Why are you interested in being TESOL President?

I am interested in being TESOL president for a very simple reason. I want to give back to the TESOL community because it has given me so much. I want to serve the organization I respect and admire. I joined TESOL in 1999 and as an active member of the association, I have taken part in its online and face-to-face professional learning and networking opportunities and held several leadership positions. Through the years, I have developed knowledge and skills that have made me a better professional, in large part due to being involved in TESOL. I have gained a deep understanding of the complexities of our profession and the value of a community such as TESOL. The leadership skills I gained through TESOL have allowed me to bring innovations into my many professional activities including my own department at my university. I have learned about my strengths as well as realized areas where I can grow further. I have had opportunities to interact and network with colleagues from all over the world that in return have made me a more global citizen. Overall, the association has helped me to become a mature professional and leader. Now, I want to serve TESOL members with my diverse and valuable experiences, knowledge, abilities, and leadership skills and contribute to the advancement of English language teaching and the Association itself.
If elected, what do you anticipate would be your single most important contribution to TESOL International Association?

The main thing I want to accomplish during my term is to ensure that everything TESOL does—from setting goals and developing plans to implementing and assessing them—is done through the input of the TESOL community. I believe effective and respectful collaboration strengthens outcomes. In the case of TESOL, collaborative efforts will yield results that are more representative of our diverse membership. I will make sure TESOL’s decisions and actions under my leadership are shaped through collaboration. I will encourage exchange and sharing of everyone’s expertise and opinions. Depending on the task, I will involve relevant constituents of TESOL and will make sure that their strengths enrich the decision-making process. I will listen to contrastive views and will ask questions when needed. I will explore options and possibilities and seek consensus that is best for the Association and its members.

What do you think are some of the biggest challenges facing the Association, and what do you think the Association should do to meet those challenges?

I believe that one of the biggest challenges revolves around the greatest asset of the Association—the global diversity of our membership and the many faces of our profession. In a way, our Association mirrors many of our classes. In class, we have learners of various language levels, needs, backgrounds, expectations, desires, and resources. It is a challenge to reach every single learner and provide relevant and engaging learning opportunities for them in their unique context. Similarly, the Association is challenged by the various levels of expertise, needs, backgrounds, expectations, and desires of its members. I recognize that TESOL can’t be everything to everybody all the time, yet it needs to make sure that it is serving the members’ needs as widely as possible. We must learn more about the interests and concerns of our members through various types of
inquiries, and that means we should seek ever more effective communication. We should use the information in our decision-making and make sure that our activities target our members’ needs and issues common to members from contexts. We should engage our members and use their strengths effectively to build knowledge communities and networks. We should have nimble structures and processes that allow us to respond quickly to the changing realities of our profession. We should collaborate in our efforts, and we should always critically reflect on what we do and how we do it.