

EDITORIAL

From JPL to PhJLIS: Leaving the Door Open for New Beginnings

Iyra S. Buenrostro, Ph.D.
Editor-in-Chief

The 39th volume opens a new chapter for the country's longest-running refereed LIS journal. The **Philippine Journal of Librarianship and Information Studies (PhJLIS)** may have assumed a new name, but not entirely a new role. The Journal's role as an intellectual leader through the publication and dissemination of researches about and/or towards the development of theory and praxis of librarianship in the Philippines still remains – but with significant reformations. Its predecessor, the **Journal of Philippine Librarianship (JPL)**, began this agenda on March 1968 as it set to be a semi-annual publication that would cover topics on the “extent of thinking, awareness, problems, and challenges of the Filipino librarians” (Furbeyre, 1968, p. iii). The focus of the earlier articles published in JPL was mainly on the nature and organization of Philippine materials, and profile and education of Filipino librarians. The authors and former editors were mostly faculty, students and alumni of the **University of the Philippines School of Library and Information Studies (UP SLIS)**¹, which had hosted JPL for five decades (Obille, 2018). The concentration of JPL on the practice of librarianship in the Philippines by Filipino librarians limited the scope of the Journal, hence the need to decline previous submissions that did not fit in this rather indiscernible definition of *Philippine Librarianship*. One may ask, is Philippine librarianship simply the exercise of the library profession in our geographic area or is there a unique quality that delineates Philippine librarianship from other types of

librarianship? (Obille & Buenrostro, 2015). This is not to say, however, that the initial focus or agenda of JPL is inoperable for this generation of LIS scholars and practitioners. With the existing need to have more literature in and about the practice of LIS and related disciplines in the Philippines, this agenda will still be reflected in the succeeding volumes of PhJLIS but we are opening our door for submissions from different parts of the globe with a wide array of conceptual and practical topics on librarianship and information.

The plan for the internationalization and making the Journal extensively recognized in terms of LIS scholarship already began a decade ago by aiming for a more timely release of volumes and issues, inviting more authors to submit their articles, and having an international advisory board. The plan did not immediately materialize due to lack of manpower and resources. The faculty members who have been in charge of the Journal's operations are most of time overwhelmed with teaching, research and extension work, and services to the university and community. The JPL has also been operating with zero budget, since it has become available online and an open access journal in 2007. As we had already accepted the fact that something had to be done to further improve JPL, the Journal's status quo was preserved for the past years. However, the drive to promptly take action to re-evaluate and enhance the Journal happened during the IFLA Satellite Meeting in LIS Education that I and Prof. Johann Frederick Cabbab

¹ Formerly Institute of Library Science (ILS), and Institute of Library and Information Science (ILIS).

attended last August 23, 2018. The meeting/workshop to institute collaborations in curriculum development and publishing activities within the LIS schools in the region was hosted by the University of Malaya in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. While the UP SLIS' curricular offerings are up-to-date and our students and graduates are becoming more globally competitive, the research and publication aspect of the School still needs to be tackled and revamped. Many of the participants, mostly faculty members and editors of LIS journals in their respective countries, were very surprised to know that the Philippines has a library journal that has been in existence since 1968. The discussions resulted in recommendations and plans for collaboration among different LIS journals in Asia, particularly in the Philippines, Malaysia and Pakistan. One of the main goals is for the LIS journals in Southeast Asia to be indexed in the ASEAN Citation Index, Scopus, and ISI (Web of Science). Another plan is to have a 'sister' journal, wherein there can be joint editorship to increase the diversity of articles to be included in the publication. I was told by the fellow editors that the Philippines has a very big potential because of our proficiency in English and the long, dynamic history of the JPL.

The change of name and scope of JPL to PhJLIS, as unanimously decided during the UP SLIS Executive Committee Meeting last October 25, 2018, is one of the many steps that the UP SLIS is undertaking to strengthen its place as the premier library and information school in the region. More importantly, this move signifies the School's unremitting pursuit for excellence in servicing the LIS profession and community. We acknowledge that this road will be challenging and these bold plans may not instantly guarantee success. But, we are just leaving and keeping the door open for exciting possibilities.

References:

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