

## **Priscilla Szeto – Alay Coordinator**

My name is Priscilla Szeto and I am currently a third-year Global Literature student. The longer I attended UCSC, the more and more I have come to respect the FSA community. Up until college, I have never seen a student initiated and student ran organization so committed and consistent to their mission statement of promoting unity and empowerment through awareness of our diverse community. This is a group of people who believe in promoting unity and strength through understanding and respecting the different cultures surrounding our everyday lives; yet at the same time is still able to retain the culture we were born into. Having this kind of community in our university is important to me because sometimes it scares me how strongly we, underrepresented students of color, desire to successfully assimilate within the “American culture” to such an extent that oftentimes, we end up neglecting our own ethnic culture. FSA, to me, is an open space that not only strives to promote pride and awareness of the Filipin@ culture, but is one that embraces, appreciates and inclusive of different cultures as well. In a way, FSA serves as a utopian model of how I have always envisioned our university should be, and because of that, I want to take an active part of this community.

This year, I had the opportunity to be Alay’s intern and witness for myself the impact that creative expression has for our individuality. I had the privilege of working with Alay co-coordinators Jade and Leann, two incredibly soulful individuals that inspire me with their desire for social change through creative mediums such as spoken word, poetry, art and music. As a literature fanatic, I, myself also practice creative writing as a form of expression, stress reliever and emotional release. Understanding the importance of creative expressions, I feel that I make an appropriate fit as your Alay Coordinator. I have faith in the benefits of expressing our struggles, emotions and desires through different creative methods. If placed in the position, I want to continue to provide open forums and activities where both the FSA community and the whole UCSC community can actively take part in the creative process and be the performance, rather than sitting passively as an audience. May it be open-mics, guest speakers, events that offer exposure to our culture’s traditions or activities that help give clarity to issues we find difficult to translate on paper, music, art, and other creative arenas, the possibility is endless and I want to take on this position to help inspire our whole community to continue actively channeling what we oftentimes repress within ourselves because we can’t find the appropriate medium to release it. My goal is to add a firmer, yet still flexible structure to Alay, to form and also actively utilize and rely on the “Alay committee” to take part intimately in all the Alay events and activities throughout the year. I also have ambitions to help the aspect continue growing and slowly take on a heavier role within the FSA community. I hope to create an inclusive environment, one with open arms that appreciate and promote creative expression with all different cultures. With Alay, I want to help continue to promote unity and empowerment in our diverse community, to provide different methods of educating ourselves on both the beauty and struggles of our cultures and other cultures as well, whether it be contemporary or historical.

I have many past leadership experiences that make me an appropriate fit as your Alay Coordinator. I was a Community Assistant for Oakes College during my sophomore year at UCSC. As a Community Assistant, I would create and facilitate up to five events per quarter, all towards instilling a sense of community and

appreciation of diversity within my college. I was also the co-head of last year's winter quarter Solidarity Tongue, an open-mic forum where the theme focused on the misconceptions of our college. My position as a student programmer helped me learn the importance of promoting unity within a community. My experience as an Oakes staff member is beneficial for me as well towards being an Alay Coordinator because not only am I acquainted with the logistics of handling large-scale events, but I am also familiar with school protocol, paperwork and the requirements to have events on campus. To become a Community Assistant, I had to go through sensitivity training and learn to practice and enforce community agreements; these skills will be useful to me if I were to become Alay Coordinator, for I can appropriately relate and know how to be respectful and sensitive to everyone's creative works. Aside from leadership and delegation skills, I also have experience with creative writing and publication as well. During my senior year of high school, I was responsible for the publication of our school's annual creative writing anthology. I handled submissions, procedures and the overall production of the anthology. My experience in creating the annual creative writing anthology will be beneficial seeing as one of Alay's constitutional responsibilities is to produce Alay's Annual Literary Journal.

I consider myself a student activist, because with my words, I am not afraid to express my dissatisfactions or issues I have or see in my community. I want to be your Alay coordinator and help each and every student realize that FSA is a community of people that embraces, appreciates and encourage everybody's internal desire to express our everyday cultural, physical and mental struggles and emotions. All and all, I believe that I have the passion, enthusiasm and leadership experience for the position. So vote for me and you will not be sorry!