The University of Santo Tomas
Bachelor of Library and Information Science Program

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Abstract

The Bachelor of Library and Information Science (BLIS) program of the University of Santo Tomas (UST) is a four-year program that prepares students to develop, deploy and manage information resources in print, non-print, electronic, and digital formats. It trains students to apply information technology to basic library operations and functions; to systematically organize, conserve, and preserve information objects, historical and cultural documents, and other intellectual properties; and to harness bibliographical and online tools to support teaching, research, and other services. The program is fortunate to have made significant leaps in the last 12 years. But as new challenges arrive, it commits itself to continuous quality improvement. The program will strive to remain at par with local and international standards. It shall continue supporting the strategic directions and advocacies of the University and produce world-class competent, committed, and compassionate information professionals who make significant contributions to society.

Keywords: Bachelor of Library and Information Science, LIS curriculum, Library and information science education, Library education and training, Philippines

INTRODUCTION

The evolving demands from information professionals and the field itself brought about by constant technology innovations necessitate library and information science (LIS) schools to continually assess the adequacy of the learning opportunities provided for students. With the integration of information and communications technology (ICT) in library services, prospective information professionals are expected to possess the necessary competencies for effective and efficient knowledge management. According to Derakhshan et al. (2014), the foundations for these competencies are laid in LIS education programs. The quality of education and training they received will help develop skills to meet the challenges of the information society. Attainment of these skills and competencies is crucial to prepare them for employment in various institutions after graduation.

The Bachelor of Library and Information Science (BLIS) program of the University of Santo Tomas (UST) is a four-year program that prepares students to develop, deploy and manage information resources in print, non-print, electronic, and digital formats. The program trains students to apply information technology to basic library operations and functions; to systematically organize, conserve, and preserve

information objects, historical and cultural documents, and other intellectual properties; and to harness bibliographical and online tools to support teaching, research, and other services. It culminates with a one-year practicum/on-the-job training (OJT) at the University of Santo Tomas Miguel de Benavides Library, and in libraries and information centers in public and private sectors outside the University (University of Santo Tomas, 2021). The BLIS program endeavors to produce librarians and information professionals imbued with the Thomasian core values of competence, commitment, and compassion. All curricular and co-curricular activities are aimed to imbibe the SEAL of Thomasian Education (Servant Leader, Effective Communicator and Collaborator, Analytical and Creative Thinker, and Lifelong Learner) and are geared towards the achievement of the Thomasian Graduate Attributes (ThoGAs).

This paper will provide an overview of the UST BLIS program. It will focus on curriculum development and the significant milestones in the past 16 years (2005–2021) since its offshoot from the Bachelor of Secondary Education (BSE) program. Data on BLIS course offerings, the Librarian Licensure Examination (LLE) results from 2009 to 2019, and alumni's

Table 1
Library Science Curriculum (1947-1948)

Library Science *(Minor: 12 Units)*
Library Science 1 Orientation: a. Library methods b. Library economy c. Library practice
Library Science 3 Book Selections: a. Book review b. Book evaluation
Library Science 4 Elem. Classification
Library Science 5 Elem. Cataloging

perceptions about the LIS curriculum will be presented.

**BRIEF HISTORY OF
LIBRARY SCIENCE EDUCATION**
Library science education in UST started when library science courses were first offered as electives in 1934 (Damaso, 1966). Library science was offered as a minor specialization under the BSE program beginning school year 1947-1948 (Paradera, 1948). It was later developed as a full course on library education at the undergraduate level (Cabañero & Tann, 1980). Students were required to finish 12 units of courses on library methods, economy and practice, book selections, elementary classification, and elementary cataloging. Table 1 shows the required units and the course descriptions.

Since its inception, the library science curriculum underwent revisions influenced by the provisions of Republic Act (RA) 6966 or otherwise known as the "Philippine Librarianship Act." Approved on September 19, 1990, the Act regulated the practice of librarianship and prescribed the qualifications of librarians. It stipulated that no person shall practice librarianship in the Philippines without a certificate of registration issued by the Professional Regulatory Board for Librarians (PRBFL) obtained through a written licensure examination (Republic Act No. 6966, 1990). RA 6966 was later repealed by RA 9246 known as "The Philippine Librarianship Act of 2003," which was approved on February 19, 2004 (Professional Regulation Commission Board for Librarians, 2004).

The scope of librarianship practice and licensure examination specified in RA 6966 and RA 9246 served as the basis for the library science curriculum. The scope of the licensure examination for librarianship was covered in the curricular offerings, specifically, selection and acquisition of multi-media sources of information; cataloging and classification; indexing and abstracting; reference, bibliography and information services; organization, management, and development of multimedia-based library or information service, laws, trends and practices affecting the profession; and information technology.

As a field of specialization under the BSE program, students were required to take up 79 units of General Education courses (including institutional courses, such as Theology), 39 units of Professional Education courses, and 30 units of Library Science specialization courses (including 6 units of electives). During their second year, the students will start taking up Library Science specialization courses. The curriculum required them to take up courses on theories, methods, and strategies on education such as Facilitating Learning, Principles of Teaching, Social Dimensions of Education, Assessment of Student Learning, Curriculum Development, Educational Technology, and Field Study courses. Library practicum is undertaken during the senior student's final year, both in-campus and off-campus. The number of practicum hours required per semester was 150.

Table 2 shows the professional Library Science courses offered in the BSE-LS program.

CURRICULUM REVISIONS
The BLIS curriculum ensures quality instructional delivery by complying with the Commission on Higher Education's (CHED) prescribed curricula. In revising the curriculum, the recommendations and feedback from library practitioners, partner institutions, and alumni are integrated. For the past 16 years, the BLIS program made significant curriculum revisions based on two memorandum orders issued by the Commission, specifically, CHED Memorandum Order (CMO) no. 08, series of 2005, and CMO no. 24, series of 2015.

CMO No. 08, Series of 2005
In 2005, CHED released CMO no. 8, series of 2005 entitled "Policies and Standards for Bachelor of Library and Information Science (BLIS) Program," which mandated the offering of BSE major in Library

Table 2

Library Science Courses in the Bachelor of Secondary Education-Library Science Program

LIS Courses	
Course Title	Units
Introduction to Library and Information Science	3
Building Library Collections	3
Organization of Information Sources and Services I	3
Organization of Information Sources and Services II	3
Information Sources and Services I	3
Library and Information Management I	3
Abstracting and Indexing	3
Information Technology I	3
Electives (6 units only)	
Course Title	Units
Information Sources and Services II	3
Information Technology II	3
Research Methods in Library and Information Science	3
Special Materials	3
Literature for Children and Young Adults	3
School Library Media Center	3
Academic Libraries	3
Special Libraries	3
Public Libraries	3
Archives Management	3
Records Management	3
Library Practicum	
Course Title	Units
Library Practicum 1	3
Library Practicum 2	3

Science as a separate degree program. In compliance, the library science major of the Bachelor of Secondary Education program became the BLIS program in 2006. Among the salient features of the curriculum stated in the said CMO are the provision for the mastery of the basic subjects such as Library and Information Organization and Management; the addition of topics in vital information and communication technologies crucial in the LIS program; enriched specialization component such as law, health and medical, academic, special, school and public librarianship; and the provision for community exposure through field-based experiences (Commission on Higher Education, 2005).

The BLIS program carried out the CMO's stated objectives: to provide prospective information professionals with the necessary competencies essential for effective provision and delivery of library and information services (Commission on Higher Education, 2005). It equipped students with competencies and skills for better organization of library resources using an outcomes-based approach to teaching and learning. Further, the program aimed to mold information professionals who are compassionate and responsive to the needs of the less-privileged, and committed to the service of the Church.

In this curriculum, students enrolled started taking up LIS professional courses in their second year. They were required to take up 92 units of General Education courses (including institutional courses, such as Theology), 9 units of Professional Education or core courses, and 78 units of Library and Information Science courses. In addition, the Library Practicum hours required from a senior BLIS student increased from 150 to 200 hours. Table 3 shows the curriculum implemented from academic year (AY) 2006 to 2019.

Table 3

Library and Information Science Courses (Effective: AY 2006–2007 to AY 2018–2019)

Course Title	Units
Introduction to Library and Information Science	3
Collection Development	3
Organization of Information Sources I	3
Organization of Information Sources II	3
Information Sources and Services I	3
Library and Information Management I	3
Indexing and Abstracting I	3
Information Technology I	3
Information Sources and Services II	3
Information Technology II	3
Research Methods in Library and Information Science	3
Special Materials	3
Literature for Children and Young Adults	3
School Libraries and Media Center	3
Academic Libraries	3
Special Libraries	3
Public Libraries	3
Archives and Records Management	3
Collection Management	3
Information Sources and Services III	3
Indexing and Abstracting II	3
Information Technology III	3
Organization and Information Sources III	3
Library and Information Management II	3
Library Practicum 1	3
Library Practicum 2	3

Tinipunan, M. P. M. (2021). The University of Santo Tomas Bachelor of Library and Information Science program. *Philippine Journal of Librarianship and Information Studies, 41* (1), 63-69.

65

CMO No. 24, Series of 2015

In 2015, CHED released CMO no. 24, series of 2015, which revised the policies, standards, and guidelines (PSG) for the BLIS program. Among the salient features identified in the CMO is the implementation of competency-based standards or outcomes-based education, which puts a premium on learning outcomes. The CMO stated that the guidelines for the professional library/information education program of the International Federation of the Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) and the curricula of library schools abroad were the basis of the revisions made on the 2015 BLIS curriculum (Commission on Higher Education, 2015a).

The BLIS curriculum was revised in compliance with CHED. It was crafted with the help of the BLIS faculty members, university administrators, other stakeholders, and alumni. In the 2019 graduate tracer study (Tinipunan et al., 2019), BLIS alumni respondents suggested having more hands-on activities on specific LIS courses (i.e., IT, Archives, Indexing and Abstracting, and Cataloging), more exposure to the actual library environment and professional organizations activities, and the inclusion of specialization courses in the curriculum. Recommendations were integrated into the curriculum which was finalized in AY 2018-2019 and implemented in AY 2019-2020.

The CMO prescribed additional 18 units of Information Technology courses and 21 units of Special Topics. In this curriculum, students enrolled shall start taking up professional LIS courses in their first year. They are required to take up 65 units of General Education (including electives and institutional courses, such as Theology), 45 units of LIS Core courses, 18 units of ICT courses, 21 units of Special Topics, and 18 units Cognates. Further, CMO no. 20 series of 2013 prescribing the General Education Curriculum was followed in the selection of General Education courses.

The competency standards and program outcomes identified in the PSG were selected as the BLIS program's intended learning outcomes (ILO) and are constructively aligned to the Institutional Outcomes (Competence, Commitment, and Compassion), SEAL of Thomasian Education (Servant Leader, Effective Communicator and Collaborator, Analytical and Creative Thinker, and Lifelong Learner), and Thomasian Graduate Attributes (ThoGAs).

Table 4 shows the LIS curricular offerings, as prescribed by CMO no. 24, series of 2015.

Table 4

Library and Information Science Courses (Effective AY 2018)

LIS Courses	
Course Title	Units
Introduction to Library and Information Science	3
Collection Management of Information Resources	3
Information Resources and Services I	3
Information Resources and Services II	3
Organization of Information Resources I	3
Organization of Information Resources II	3
Indexing and Abstracting	3
Management of Libraries and Information Centers	3
Information Literacy	3
Library Materials for Children and Young Adults	3
Introduction to Records Management and Archives	3
Research Methods in Library and Information Science	3
Thesis/Research Writing	3
Library Practice I	3
Library Practice II	3
School/Academic Librarianship	3
Special/Public Librarianship	3
Preservation of Information Resources	3
Philosophies and Principles of Teaching	3
Educational Technology	3
Indigenous Knowledge and Multi-Culturalism	3
Foreign Language	3
Statistical Methods in Library and Information Science	3
Educational Technology 2	3
Technology in Libraries and Information Centers	3
Philosophies and Principles of Teaching 2	3
Collection Management of Information Resources II	3
ICT Courses	
Course Title	Units
Information Processing and Handling in Libraries and Information Centers	3
Web Technologies in Libraries and Information Centers (Lecture and Laboratory)	3
Digital Libraries and Resources	3
Programming Fundamentals (Lecture and Laboratory)	3
Systems Analysis and Design in Libraries and Information Centers	3
Database Design for Libraries (Lecture and Laboratory)	3

LIS FACULTY PROFILE

There is only one section for the BLIS program across year levels, a highly competent academic staff mentors them. The current BLIS academic staff is composed of one full-time tenured faculty member and three part-time faculty members. One faculty member has a doctoral degree in education, while three faculty members have attained their master's degree in library science. In terms of their bachelor's degree, three out of four faculty members are holders of a bachelor's degree in secondary education major in library science. On the other hand, one faculty member holds a bachelor's degree in banking and finance.

The academic staff are active members of professional organizations and engage in continuing professional education locally and internationally. Aside from their teaching experience, they have extensive library work experiences and are seasoned top-level administrators. They are also known trainers/resource speakers in their areas of expertise.

COMPETENCIES AND SKILLS DEVELOPED AMONG THE STUDENTS

In 2019, a graduate tracer study (Tinipunan et al., 2019) was conducted to determine the employability of the BLIS graduates, to assess the relevance of their educational attainment to their present careers, and to examine their perceptions about the LIS curriculum. The descriptive study is premised on the National Competency-based Standards for Filipino Librarians (Professional Regulatory Board for Librarians, 2015), which enumerates the professional and personal competencies required for Filipino librarians in terms of managing information resources, services and organizations, information tools and techniques. The study aims to determine the employability of the BLIS graduates of the UST College of Education, to assess the relevance of their educational attainment to their present careers, and to examine their perceptions about the LIS curriculum. Findings reveal that 82.1% of the respondents were hired immediately after graduation. Majority of the respondents work in the private sector (85.5%) and indicated a university library (29%) as their area of employment. The majority of the respondents identified values and ethics (76) and communication skills (71) as the personal competencies/skills learned in college that is perceived as "very useful" in their employment. On the other hand, professional competencies ranked as "very useful" are reference or information skills, followed by technical skills (i.e., cataloging, selection and acquisition), and information literacy and policy formulation. Majority of the respondents reported that they have received "excellent" quality education from the college, particularly through the BLIS program, in preparing them for workforce. Further, 57.7% (45) of the respondents ranked "excellent" as their satisfaction for the overall quality education they received from the College of Education and the University. Respondents also identified activities in their library management and collection development courses as "very helpful" in preparing them for the workforce.

GRADUATES' PERFORMANCE IN THE LIBRARIAN LICENSURE EXAMINATION

The results of the LLE administered by the PRBFL is one of the quality measurements used to gauge the adequacy of the BLIS program's instructional delivery. Results of the LLE were analyzed to determine the level of achievement of its intended learning outcomes.

Table 5 shows UST's passing rate for the last 12 years, specifically the years that the BLIS was offered separately from the BSE program.

Data shows that UST's passing rate is consistently above the national passing rate (NPR). It also indicates that the program has produced LLE topnotchers for the last years. Analysis of data imply high efficacy of teaching strategies employed by the academic staff and good practices in instructional delivery which could have contributed to the graduates' chances of passing the LLE. Due to enrollment gaps, it is projected that the next batch of BLIS graduates who will take the LLE will be on the year 2023.

Table 5

UST's Performance in the Librarian Licensure Examination from 2009 to 2019

Year	UST's Passing Rate	National Passing Rate	Top Performing School Rank	No. of Board Topnotcher/s
2009	61.00%	29.98%		1
2010	53.85%	27.32%		1
2011	38.78%	27.61%		
2012	81.58%	46.67%	Rank 3	
2013	81.82%	45.80%	Rank 2	1
2014	42.86%	27.95%		
2015	87.88%	47.03%	Rank 2	
2016	94.44%	64.73%	Rank 2	1
2017	90.00%	60.28%	Rank 2	3
2018	97.37%	49.00%		2
2019	90.32%	55.17%	Rank 3	1

Note. Data from the PRC website (https://www.prc.gov.ph).

Tinipunan, M. P. M. (2021). The University of Santo Tomas Bachelor of Library and Information Science program. *Philippine Journal of Librarianship and Information Studies, 41* (1), 63-69.

67

ACTIVITIES AND MILESTONES (2005 TO 2021)

Being declared a Center of Development in Library and Information Science in 2015 (Commission on Higher Education, 2015b) is one of the BLIS program's milestones. Additionally, the Philippine Association of Colleges and Universities Commission on Accreditation (PACUCOA) granted Level II First Reaccredited status in 2019. Gaining accreditation ensured quality and gave assurance that the program met the levels of quality set by the accrediting agencies.

Internationalization became one of the major thrusts of the University. Librarians abroad and with international working experience were invited to share their wisdom and best practices with students. Mr. John Hickok, a faculty librarian/instructor at California State University, Fullerton, USA, became a visiting lecturer in 2016. Using a team-teaching approach, he handled the course "Reference Source and Services" for three months. Other foreign speakers who have visited the University are Prof. Brendan Luyt of Nanyang Technological University, Singapore, and Prof. Yuen-Hsien Tseng, Ph.D. of National Taiwan Normal University. They were invited as resource speakers during the "LIS Colloquies" in 2017 and 2018, respectively. In AY 2020-2021, Filipino librarians practicing abroad were also invited as resource speakers in department-sponsored webinars. Among them are Ms. Regine Mamburam-Choresca of SAE Institute, Dubai; Mr. Joseph M. Yap of Nazarbayev Library, Kazakhstan; and Mr. Darrel Manuel O. Marco, an Erasmus Mundus International Master's Program of University of Glasgow, Aarhus University, and Tilburg University. They generously shared their experiences as Filipino librarians working/studying abroad to undergraduate students and professional librarians who attended the webinars.

Local linkages with institutions are forged for students' off-campus OJT. Partnerships in public and private sectors are established via memoranda of agreement, providing a venue for senior students to practice theoretical knowledge learned in the classroom to the actual field. Among the BLIS program's partner institutions as of AY 2018-2020 are the following: Asian Institute of Management, Makati; Far Eastern University Diliman, Quezon City; Lyceum of the Philippines University, Manila; Saint Jude Catholic School, Manila; Saint Theresa's College of Quezon City; Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) Innotech, Quezon City; and UST Angelicum College, Quezon City.

With the addition of ICT courses in the curriculum, the BLIS program enhances students' IT skills through close collaboration with IT experts from the UST Institute of Information and Computing Sciences (IICS). Further, the IICS faculty members handle IT courses in the BLIS program. In 2019, the "IT Skills Development Workshop" series was first organized. Workshop topics are Java programming, database management systems, Web applications development, and digital library software and resources.

The BLIS program supports the advocacies of the University by extending its assistance to the less fortunate through community development activities. These activities are spearheaded by the Library and Information Science Students' Association (LISSA), the official student organization of the BLIS program. The student leaders closely coordinate with UST-SIMBAHAYAN Community Development Office in identifying the actual needs of target communities. LIS courses employ a service-learning approach to support outreach projects through course requirements to benefit the partner communities. The following are some activities LISSA has conducted for the past 12 years: organizing community libraries; conduct storytelling sessions; conducting literacy and numeracy lessons; school supplies and book donation drives; classroom renovation; and participating in tree planting activities. Sustainability of efforts is measured through post-evaluation of community activities.

CONCLUSION

The BLIS program is fortunate to have made significant leaps in the last 12 years. But as new challenges arrive, it commits itself to continuous quality improvement. The program will strive to remain at par with local and international standards. It shall continue supporting the strategic directions and advocacies of the University and produce world-class competent, committed, and compassionate information professionals who make significant contributions to society.
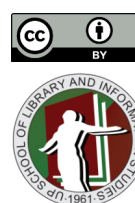
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69