

From Alumna to Dean:
Coming Home to UCLA TFT

I came here tonight not expecting to feel the oceanic surge of emotions in being in physical proximity with all of you including many of my own classmates!

What does it mean to be alumni of UCLA TFT together? We grew up in the same place at different times from everywhere in the world to find home in our craft in those film and theater stages and classrooms where we produced so much of ourselves.

Thirty years ago, I came to TFT, selected as you in that unbelievable process of winning a slot among the very few admitted. I had no money and obstacles abounded. Yet, I came here to seek my freedom to make the movies and plays in my mind of which there are so many that span continents and generations.

I grew up in the Philippines at a time of martial law and dictatorship to witness how film on screen and performance on scene could topple regimes against humanity. We need powerful theater and cinema when fear and repression make creativity so needed.

As your new Dean, I bring to UCLA TFT the love of an alumna, the lessons of my personal story, and my passion for learning everything I can about film and theater both.

My hope in coming here tonight? To invite you to come home to each other, by weaving community among alumni and taking care of each other as our industries undergo great innovation and challenges both. When we come together, we will bring UCLA TFT to its next eminence globally, nationally, regionally and locally with accountability, respect, awe, reverence, and unstoppable strength that befits our institution's history.

Your passion and partnership are essential to TFT's success, and I look forward to getting to know each of you better tonight so we may meld our dreams and visions for championing TFT together with your time, talent and treasure. Let your stories that started at TFT continue by coming home together now! Let's go!

–Dean Celine Parreñas Shimizu