My last year as Director of the Center for Philippine Studies has been perhaps the most memorable and significant of my four-year tenure. The year was marked by two very important events in the life of the CPS: our 40th year Anniversary celebrations, and the launching of our Study Abroad Program in Manila, Philippines. In 1975, Senate Resolution No. 14 of the Hawai‘i State Legislature, established the Center for Philippine Studies (CPS) at the University of Hawai‘i (UH), an academic program that capitalized on the strength of the faculty and academic and library resources at UH on Philippine and Filipino studies. Its founding recognized UH as a leading research center in Philippine and Filipino studies, and one that linked the contributions of Filipinos to the history of Hawai‘i and the United States to the complexities of a broader Philippine and diasporic experience. The CPS was the first institution dedicated to Philippine and Filipino Studies in the United States and the only institution in the United States that offered a comprehensive Philippine Studies academic program. After 40 years, it has established itself as a leading center for intellectual and academic exchange on Philippine and Filipino studies.

Last year the CPS Executive Council began preparations to ensure that the celebration of our 40 years of excellence would be truly memorable. In the spring of 2015, the CPS organized a series of academic and cultural events to mark this anniversary, including an international symposium, a community banquet, and a series of dance performances. Our celebrations commenced on April 8th, with a Distinguished Lecture by Dr. Alfred W. McCoy, J.R.W. Smail Professor of History at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, entitled *Covert Netherworld: An Invisible Arena for Contesting Global Power in the 21st Century*. McCoy’s lecture offered a novel and complex theoretical model of imperial power that linked the history of the Philippines to the transnational history of the American state.

On April 9th and 10th, an International Symposium was held at the Imin Center, UH-Manoa entitled *Philippine and Filipino Studies: Forty Years Hence*, which brought together the fields of Philippine Studies and Filipino diasporic studies in a genuine moment of intellectual exchange and dialogue. The conference featured more than a hundred prominent scholars in Philippine and Filipino Studies, many of whom have shaped the direction of their fields, as well as upcoming scholars and graduate students, who are currently reshaping their fields through novel, cutting edge research. Keynote lectures were delivered by Dr, McCoy (for Philippine Studies) and by Dr. Martin Manalansan (for Fil-Am Studies) of the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. Eminent scholars such as Warwick Anderson, Jun Aguilar, Michael Cullinane, Allan Isaac, Ed and Tesa Tadem, Bomen Guillermo, Roland Tolentino, Robyn Rodriguez, Steve McKay, and Theo Gonzalvez, among others, came from Spain, Australia, England, Canada, Japan, China, and the U.S. mainland, and covered a wide range of different regions and interests in Philippine and Filipino Studies. Their participation made the conference extremely exciting and stimulating. Hopefully, this will be the start of many more exchanges between scholars in these two growing and closely linked fields. For a full overview of the conference, please see:

https://cps40thanniversary.wordpress.com/
Our April events culminated in a fiesta celebration at the Filipino Community Center on April 11, 2015. The CPS has always been actively engaged with community matters and issues. In the last few years, it has hosted symposia on contemporary issues in the Philippines, such as the violence in Mindanao and the geopolitical conflicts around the Spratly Islands; provided speakers and resource people to support commemorative events in the community, such as the Fall of Bataan and Rizal Day, and spearheaded UH efforts to raise money after Philippine disasters. The fiesta provided an important opportunity to bring the Filipino and UH communities together in a celebration of our strong and beneficial relationship over the past 40 years. As our guest speaker for the occasion, we welcomed Mr. Tony Meloto, the founder of Gawad Kalinga, Philippines. Unfortunately, his speech and the subsequent statement of the CPS Executive Committee elicited a great deal of controversy. [For more on this controversy, see our Facebook page at https://www.facebook.com/UHM.CPS]. Notwithstanding this controversy, and the criticism the CPS faced from some quarters for publishing our statement, the entire event further validated the relevance of the CPS, and the important role we play in the cultural landscape, not only in Hawai‘i but in the Philippines.

Another milestone last year, was the launching of a semester-long Study Abroad program in Manila, Philippines. The idea of the Study Abroad Program in the Philippines is as old as the Center itself. It had long been the dream of those involved in the CPS to bring our UH students, especially our heritage students, to the Philippines—so they could experience first-hand its culture, its history, and the gifts and challenges of the contemporary society. Working with our partner institution, the Ateneo de Manila University, this program combines an excellent academic curriculum with cultural immersion activities, to give students a truly genuine Filipino experience. I am currently serving as the Resident Director of the program, and with me are six students—including four Filipino Americans—who are quickly settling in as students of the Ateneo, and residents of the hectic, challenging and exciting city of Manila. For more details on our program, see https://universityofhawaiistudyabroadphilippines.wordpress.com/.

Finally, I would like to thank everyone for the support that you've given me over the last four years. It was intimidating to take over from pioneers like Lindy Aquino and Ric Trimillos, but working with the many wonderful, and enthusiastic people who support the CPS has made the transition relatively smooth and productive, and definitely made my tenure worthwhile.

The CPS will be in good hands after my departure with the appointment of its new director, Dr. Patricio “Jojo” Abinales, Professor in the Department of Asian Studies, who has tirelessly served on the Executive Council for the past 4 years. I have no doubt Jojo will do an excellent job as he shapes his own vision and plans for the Center, and I hope you will all support him with the same generosity you have extended to me. Mabuhay and Good Luck, Jojo!

Mahalo nui loa, Maraming Salamat and see you around...

Much Aloha,

Vina