for interpreters. This exam would serve the needs of both our members and the public, without merely echoing the interpreter examinations that are already available for qualification to work in the state and federal courts. My background in testing with three state court systems and my familiarity with the instruments used in those contexts would provide valuable insights.

Another important aspect that I would like to work on is developing more and closer cooperative working relationships with organizations outside of ATA whose goals and missions complement those of our organization. There is strength in numbers, and we should continue to build on the many ways in which these collaborations make it possible to undertake

ambitious projects that would be difficult or even impossible to undertake on our own. The synergies of collaboration are increasingly important in an atmosphere of tight resources.

The ATA has been doing a tremendous job in terms of outreach and raising public awareness of the importance of translation and interpreting. I hope to participate in helping to make everyone who has anything to do with the selection of translators and interpreters conscious of the importance of focusing on quality when these selections are being made, and of the negative consequences that can result when their entire focus is on obtaining these services at the lowest price.

Finally, as a teacher of translation and organizer of training and continuing education events, I know that the importance of training cannot be underestimated, and I would like to be a voice in ATA that supports variety and quality in these efforts.

I would welcome the opportunity to make a contribution to ATA as a member of the Board. Thank you.



Director
(three-year term)
David C. Rumsey
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I am happy and honored to be nominated to run for a position on ATA's Board of Directors. In the past 17 years, I have been involved in all aspects of the translation business: starting out as a freelance translator (Scandinavian and German into English), becoming a project manager with an agency, being hired to work as an end client at a soft-

ware company, and ultimately back to freelancing.

This broad range of experience, in addition to my practical skills as the administrator of ATA's Nordic Division, will be a valuable asset to ensure that ATA continues to provide the best quality services and resources for its members.

The translation industry has been undergoing major changes. As the global market expands, end clients are realizing the importance of translation, but they struggle to find a way to pay for it or understand what they are buying. Project managers struggle to

educate their clients and meet their demands while trying to find and retain high-quality freelancers. Meanwhile, professional freelancers struggle to distinguish themselves from the millions of amateur and hobbyist translators/interpreters around the world who are creating a wide range of prices.

The importance of large organizations such as ATA in addressing the issues related to our craft cannot be understated. The success of the Certification Program has helped to bring legitimacy to the translation profession among end users. My ➡

two terms as administrator of the Nordic Division and my work with end clients has convinced me of the need to support this program and expand it to smaller languages, so that clients can appreciate the importance of languages beyond the traditional “FIGS” (French, Italian, German, and Spanish).

I also see a greater role for ATA in facilitating better communication between freelancers, agencies, and end

clients, as well as providing a greater number of technical and training services through our website. ATA’s website should act as a portal to the profession with expanded member profiles, forums, online courses, and downloads.

However, serving on the Board of Directors is less about policy and more about doing the work that is required to make the organization run. I have served two terms as the administrator of the Nordic Division and

also as the division’s newsletter editor for *Aurora Borealis*. I have also been a board member of two local service organizations and my condo association. I have the skills and dedication to ensure that ATA continues to provide the best services and features to its members.

I would appreciate your consideration in the upcoming election. Thank you.



Director
(three-year term)
Boris Silversteyn
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For the past three years, I have had the privilege of serving as an ATA director. I am honored to be nominated for this position again.

When I ran in 2005, I promised to focus on two areas—continuing education (CE) and conferences.

It was necessary to address CE requirements for certification, expand the range of activities counted for CE points, and bring the number of points assigned to each activity into better alignment with their actual educational values. At the time of my election, CE requirements were heavily tilted toward costly activities, including ATA conferences and seminars. A number of highly skilled members were in danger of losing their certification if they failed to meet those requirements by January 1, 2007. Immediate action was necessary to prevent this from happening.

Together with Board members Dorothee Racette and Nicholas Hartmann, I proposed, and the Board unanimously agreed, to extend the

deadline for accumulating CE points and to instruct the CE Requirements Committee to review the requirements to bring them in line with the above objectives. The improvements that were implemented have brought the desired results.

I also suggested finding ways to expand the Certification Program to language pairs for which no exams were offered at the time. With my participation, the English→Ukrainian pair was added in 2006. Several other pairs are in the works.

Having concentrated on solving CE problems during my first term, if elected, I will try to work with the Board and Headquarters to find ways to reduce the cost of attending ATA conferences. Conferences are one of the most valuable membership benefits, but for many members, especially newcomers, their cost imposes a financial hardship. We must find ways to reduce costs so more people can attend. This is a harder nut to crack, but encouraged by the success with the CE requirements, I think that by concentrating on an issue that is clearly in the interests of members, it is possible to change things in the right direction.

A few words about myself. I am a Russian and Ukrainian translator and

interpreter specializing in science and technology, finance, business, law, and environment. I joined ATA in 1986, received English→Russian certification in 1989, and was certified in Russian→English in 1990.

Having been fortunate professionally, I have always tried to give back to the profession when and where I could. For six years I chaired the Dictionary Review Committee. I participate in the Certification Program as an English→Russian and English→Ukrainian grader. I have given presentations at ATA conferences and published papers in various publications. I also volunteer as an interpreter for our county health department.

Being a freelancer, I know freelancers’ needs and interests. As a Board member, I always keep my eye on defending those interests. I will continue doing this if elected.

For many years now, ATA Board members have been guided by the common goal of serving the members and advancing the profession. With your support, I would be honored to continue working toward this objective.



Director
(three-year term)
Milly Suazo-Martinez
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Growing up, I had the best role model regarding service: my father. As early as I can remember he was always an active participant in both community and professional organizations, so it was no surprise to my parents to see me run for class treasurer or class president, organize the graduation trip, and be involved in all kinds of activities. From him I learned that everyone has something to offer and that serving others can be extremely rewarding.

I joined ATA and the Spanish Language Division (SPD) in March of 1999, when I finally decided to take my translation career to the next level. Little did I know that I would be writing this candidate statement 10 years later. Interestingly enough, the first ATA Annual Conference I attended was in Orlando in 2000. I had

been participating in Espalista, the SPD's listserv group, and was really excited to meet my colleagues in person. By the end of the conference, I felt empowered to continue my freelance business not only because of the information and knowledge gained, but also because of the networking and friendships developed. A few months later, SPD's administrator, Rudy Heller, asked me if I would be willing to take on the role of division treasurer. Pleasantly surprised and feeling honored, I said yes.

I served two terms as division treasurer and another one and a half as division administrator, and was part of many exciting events. The SPD was able to organize its very first Mid Year Conference in January 2002, and went on to have successful conferences in San Antonio, Jersey City, Las Vegas, and Philadelphia. Espalista continued to grow and our newsletter, *Intercambios*, started to be published in electronic format.

Organizations like ours function thanks to the dedication of volunteers who are passionate about the issues

that matter to their members. I have always believed that you can get people more involved in service when they are personally invested, and the only way to achieve that is through personal relationships. The work of a freelance translator can be quite lonely at times due to the very nature of the profession, and it can be quite comforting to know that there are colleagues available to you at the click of a mouse. This is the area where I believe that most of my strengths are, and where I hope to get an opportunity to work on fostering member involvement and volunteerism.

As a member of ATA's Board of Directors, I hope to bring with me the experience gained during my years of service with the SPD, the largest ATA division with about 4,000 members. It has not been a simple task to create cohesion in such a big group, but we have made much progress. I know that I have a lot to learn, but if given the opportunity, I will do my best to make a difference in the future of ATA. Just like my dad taught me.



Director
(three-year term)
Naomi J. Sutcliffe de Moraes
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During an economic downturn, there are two principal ways for translators and interpreters to make more money: work more hours or work faster. Since few of us want to work longer hours, we must learn to work faster and smarter, which, aside from years of experience, comes from studying translation techniques and specialty areas, such as law and

finance, and using computer tools. To be competitive and improve our quality of life, we must never stop learning. Fortunately, our intellectual curiosity probably inspired most of us to become linguists in the first place.

I am amazed at how much easier and faster I can now translate legal documents after studying for a law degree. While my BS in mechanical engineering and MS in physics (both from the University of California, Los Angeles) allow me to translate engineering and science documents faster, they were not much help when translating contracts.

Most cities do not have a university graduate program in translation, and I

feel privileged to have studied translation at the PhD level in São Paulo, Brazil, and to have taught the Portuguese→English medical and scientific modules of a two-year professional translation course. ATA should provide more information on how translators can get translation-related and subject area training through online or distance-learning courses and through universities and other associations.

I also feel that ATA should attempt to determine what kinds of training translators want and need and then plan a way to provide it at the Annual Conference and regional seminars—rather than just relying on spontaneous session proposals on random ➡

topics. Some members complain that ATA's Annual Conference is too expensive, and it is expensive, but over the years no one has found a way to make it cheaper. Perhaps the problem is not the absolute price, but rather the cost/benefit ratio. Some members attend the conference just for the networking functions and forgo the sessions altogether! I would like to work to bring more outside speakers to ATA conferences—specialists in areas such as law, finance, and medicine—so that no one will leave the conference without knowledge they can use immediately when working.

ATA should also provide more computer tool learning opportunities for members at the Annual Conference and other continuing education programs. I hope my articles in *The ATA Chronicle* and Language Technology Division newsletter column on computers have increased members' knowledge of available tools and the importance of using them to increase productivity, but they are just a beginning. Another important area in which ATA could offer training is business skills, including tax preparation, accounting, and direct marketing techniques.

I would like to thank the Nominating Committee for their confidence in me. Your vote will indicate that continuing education, not just certification maintenance, should be more prominent. Better trained members are better linguists, better paid, and thus happier, which will keep the profession interesting for its practitioners and make us more valuable to our clients. I hope to represent you over the next three years.



Director
(three-year term)
Izumi Suzuki
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It is an honor to be nominated for the Board again. It has been eight years since I was last a Board member. When I completed my three-year term, I was slated to be administrator of ATA's Japanese Language Division (JLD), so I did not run again. Fortunately, JLD is administered under very capable hands now.

I joined ATA in 1989, and became a grader for the English→Japanese certification exam in 1991. I served as a language chair a couple of times within ATA's Certification Program, but now I am back to being a grader. I have been mainly an interpreter for the past 30 years, since my training is in conference interpreting. I am a member of JLD and the Interpreters Division. Back in Michigan, I am the president of the Michigan Translators/

Interpreters Network, an ATA chapter. I own a boutique firm specializing in Japanese and English translation and interpreting, and work as the chief interpreter and translator of the firm.

While I was interpreting at a district court about 10 years ago, I was shocked by the lack of competence of these so-called interpreters that the police and the court hired. When I learned that California offered court certification in Japanese, I took the exam and was certified in 2001. Since that time, more and more courts have started to require certified interpreters in the court, which is a wonderful development. I strongly feel that certification would definitely help raise the public recognition of our profession, as ATA's translation certification shows. Although court interpreting certification is covered by the National Consortium of Supreme Courts as well as the National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators, there is no certification for general interpreting. ATA should be the organization to lead this effort. I would like

to see ATA truly represent interpreters, as it does translators.

When I first joined ATA, I was extremely impressed with the JLD. I think people join ATA mainly because they are attracted to meeting and working with others who are involved in the same language or the same subject. Divisions are vital to the future growth of ATA. In recent years, it seems to me that increasingly ATA has negatively restructured division activities. There is a growing perception among division leaders that their relevance is gradually being taken away. I feel that the Association needs to improve its communications with divisions. I support active divisions and chapters, and would like to commit myself to further the growth of divisions and chapters, which will strengthen ATA.



Director
(one-year term)
Lilian Van Vranken
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Since I joined ATA in 1990 as a newly immigrated translator from Argentina, our association has seen an explosive growth and positioned itself to create much needed awareness about our profession. I am indebted to all our colleagues who had the extraordinary vision to shape the future of ATA.

I have a degree in legal translation from the University of Buenos Aires (*traductora pública*), and in my 20 years of experience, I have worked as a staff translator for a law firm in Argentina, as a project manager and in-house translator for a translation company in Houston, and as a full-time freelance English→Spanish conference interpreter, translator, and editor.

The opportunity to make a difference in our profession prompted me to get involved in ATA activities. I became a grader (English→Spanish) for the Certification Program in 1995, and after holding the positions of language chair and member of the Certification Committee, past ATA

President Ann Macfarlane honored me with the invitation to chair the Certification Committee. During my tenure, and with the unwavering support of ATA's Board and dedicated graders, the Certification Program underwent pivotal changes that elevated the stature of our exam, created more transparency for graders and candidates, and helped us reach a new level of excellence.

It is my goal to apply the same work ethics to the service of ATA and its members and, in the past year, I have undertaken the following projects that resonate with many of us who work in a highly competitive language combination:

1. Tools for freelance translators to market themselves better: As a full-time freelance translator and editor, I have experienced major changes in the way business is conducted, and there is no denying the ever-increasing need to reinvent ourselves to keep a grip on a changing market. I have stated this need, and the Board responded by requesting the Public Relations Committee to design workshops for the upcoming Annual Conference in Orlando.

2. Health insurance: Together with Mary David, member benefits and project development manager at ATA Headquarters, we have been researching health care programs offered by other associations. It is a complex issue due to significant differences in state and federal regulations beyond our control, and while there is no national group coverage available, I remain committed to exploring this area of member benefits.

3. Accreditation: I continue to be involved in the efforts to pursue ANSI accreditation of the Certification Program spearheaded by fellow board members Dr. Claudia Angelelli and Professor Alan Melby, who are working closely with the Certification Committee.

I will always strive to do what is best for the translation and interpreting community, and I firmly believe that our mandate as professional translators and interpreters is to seek continuous self-improvement, create translation and interpreting education awareness, and fight for recognition. Thank you for trusting me with your vote.

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