

# The Bachelor of Library and Information Science Program of the University of San Agustin

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## Abstract

*The University of San Agustin (USA) is a Catholic Augustinian University located in Gen. Luna Street, Iloilo City. It is one of the universities in Iloilo City that offers Bachelor of Library and Information Science. The program offers BLIS since 2000 up to the present. It aims to provide quality education through updating of its curriculum and accreditation, enhancing its faculty competence, and promoting the BLIS program in fulfillment of the mission of Virtues et Scientia of the USA academic community to serve Western Visayas, the Philippines, and the world.*

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

## HISTORY

In 1998, library science was offered as one of the major courses in the Bachelor of Secondary Education (BSED) program of the University of San Agustin (USA). With the implementation of Republic Act 6966 (also known as the “Philippine Librarianship Act”), the law regulating the practice of librarians, the University strongly recommended the conversion of the BSED major in Library Science program to Bachelor of Library and Information Science (BLIS) in 1999. The offering and conversion of the program was made possible through the initiative and hard work of Ms. Regina A. Maligad, RL, MSLS, who was then the former director of the University Learning Resource Center.

In July 2000, the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) authorized USA to open the BLIS program under Government Permit no. 43, series of 2000 and was granted to operate last April 9, 2003 with the Government Recognition no. 006, series of 2003.

The College of Education, now the College of Liberal Arts, Sciences, and Education (CLASE) produced the first batch of graduates in 2004. Since then, USA provided highly competitive Augustinian librarians who are currently employed in various libraries and information centers here and abroad. Moreover, two of the library science graduates, Mrs. Nora Padilla-Rose, third placer (2000), and Mrs. Prosamel Natividad-Salcedo, eighth placer (1999), were among the topnotchers in the Librarian Licensure Examination (LLE) of the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC). This proves that the University is soaring high and living its legacy through the years.

In 2012, under the administration of Fr. Frederick C. Comendador, O.S.A., the appointment of Dr. Reysa Alenzuela, RL, as the first BLIS academic coordinator was realized. From April 2014 up to the present, Mrs. Cozette C. Gregorios, RL, MSLIS succeeded the academic supervisor/

program coordinator position. Mrs. Gregorios has continued to promote the BLIS program in fulfillment of the mission of *Virtus et Scientia* of the USA academic community to serve Western Visayas, the Philippines, and the world.

### CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

USA aims to provide quality education through accreditation. The BLIS program undergone preliminary visit by the Philippine Association of Colleges and Universities Commission on Accreditation (PACUCOA) last February 5-7, 2018 and was granted candidate status last March 2018-2020. This was made possible through the support of the administration, CLASE, BLIS faculty, students and alumni. Despite the pandemic, the program pursues its application for level I accreditation this year.

### PROFILE AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF FACULTY MEMBERS

In the pursuit of academic excellence, the program provides competent and qualified librarians to teach in the program. The BLIS program has a very good faculty profile since it was offered way back in 2004. Mostly of the faculty members are master's degree holders, and some are doctorate degree holders. It is noteworthy to mention some of the faculty members who are no longer connected with the University but has great contributions to the success of the program. They are:

- Ms. Regina A. Maligad, RL, MSLS, the former director of USA Learning Resource Center;
- Mrs. Prosamel S. Natividad, RL, MSLS, the former cataloger of the USA Learning Resource Center and now connected with the University of the Philippines Visayas-Iloilo as College Librarian III;
- Mrs. Cynthia Deza, RL, MSLS, the former head librarian at West Visayas State University;
- Mrs. Teresita A. Natividad, RL, MLIS, the former head librarian at Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center Aquaculture

Department (SEAFDEC/AQD);

- Dr. Reysa Alenzuela, RL, the former BLIS academic coordinator, former director at Thomas Jefferson Information Center, former Expert Manager at Nazarbayev University Library and currently working at Oriental Institute of the Academy of Science in Czech Republic; and
- Mr. Stephen B. Alayon, RL, MLIS, the 2020 PRC Outstanding Professional of the Year Awardee (Librarian) and presently connected with SEAFDEC/AQD as Information Specialist II (head).

At present, most of the faculty members are alumni of BLIS, namely:

- Mrs. Cozette C. Gregorios, RL, MSLIS, BLIS Academic Supervisor and former Graduate School Librarian of the USA Learning Resource Center;
- Ms. Rhea L. Espina, RL, MSLIS, Director of USA Learning Resources Center;
- Mr. Edmar T. Labrador, RL, MLIS, the current Graduate School Librarian; and
- Mrs. Analiza Rosales, RL, MLIS, a part-time faculty member and also affiliated with West Visayas State University-Pototan Campus.

The BLIS faculty are also members of professional organizations such as the Philippine Librarians Association, Inc. (PLAI), Philippine Association of Teachers of Library and Information Science, Inc. (PATLS), and the Philippine Group of Law Librarians, Inc. (PGLL). The University is also a member of the Council of Deans and Heads of Library and Information Science Schools (CODHLIS).

Aside from being Academic Supervisor, Mrs. Gregorios is a member of the CHED Regional Quality Assessment Team (RQAT) Region VI, a member of the Internal Quality Audit Team of the University, and an officer of PLAI-Western Visayas Region Librarians Council (PLAI-WVRLC) as secretary. Likewise, Mr. Labrador is the vice-president of PLAI-WVRLC. Before

the pandemic, the faculty members were also active in outreach programs of the adopted communities of the University, such as the Ati-Cultural Literacy at Camanggahan Guimbal, Tilipunan Kiddie Center at Nabitasan, Leganes, and the Reading Program for the Non-Readers of Apolinario Mabini Elementary School (AMES) at Mabini Street, Iloilo City. Furthermore, 100% of the BLIS faculty members engage in scholarly work that includes research papers published in volume 1 (2018) and volume 2 (2019) of "TUON," the peer-reviewed science and technology journal of CLASE, and research presentations in academic and professional colloquia.

### ALUMNI TRACER

According to the results of the BLIS tracer study (Cartagena et al., 2020), graduates are employed after graduation and they find the curriculum 100% relevant to their current profession. In terms of its performance in the LLE, the USA BLIS program has very good results for the past three years and its passing percentage is above the national passing rate. To further increase the passers in the LLE, Mrs. Gregorios recently initiated an enrichment program for Augustinian takers.

### STUDENT ORGANIZATION

The BLIS program supports not only the academic endeavor of the students, but also the total well-being of the students by establishing the University of San Agustin-Library and Information Science Student Association (USA-LISSA). USA-LISSA is a recognized Campus Student Organization of USA under CLASE since August 14, 2015 up to the present. It was established last June 22, 2015 under the then-College of Education. The first USA-LISSA president was Ms. Lourigen Cabillon, now a licensed librarian and Assistant Archivist of the University. The present adviser is Mrs. Gregorios. The student organization provides curricular and extra-curricular activities that develop and shape students to become better and well-rounded Augustinians.

### FUTURE PLANS

To increase the enrolment in the BLIS program, the University continues to promote the program using online and social media platforms. It is also committed to give quality education to its clients by continuously upgrading its curriculum and enhancing the faculty competence through graduate studies and attendance to seminars and trainings.

Thus, the BLIS program will collaborate with the LIS schools in the Philippines and in other countries, build partnership and linkages with various libraries and information centers, conduct research to contribute to the LIS profession, support outreach programs of the University and other professional organizations, and provide extension activities for the common good in fulfillment of the mission of *Virtus et Scientia* of the University.

### DECLARATION ON CONFLICTING INTERESTS

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