

## EDITORIAL

# Revitalizing the Graduate Program of the UP SLIS

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**I**t has been an eventful year for the University of the Philippines School of Library and Information Studies (UP SLIS). The year 2021 started with an optimism to overcome the pandemic and finally go back to normal—or rather, to courageously face the “new normal” with hope and eagerness. This year also marks the 60th founding anniversary of the UP SLIS as a degree-granting academic unit. Since its establishment, UP SLIS has been recognized as the premier higher education institution in the Philippines that offers courses on library and information science, archival studies, records management, information systems, and other areas related to library and information work. The UP SLIS has been awarded the Center of Excellence in Library and Information Science by the Philippine Commission on Higher Education (CHED) because of its faculty and student profile, research productivity, and major contributions to the field. The UP SLIS is also an active member of the iSchool Consortium and Southeast Asia Pacific Audiovisual Archives Association (SEAPAVAA), and has been consistently participating in various international conferences and research activities facilitated by different academic and professional organizations.

Due to the pandemic, we have faced many challenges in providing educational, administrative and emotional support to our students, faculty and staff, as well as extension services and assistance to our colleagues in the profession. But the UP SLIS continues to thrive and devise ways and ideas to uphold honor and excellence, and fulfill its vital role in educating and training more librarians and information professionals who fully recognize their

responsibilities as “laybraryan ng bayan, para sa bayan.” With our mandate as an educational institution, the UP SLIS faculty members constantly revisit our pedagogical approaches to keep up with the times and the shifting demands of the field. Just recently, the Master of Library and Information Science (MLIS) program of UP SLIS has been revised and approved by the university effective academic year 2022-2023. The revised MLIS program is in line with the vision statement of the UP SLIS and the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions’ foundational knowledge areas in LIS education programs. New courses, particularly Critical Theory for Librarianship and Information Science, Project Management for Library and Information Professionals, Special Topics in Library and Information Science, and Qualitative Methods in Library and Information Science have been instituted to further enrich theory, specialization, and research components of the degree program. The LIS elective and cognate courses were reclassified as electives to provide wider options for students to acquire graduate courses as applicable to their chosen field of specialization or simply for enrichment. Also, in compliance with CHED Memorandum Order No. 15, series of 2019, as instructed by the UP Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs, the name of the MLIS program for its the thesis option has been changed to Master of Science in Library and Information Science (MSLIS).

Part of the vision of the UP SLIS is to reach out to our neighboring countries for further collaborations in terms of education, research, and practice. To fulfill that vision, the UP SLIS continuously improves its curricular offerings and research

activities to broaden its direction and address the needs of the profession. One of the major and most recent accomplishments of the UP SLIS is the university's approval of the Master in Archives and Records Management (MARM) program. MARM, the first of its kind in the Philippines and in the region, is a two-year graduate program that provides students with the knowledge and skills required to work in and develop archives, special collections, record centers, and other memory and collecting institutions. Commencing this coming academic year 2022-2023, this program addresses the need for formal education on archives and recordkeeping in the country and in the region. The plan of having a graduate program on archives and records management separate from MLIS already started decades ago with the former deans and archives lecturers of UP SLIS. The "rebirth" of the proposal took place around three to four years ago, when the faculty complement of the UP SLIS was deemed sufficient in terms of number, experience, and academic degrees to offer a new graduate program specific to archival studies and records management. The main proponents of the MARM program are Iyra Buenrostro-Cabbab, Mary Grace Golfo-Barcelona (current UP SLIS Dean), Jonathan Isip, Benedict Olgado, and with the assistance of Kathleen Lourdes Obille (former UP SLIS Dean). Prior to the writing of the actual proposal to be submitted to the curriculum committee of the university for a series of deliberations, the main proponents conducted a demand survey in 2019 to find out the nature of potential enrollees and their expectations. The proponents made sure that the topics, learning outcomes and activities per course, and summative assessments to be done are in line with the survey results, national and regional contexts, international models and practices in archival studies and records management education, and the standards used by the university and CHED.

A formal education on archiving and recordkeeping will help institutionalize the importance of records and archives, as well as in obtaining support from various sectors to enrich activities associated with these essential resources. Alongside the pragmatic, business and functional aspects of records management, the MARM program also covers topics and issues that are central to archival studies and community engagement such as preservation and promotion of our cultural heritage, collective memory, and identity. As this program will provide students with strong theoretical and practical foundations on the effective, efficient, and ethical management of records and archival materials, the

students will have a more balanced perspective that will help them come up with informed decisions as to the use and management of archives and records.

With the new and revised graduate programs to be offered starting academic year 2022-2023 (i.e., MLIS, MSLIS, MARM), the UP SLIS maintains its mission to deliver outstanding graduate LIS education in the country and in the Southeast Asian region. It is also hoped by the UP SLIS that, for the next years to come, it remains as a significant contributor in meeting the demands of the discipline and industry through its well-rounded graduates who are prepared to conceptualize and provide solutions for information-related concerns and who can be leaders and innovators in the field.



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