

President's Message

New York, December 20, 2025

Continuing the Legacy: A Message from the GUAVA President

“Chúng ta không bao giờ bắt đầu hoàn toàn mới, mà chỉ tiếp nối những gì đã có.”

– Thiền sư Thích Nhất Hạnh

Thirty-two years ago, GUAVA was founded on a simple yet powerful vision: to connect, support, and advance the teaching of Vietnamese in higher education across the United States and around the world.

Today, as I write this message as the new President of GUAVA, I recognize that our history is not a collection of isolated milestones, but a continuous flow of commitment, collaboration, and shared purpose carried forward across generations.

In its early years, GUAVA began as the Group of Universities for the Advancement of Vietnamese Abroad (GUAVA Abroad), closely associated with the Vietnamese Advanced Summer Institute (VASI) funded by Fulbright-Hays. As Vietnamese language education grew across the U.S., GUAVA transitioned into GUAVA America, reflecting its strengthened focus on supporting Vietnamese language instruction within American higher education.

During this important transition, Former President Dr. Thúy Tranviet played a pivotal role in maintaining the organization's connection and continuity. Her leadership ensured that GUAVA remained strong through times of change and continued moving confidently toward new directions.

Under the leadership of Dr. Thúy Tranviet and the Executive Board of 2021–2023, GUAVA launched a new website in 2021, a milestone that consolidated the organization's history, leadership records, information about Vietnamese language programs across the U.S., and valuable teaching and learning resources. This website has been redesigned and upgraded and since become both a living archive and a central hub for connecting generations of Vietnamese language educators.

During this same period, GUAVA began holding its biennial GUAVA Workshops, providing professional platforms for instructors to share experiences, present research findings, and exchange innovative teaching practices.

The last several years have shown how GUAVA's initiatives work together to advance our long-term missions. Each activity forms part of a coherent ecosystem of professional development, collaboration, and innovation, interconnected expressions of the same enduring commitment.

One of the most impactful initiatives has been [GUAVA Connect](#), launched in 2022 to strengthen global collaboration and knowledge sharing. This year, GUAVA Connect continued with the theme [Digitizing Vietnam](#), focusing on digital preservation, the development of humanities-based digital tools, and resources that support both research and Vietnamese language teaching. This reflects GUAVA's recognition of how technology and digital humanities are reshaping the future of Vietnamese studies.

Spring 2025 also marked the success of the [GUAVA Innovation Awards](#), enthusiastically embraced by members. Three educators—Hoan Nguyen, An Sakach, and Trang Tran—were recognized for their contributions and pedagogical innovations. Their work inspired further community engagement and set the stage for GUAVA's next professional initiative: [Member Highlights](#). This ongoing series creates a welcoming space for Vietnamese language instructors to exchange classroom practices, learn from one another's experiences, and strengthen shared pedagogical knowledge.

This year also offered a meaningful moment of intergenerational connection when GUAVA members met Professor Steven O'Harrow, one of GUAVA's founders in 1993, at the SEALC Fall Symposium hosted at the University of Hawai'i. The gathering offered an opportunity to reflect on GUAVA's origins while envisioning its future through community dialogue and academic exchange.

Beyond GUAVA's official activities, members have demonstrated continued dedication to collaborative professional development. [The VietTBLT group](#), founded and led by An Sakach, Chung Nguyen, and Huy Phung, has expanded training opportunities through workshops and shared task-based teaching resources. Likewise, [the annual Venice–Tempe Vietnamese Language Teaching Symposium](#), co-organized by An Sakach and Trang Phan, continues to cultivate global dialogue in the field.

Complementing these developments is the expansion of GUAVA's digital resource ecosystem. Communication Manager Huy Phung has curated a rich collection of open-access textbooks, teaching materials, publications, recorded talks, and especially the Annual Newsletter, now in its fifth edition. These efforts, supported by Dr. Thúy Tranviet and many dedicated members, have positioned GUAVA as a central repository for high-quality, accessible resources for Vietnamese language educators.

In addition to growing professional activities, GUAVA has made significant progress in strengthening its structural foundation. A major milestone this year was the unanimous approval of the GUAVA Bylaws on August 20, 2025, the culmination of years of groundwork laid by Former President Dr. Thúy Tranviet. The bylaws formalize governance structures, clarify leadership roles, and position GUAVA for sustainable growth in the years ahead.

With the transition on August 31, 2025, GUAVA honors Dr. Thúy Tranviet's long standing service while embracing a new chapter of leadership. Beginning September 1, 2025, [**the Executive Board**](#) including Chung Nguyen (*President*), Huy Phung (*Communication Manager*), and Trang Tran (*Executive Secretary*) assume the responsibility of carrying forward GUAVA's legacy until the 2027 election.

As GUAVA enters its 33rd year, our commitment remains unwavering: to continue building the professional community envisioned by our founders, to strengthen Vietnamese language education at all levels, and to ensure that GUAVA remains a pioneering organization in the field.

What GUAVA has done, is doing, and will continue to do represents an unbroken chain of dedication, a continuation of the values, mission, and aspirations shaped by generations of Vietnamese language educators. The 2025–2027 Board is honored to carry this torch forward, and together with our members, we remain committed to building an inspiring, sustainable, and innovative future for Vietnamese language teaching.

Chung Nguyen
President, GUAVA