

## TFT Professional Programs Certificate Ceremony Remarks

Dean Celine Parreñas Shimizu, Fowler Museum, June 10, 2026

Good evening.

I begin by acknowledging the people who made tonight possible: Professional Programs Director Brian Fagan, Associate Director Matt Yaldezian, and Faculty Advisor George Huang. Their belief that craft deepens with discipline — and that this industry belongs to people who keep learning — built the program you just completed. Please join me in thanking them.

And now: congratulations. To the graduates. To your families, your collaborators, your people who held things together while you were in class.

Look at this beautiful room and all the excitement palpably present. I got a chance to observe and even listen to you for the half hour waiting to get inside. Flowers, Selfies, Family who traveled a long way to celebrate you.

People from every part of the world. Every stage of life. You did not come here at the same moment in your career or your life — you came here because learning never stops, because the drive to make better work does not expire. It is what our Chancellor Julio Frenk calls UCLA FOR LIFE..

That is who UCLA TFT Professional Programs attracts. That is who you are.  
It is an honor to be in this room with you tonight.

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**\*\*The moment you are entering?\*** You are graduating into an industry being reinvented by new creative technologies beyond AI. What I know is: Cinema is not yet what it should be. What it can be. The voices that have been centered, the perspectives that have been treated as worth celluloid are not the full range of human experience. Not even close. The technology is changing. The platforms are multiplying. The gatekeepers are not what they were. New narratives are still sorely needed. We do not yet know the power of cinema until we hear the TFT banner: Your Voice. Our Story.

This is the moment. This is where you must come in. Not as people who have learned to replicate what already exists, rather as people who will make the work we have not yet seen, not yet felt. The voices we have not yet heard. The cinema that does not exist yet — in waiting for you to join Professional Programs to make your work.

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**\*\*What this program gave you\***

There is something rare that happened here, in this program, during this time. You got to make something wholly yours. This is rare, this can feel quite pure. Not shaped by a studio's demands. Not filtered through what the market wants right now is my hope. Let your story fly. Not in service of someone else's vision. Yours — your instincts, your obsessions, your point of view, given room to develop without compromise. A real grain of you. A seed you plant.

That is not guaranteed in this industry. Most of the time it is not even available. So hold onto what that felt like. The clarity of it. The difficulty of it. Let it be your standard as a measure of your desires, your wishes, to make this technology yours. When the industry asks you to sand yourself down, you will know what you are protecting because you have already felt it. That purity is not behind you. Carry it forward. Let it keep you strong enough to make something great — something needed.

**\*\*What you carry out of here\*\*** You are alumni of UCLA. Not just certificate-holders. We have a broad definition, because you came to us, you touched us as we touched you. Not just working professionals who took a program. Alumni — which means you are part of something that has been making consequential work in this industry for decades, and you carry that forward.

Three obligations I must name directly. My three I's of leading TFT.

Independence. Your voice is yours. Singularly from you.

Innovation. The tools are changing fast. Use them. Shape them. Be curious.

Be fearless about what you do not yet know. You help to define what cinema becomes next by bravely exploring new technologies and new languages and new stories.

Impact. Make work that matters beyond the screen. Cinema can do something no other form can: it makes you feel for yourself and others.

Tonight, celebrate with the craft, the certificate, and the community you now have.

Now go forth, Bruins.