

# APPENDIX

## THE CENTER FOR CREATIVE WRITING AND LITERARY STUDIES: THE STORY SO FAR

by Cristina Pantoja Hidalgo

### **A Backward Glance**

*This history of the Center is reconstructed from files found in the original office of the CCWS in 2012.*

In July or August 1999, Dr. Ophelia A. Dimalanta was appointed director of the UST Center for Creative Writing and Studies (CCWS), and the following received appointments:

Joselito B. Zulueta – Deputy Director  
Erlita Mendoza – Administrative Secretary  
Ferdinand B. Lopez – Program Officer  
Francisco Sionil Jose – Senior Associate  
Cirilo F. Bautista – Senior Associate  
Rebecca Añonuevo – Junior Associate  
Michael Corroza – Junior Associate  
Lourd Ernest de Veyra – Junior Associate  
Ramil Digal Gulle – Junior Associate  
Ralph Semino Galán – Junior Associate

(There are no files covering the Center's manpower or activities from 2000-2004. Ms. Anna C. Nicolas, secretary of the Center, believes them to have been destroyed by flood waters during Typhoon Ondoy.)

In June 2005, the following were appointed for one year: Cirilo F. Bautista – Senior Consultant-Researcher; and Jose Victor Torres, Eros Atalia, Carlos Luz, Nerisa del Carmen Guevara, and Lourde De Veyra – Junior Consultant-Researchers; Paolo Eric Melendez – Program Officer, and Alfred Martin Dimalanta – PR and Marketing Officer.

In 2006, Mr. Melendez resigned. Lourde de Veyra was replaced by Manolito Sulit. Dr. Dimalanta restored the titles of Senior Associate and Junior Associate and dropped the Consultant-Researcher title. She added Igan D/Bayan and Carlomar Daoana to the list of Junior Associates. She also restored the post of Program Officer and appointed Irene Lising to the post. These persons were given one-year appointments.

In 2007, Dr. Bautista and Messrs. Atalia, Daoana, Sulit, and Dimalanta were renewed for one semester.

In May 2008, Dr. Bautista and Messrs. Atalia, Sulit, Daoana, and Dimalanta (whose appointments were on “hold-over status”) received letters from the Rector, Rev. Fr. Roland v. de la Rosa, O.P., thanking them for their services and informing them that all new appointments were being “held in abeyance.”

In July 2008, Dr. Dimalanta was appointed Writer-in-Residence.

(There are no further records about manpower appointments to the CCWS.)

## **Revival and Reorganization**

### Prelude

In the second term of AY 2011-2012, while I was still director of the UST Publishing House, I was informed by then-Rector, Rev. Fr. Rolando de la Rosa, O.P., of his intention to revive the CCWS, which had become

dormant, and to appoint me its director. I was instructed to choose from among the Center's former Associates those I felt should be re-appointed, and to select one from among them to serve as my assistant.

Accordingly, I named Ralph Galán as my assistant, and Lito B. Zulueta, Eros Atalia, and Nerisa Guevara as Associates. Dean Anthony Vasco of the Faculty of Arts and Letters (to which the old Center had belonged) promptly gave those faculty members ARA [academic and research activity] loads effective the 2<sup>nd</sup> semester, AY 2012-2013, so they could begin working even before I was myself appointed, and instructed me to hold a UST Writers' Workshop.

In the summer of 2012, we held a UST Writers' Workshop in Baguio sponsored by the Dean's Office. The Writing Fellows were selected by ourselves from among faculty members known to have an interest in writing.

#### Appointment of Director and Resident Fellows and Submission of Vision/ Mission Statement

On June 15, 2012, the new Rector, Rev. F. Herminio Dagohey, O.P., appointed me director of the UST Center for Creative Writing and Studies and approved my proposal to change its name to UST CENTER FOR CREATIVE WRITING AND LITERARY STUDIES (CCWLS) and to change the title of the Associates to "Resident Fellows." He also informed me that the Center would be under his office.

On July 17, 2012, I wrote to the Rev. Fr. Rector recommending the appointments of Associate Prof. Nerisa Gevara, Asst. Prof. Eros Atalia, and Mr. Joselito Zulueta as Fellows (instead of Associates) and of Assoc. Prof. Ralph Galan as Assistant Director.

After our office's teambuilding activity in Tagaytay City, held on December 15-16, 2012, I again wrote to the Father Rector submitting my

Vision/Mission Statement and recommending a full complement of the officially re-established UST Center for Creative Writing and Literary Studies, effective June 2013, as follows:

Assoc. Prof. Ralph Semino Galán – Assistant Director and Resident Fellow

Asst. Prof. Eros Atalia – Resident Fellow

Assoc. Prof. Nerisa del Carmen Guevara – Resident Fellow

Mr. Joselito B. Zulueta – Resident Fellow

Mr. Joselito D. De Los Reyes – Resident Fellow

Mr. Chuckberry J. Pascual – Resident Fellow

Assoc. Prof. Ferdinand Lopez – Resident Fellow

Ms. Jaymee Siao – Resident Fellow

Prof. Rebecca Añonuevo – Associate

Prof. Michael M. Coroza – Associate

Assoc. Prof. Oscar Campomanes – Associate

### New Offices at Benavides Building

The new offices of the UST CCWLS in the Benavides Building were selected by the Office of the Rector and blessed by the Rev. Fr. Herminio Dagohoy, O.P., UST Rector Magnificus, on January 22, 2019.

## **Vision/Mission**

**Vision:** The UST Center for Creative Writing and Literary Studies (UST CCWLS) is an integral part of the University of Santo Tomas, and is committed to furthering the University's objectives as a globally recognized Catholic institution of higher learning. The UST CCWLS envisions itself

as an academy of letters, dedicated to the reaffirmation of the university's important role in the nation's literary history through the creation of a culture of literary excellence within the Thomasian community, and through the cultivation of an awareness of the University's rich literary traditions.

**Mission:** As an academy of letters, the UST CCWLS's specific mission is to gather within itself the best literary talents among the university's faculty members who will serve as a support group for each other while nurturing younger writers and literary scholars. It will also be a showcase of the University's gifted creative writers and literary scholars. The work done by the UST CCWLS will be the University's contribution to the continuing development of Philippine literature.

## Organizational Structure

[\*Note: The position of Co-Director, which was created by the Rev. Fr. Richard Ang, O.P., Rector Magnificus of UST in the third quarter of 2022, is not yet reflected in this profile of the Center.]

### Director

*Qualifications* - The Director must:

- ☞ be a nationally recognized writer whose accomplishments (as reflected in his/her published works and literary awards)\*, leadership, and dedication will serve as an inspiration to Thomasian writers, and will attract members of the larger literary community to collaborate with the Center;
- ☞ preferably have a Ph.D. in Creative Writing, Literature, or a related field, experience in running a creative writing center in an academic

setting, and experience in teaching creative writing and/or literature on the undergraduate and graduate levels;

- 🔦 occupy a position of importance and play an active role in the larger literary community.

(\*The Director must have published at least three books and won at least two national awards.)

*Responsibilities* – The Director will:

- 🔦 report to the Rector of the University;
- 🔦 determine the objectives and goals of the UST CCWLS and ensure that they are in accordance with the University’s vision/mission, and the Center’s own vision/mission and mandate;
- 🔦 be responsible for the overall administration and operation of the Center, including the preparation of its annual budget and approval of requisitions;
- 🔦 conceptualize and supervise the implementation of all the Center’s programs, projects, and activities;
- 🔦 sit as a de-facto member of the UST Publishing House’s Editorial Board and be responsible for selecting the reviewers/evaluators of literary or literary scholarship materials submitted for publication;
- 🔦 hold regular office hours as required by University policies; and
- 🔦 build linkages with organizations of writers and literary scholars, both national and international.

## Assistant Director

*Qualifications* – The Assistant Director must:

- ❖ be selected from among the UST CCWLS’s Resident Fellows and have the required qualifications; in addition to which, he/she must
- ❖ have an M.A. in Creative Writing, Literature, or a related field; with some experience as Resident Fellow or Associate Fellow of a creative writing center in an academic setting; and some experience in teaching creative writing or literature on the undergraduate and/or graduate levels;
- ❖ preferably, have won literary awards; and
- ❖ be an active member of the larger literary community.

*Responsibilities* – The Assistant Director will:

- ❖ report to the Director;
- ❖ hold regular office hours as required by University policies;
- ❖ assist the Director in the administration and operation of the Center, particularly the preparation of its annual budget;
- ❖ coordinate the work of the Resident Fellows and Associate Fellows who are in charge of the Center’s different programs, projects, and activities;
- ❖ liaise between the Center and other units/offices in the University with whom the Center has transactions;
- ❖ represent the Director in activities within and outside the University when the Director is unable to be present; and

- 👤 attend activities conducted by other creative writing centers and publishing houses, such as book launchings, literary readings, etc.

### Resident Fellows

*Qualifications:* The Resident Fellows must:

- 👤 be full-time regular faculty members of the University;
- 👤 have published at least one book, or have work(s) produced on stage or in film;
- 👤 preferably have won literary award(s); and
- 👤 be active members or be willing to become an active member of the larger literary community.

*Responsibilities* – The Resident Fellows will:

- 👤 report to the Director and Assistant Director;
- 👤 supervise the programs, projects, or activities assigned to them;
- 👤 serve as members of the teaching panel during the annual Writers' Workshop held in Baguio City each summer;
- 👤 serve as Issue Editor or Managing Editor for the literary journal *Tomás* when called upon;
- 👤 assist the Director and Assistant Director with other programs, projects, or activities as needed;
- 👤 report to the CCWLS office at least three times a week;
- 👤 submit a written self-evaluation (describing their literary accomplishments/activities) at the end of each academic year, which will serve as basis for the Director's recommendation of the renewal of his/her appointment.



## Associate Fellows

*Qualifications* – same as those of the Resident Fellows, except that the Associate Fellows must be part-time faculty members of the University.

*Responsibilities* – The Associate Fellows will:

- 🕯 attend regular and/or special meetings of the UST CCWLS;
- 🕯 be present at as many UST CCWLS-sponsored activities as possible;
- 🕯 serve on the teaching panel of the annual Writers' Workshop and as Issue Editor or Managing Editor of the literary journal if required.

## **Programs, Projects, and Activities**

### UST National Writers' Workshop

The UST National Writers' Workshop (UST NWW) is the oldest (dating to the term of the Center's founding director, Prof. Ophelia A. Dimalanta) and most important of the Center's regular programs. It is designed to improve the writing skills of Thomasian writers (faculty members, graduate students, and alumni) as well as qualified non-Thomasian writers. Each year, it accepts applications for 15 fellowships to the workshop and chooses the most deserving. The teaching panel consists of the Center's Director, Assistant Director, and Resident and Associate Fellows. In recent years, senior guest panelists have also been invited under the sponsorship of UST's school paper *The Varsitarian*. Pre-pandemic, the NWW was held in Ridgewood Residences, Baguio City. It also had an outreach component. Members of the teaching staff would take turns delivering lectures pro bono in an Outreach Seminar on Creative Writing and the Teaching of Literature in collaboration with a partner institution in Baguio City (e.g., UP

Baguio, University of Baguio, University of the Cordilleras, Benguet State University). Since 2020, the NWW has been held online via Zoom.

### Tomás: The Literary Journal of the UST Center for Creative Writing and Literary Studies

*Tomás* is the official, double-blind, peer-reviewed literary journal of the UST Center for Creative Writing and Literary Studies. It publishes both local and international professional creative writers and literary critics. It comes out annually. Since the CCWLS was revived in 2012, it has published 16 issues. All 16 issues are available online. *Tomás* has both a print edition and an online edition. The positions of Issue Editor and Managing Editor are rotated among the Resident Fellows.

### Sulat Tomasino

Sulat Tomasino (previously, the UST Thomasian Undergraduate Writers' Workshop) is an annual program of the UST CCWLS designed to raise the standards of campus journalism. It invites editors-in-chief and literary editors of the undergraduate journals of the various faculties and colleges of the Pontifical University, as well as from other DOMNET academic institutions and the Dominican Studentate.

### USTinig CCWLS Podcasts: Reading Texts and Discussion Matters

This is the newest of the Center's programs, initiated when the pandemic hit the country, and there was a need for literary programs that did not require face-to-face engagement. It is a hybrid program consisting of literary readings ("Reading Texts") alternating with discussions ("Discussion Matters") featuring writers in the news. The most successful of these

episodes, in terms of audience, were the ones featuring National Artist Ricky Lee, historian Ambeth Ocampo, and musician and writer Lourde de Veyra. Younger writers and artists are a priority since the online audience profile is predominantly young. It is held monthly.

### USTingan Roundtable Discussions

USTingan is a bi-annual program consisting of informal forums or roundtable discussions on contemporary issues in Philippine literature and popular culture. It is designed to encourage exchanges between Thomasian writers, literary scholars, and students with writers and academics from outside the University. Invited guest speakers come from the top of their respective professions. Among the most successful of these were “Popular Song Writing as Literature” (featuring Ely Buendia, Lourde de Veyra, and Ebe Dancel), “Literary Journalism in the Age of Fake News” (featuring Howie Severino and Joel Pablo Salud), “The Graphic Novel, Graphic Fiction, and the Comics” (featuring Manix Abrera, Carlo Vergara, and Carljoe Javier).

For the last two years, Asst. Director Ralph Semino Galán, who handles this program, focused on literature from the regions. This became possible because everything was done online. These episodes enjoyed a much higher viewership, either because Zoom is more convenient for everyone, or because audiences in the regions are particularly gratified at seeing their own writers being featured.

### UST Authors Series

This program is the showcase for new work by the Resident Fellows and Associate Fellows of the UST CCWLS. Each episode consists of a book launch and either a lecture by or conversation with the author(s) featured.

This program is held in collaboration with the UST Publishing House. Since the Resident Fellows regularly publish books, we do not run out of material for this program.

### UST CCWLS International Writers and Scholars Series

This program consists of formal lectures by and informal conversations with visiting international writers as guests of the UST CCWLS. It was on hold for a while due to the pandemic. But it is on track again with the visit to UST of Professor Robin Hemley (sometimes referred to as the Godfather of Creative Nonfiction) on November 29, 2022.

### CCWLS Publicity Program

Prior to the pandemic, the Center kept clippings of all articles on its activities published in the national print media and in UST'S *Academia* and *The Varsitarian*. These were all filed in clear books for easy reference. This program relied on extensive media coverage through the connections with national media of some of the Resident Fellows, like Res. Fellow Lito Zulueta, Res. Fellow Joselito De Los Reyes, and Res. Fellow Jenny Ortuoste. The CCWLS also has a Facebook Page. Announcements about the Center's programs, projects, and activities are regularly posted. So are updates about the accomplishments of the Resident Fellows, alumni of the M.A. Creative Writing Program, and former Writing Fellows of the UST National Writers' Workshops. Res. Fellow Dawn Marfil Burris is in charge of this.

## Outreach Seminars on Creative Writing and the Teaching of Literature in Quezon Province

Aside from the annual outreach seminar in Baguio, annual outreach seminars have also been held in various learning institutions in Quezon Province. This is in conjunction with the annual team-building and planning seminar of the UST CCWLS, held at Batis Aramis Resort and Hotel in Lucban, Quezon Province. This was arranged every year by Res. Fellow Joselito De Los Reyes. This program is on hold since the pandemic.

## Auction for a Cause

This is a special project which we put in place when the pandemic affected some Thomasian writers. The idea is to hold an online auction of works of art or literary memorabilia donated by writers or artists to raise funds for Thomasian writers who need it. Thus far we have had five such auctions.

## **Collaborative Activities with Other UST Units and with Other Institutions**

Exigencies of time and space require that I merely enumerate these activities. And they are too many for me to mention all of them. So, these are some of them:

- 💡 UST The Varsitarian Scholarships for M.A. Creative Writing Students (ongoing)
- 💡 “Making Love in 14 Collaborative Acts: an Interdisciplinary Celebration of the Arts,” 2013

- 🔦 The 4<sup>th</sup> Philippine International Literary Festival “Text and the City” organized by the National Book Development Board (NBDB), 2013
- 🔦 National Artist Virgilio S. Almario Lecture and Book Launch, 2014
- 🔦 “Pusong Walang Pag-ibig: Ang Pagtatatwa sa Wika”: Isang Panayam ni Dr. Soledad Reyes, 2014
- 🔦 “Thomasians in Love: a post-Valentine Celebration of the Arts,” in collaboration with the Conservatory of Music, the College of Fine Arts and Design, The Varsitarian, the UST Publishing House, and the Faculty of Civil Law, 2015
- 🔦 “Shakespeare in Today’s Japanese Pop Culture” lecture featuring Dr. Yukari Yosiahara of the University of Tsukuba, 2015
- 🔦 Testimonial dinner to honor Thomasian National Artist Cirilo F. Bautista, 2015
- 🔦 “Against the Grain: Dissidence, Dissonance, and Difference,” an international conference and literary festival organized by the Asia Pacific Writers and Translators Series (APWT) in collaboration with UST, UP [University of the Philippines] and DLSU [De La Sall University], 2015
- 🔦 Nobel Laureate Mario Vargas Llosa Visit to UST, at the invitation of the UST CCWLS Director, with the support of the Rev. Fr. Rector, 2016
- 🔦 “Banyuhay: Bagong Anyo, Bagong Buhay,” an exhibit of art works used as covers for books, and a performance night consisting of literary readings and musical performances in collaboration with the National Commission for Culture and the Arts, 2017

- 🔦 The 2019 Adrian Cristobal Lecture: “Will there be Space for the Practice and Study of Literature in the Near Future?”, delivered by the UST CCWLS Director, 2019
- 🔦 “Weaving Words into Worlds,” 2019 Philippine Readers and Writers Festival (in collaboration with the National Book Development Board)
- 🔦 Senior Visiting Fellows:
  - 🔦 National Artist Gemino H. Abad, 2016 and 2017
  - 🔦 Award-winning Filipino-American Poet Eugene Gloria and Fulbright Lecturer, 2017
  - 🔦 Award-winning writer, actor, director of stage, film and TV Bernardo Bernardo, 2016

## The Resident Fellows

The Center’s Fellows are full-time faculty members who have published at least one book or written a play or film script that has been produced on stage or for the movies; are willing to take on the responsibilities of being part of the CCWLS; and are active members, or willing to become members, of the country’s larger literary community. Associate Fellows are part-time faculty members who have the same qualifications as the Resident Fellows.

The following are the Center’s current Resident Fellows:

Associate Prof. Ralph Semino Galán (Assistant Director);

Prof. Dr. John Jack G. Wigley;

Prof. Dr. Augusto Antonio A. Aguila;

Prof. Dr. Joyce L. Arriola;  
Prof. Dr. Ma. Luisa Torres Reyes;  
Associate Prof. Dr. Joselito D. De Los Reyes;  
Associate Prof. Dr. Chuckberry J. Pascual;  
Associate Prof. Joselito B. Zulueta;  
Associate Prof. Nerisa del Carmen Guevara;  
Asst. Prof. Jennifer Rebecca L. Ortuoste;  
Asst. Prof. Ma. Ailil B. Alvarez;  
Asst. Prof. Dawn Nicole Marfil Burris;  
Asst. Prof. Benedict Parfan;  
Asst. Prof. Paul A. Castillo;  
Mr. Jose P. Mojica;  
Mr. Mark Anthony S. Angeles;  
Mr. Joel M. Toledo.

The Resident Fellows are all very productive in terms of their own literary and scholarly/critical work – they regularly publish books and/or stories, creative nonfiction, poetry, or plays in literary journals, magazines, book anthologies, and scholarly papers in peer-reviewed journals. They are also very active and cooperative within the Center, being high-energy, self-motivated individuals who work well as a team, stepping up for each other when needed, and doing everything cheerfully and efficiently. My policy has been to rotate the different programs and projects among them so that all of them can manage all of these programs and projects. And I am pleased to report that all of them, even during these depressing times, have stayed the course.



## Senior Visiting Fellows

### National Artist for Literature Gemino H. Abad

Upon the invitation of the CCWLS, UP University Professor Emeritus Gémino H. Abad—now a National Artist for Literature—taught a Poetry Writing Workshop course in 2016 and 2017, as Senior Professorial Lecturer at the UST Graduate School. He also served as Senior Visiting Fellow at the CCWLS and has been a regular Senior Guest Panelist at the UST National Writers' Workshop for almost a decade.

### Eugene Gloria

Award-winning Filipino-American poet, Eugene Gloria, professor of English at DePauw University, received a Fulbright Lecturer Award to travel to Manila in 2017, where he was hosted by the CCWLS. He taught a Poetry Workshop course as Associate Professorial Lecturer of the UST Graduate School, and served as a CCWLS Senior Visiting Fellow. He also delivered a lecture on the craft of writing poetry at Benavides Building as part of the International Writers and Scholars Series, a regular program of the CCWLS.

### Bernardo Bernardo

At the invitation of the CCWLS, award-winning writer, actor, and director of stage, film, and television Bernardo Bernardo taught a course on Playwriting as Professorial Lecturer of the UST Graduate School while serving as Senior Visiting Fellow of the CCWLS. He also participated in various activities of the Center, including serving on the teaching panel of the National Writers' Workshop held in Baguio, mentoring pro bono the Teatro Tomasino, an undergraduate theatre group of the Faculty of Arts

and Letters, and directing the stage performance “Banyuhay: Bagong Anyo, Bagong Buhay.”

## Planning for the Next Decade

Shortly before the closing of the term, toward the end of October 2022, the Center held an in-person planning meeting in a seminar room at the Buenaventura Garcia Paredes, O.P. (BGPOP) Building at UST to discuss directions for the coming decade. It was an all-day meeting with meals served in the dining room of the University Hotel, 1611, sponsored by the Rector’s Office. A good way to end a year—no, almost three years—of not having been able to work face-to-face, at a time when the support of friends and colleagues was most needed.

We are deeply grateful for the University’s support of all our endeavors. We thank especially the Office of the Rector, the Office of the Vice-Rector, the Office of the Secretary-General, and the Office of the Vice-Rector for Finance. And we hope that we may continue to count on their guidance and support to enable us to fulfill our mandate to strengthen the literary culture not just of UST, but of the larger community, and thus contribute to the development of a national literature.

