

Library and Information Science Education: The University of Mindanao Experience

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Abstract

The University of Mindanao's quest for excellence and total quality education inspired the library and information science (LIS) faculty to keep LIS education viable, ensuring that the students are equipped with the necessary skills to build supportive and broad information services that will address the needs of the new learning environment. The LIS Program envisions to be the Center of Excellence in the instruction, research, and extension programs for globally competitive information and knowledge workers in the Philippines, South-East Asian Region, and the world. The Program is committed to deliver excellent, innovative, and high-quality education and training to information professionals; create new knowledge, skills, and relevant technologies; and provide services to society.

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

BRIEF HISTORY

The four-year library and information science (LIS) undergraduate program offered at the time the program began led to the Bachelor of Secondary Education (BSED) major in Library Science under the College of Education. In school year 2005-2006, the program was recognized and given permit by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) to offer the Bachelor of Library and Information Science (BLIS) program under the College of Arts and Sciences Education. As part of the continued development in the University of Mindanao (UM), the program was again transferred to the College of Computing Education (CCE) last June 2012. The BLIS program is designed to provide students with knowledge and skills related to the theories and concepts of library and information services. The program seeks to train students to manage libraries and to expose them to practical librarianship and management information systems for better organization and use of information resources.

With the continued quest for excellence and total quality education, the BLIS program applied for accreditation in 2015 and was granted for Level 1

Formal Accredited Status from February 2016 to February 2019 by the Philippine Association of Colleges and Universities Commission on Accreditation (PACUCOA). In 2018, Level II First Reaccredited Status was granted for having satisfactorily met the standards and fulfilled all the requirements of the PACUCOA for the period October 2018 to October 2023.

MISSION AND VISION

The LIS Program envisions to be the Center of Excellence in the instruction, research, and extension programs for globally competitive information and knowledge workers in the Philippines, South-East Asian Region, and the world.

The Program is committed to delivering excellent, innovative, and high-quality education and training to information professionals, create new knowledge, skills, and relevant technologies; and, service to a diverse society in a dynamically changing global information environment.

PROGRAM EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES

Three to five years after graduation, BLIS graduates are expected to:

- Attain expertise in librarianship profession.
- Earn leadership status among peers in the profession or the industry.
- Demonstrate competence in Information Technology and Research.

STUDENT OUTCOMES

1. Select, evaluate, organize and disseminate print, multimedia and digital information resources;
2. Demonstrate proficient oral and written communication skills; and uses a variety of communication methods in a manner that enables the message to be understood;
3. Demonstrate logical and systematic approaches to the accomplishment of tasks;
4. Formulate objectives, policies and processes as well as design and manage resources in anticipation of future educational or organizational changes;
5. Recognize, analyze and constructively solve problems, providing appropriate direction and assistance when necessary as well as overcome barriers;
6. Identify users' needs and wants through reference interviews, customer surveys, complaint logs and other means in order to evaluate the effectiveness of current services and improve these and other practices;
7. Demonstrate ability to work well with groups and seek ways to build team efforts to solve problems and achieve common goals;
8. Demonstrate understanding library's automation system and the uses of computer hardware and software peripherals, including online collaboration tools, the internet, the world wide web, and social networking sites;
9. Develops simple information technology solutions (e.g. library automation system, website, etc.);
10. Conduct significant research projects that will benefit the library and the organization;
11. Evaluate and debate information policy (e.g. copyright law, plagiarism, cybercrimes, etc.) and ethical issues applicable in local, national or global context; and
12. Participate in continuing education activities organized by library associations and entities.

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT AND STORY

The BLIS curriculum is composed of six components based on the body of knowledge of the librarianship profession, namely: Organization, management and development and maintenance of multi-media based library or information service, laws, trends and practices affecting the profession; Reference,

bibliography, and information services; Selection and acquisition of multi-media sources of information; Cataloging and classification; Indexing and abstracting; and Information technology. The main focus of the BLIS program is to prepare students for career opportunities in professional librarianship, research, training, publishing and book trade, public relations, consultancy, and information-related business.

At the first year level, the curriculum is designed for students to **discover** the fundamental knowledge of the LIS profession. The students at this level will be able to appreciate and widen their perception of the LIS profession. It is also at this level that the students begin to internalize and differentiate the functions of various types of libraries; ready to apply the acquisition and collection development processes and policies for the library; value the essential characteristics of reference service to assist, advise and instruct users in the use of primary sources and be able to practice the use of basic information technology tools in the various library functions. In enhancing their personal competencies, it is at this level that the students develop a commitment to personal growth and lifelong learning, act according to the fundamental values and ethics of library services, and communicate effectively using various methods.

At the second year level, the students will be able to **organize** information resources and archives. The students at this level will be able to catalog, abstract, index, and digitize information resources. At this level, the students can demonstrate knowledge on preservation and conservation issues, including the requirements for archival preservation and proper handling of materials. The students also know how to design and implement library services to meet the needs and interests of children in the community, select and apply current and emerging information tools, and create information access and delivery solutions.

The curriculum design for the third year level allows the students to **manage** information organization and **connect** through linkages/partnerships. The students at this level will be able to envision strategic direction of the library in support of the programs of the institution to which it is attached; establish effective financial management processes and services using sound business and financial judgment; employs sound project management principles and procedures in the planning and implementation of projects, programs and researches; build compelling and harmonious work relationships toward the professional and personal growth of the people working in the organization; communicate the value

of the library and makes support to promote its information resources and services through various media and/or multilevel marketing; forge linkages/partnership within and outside the organization to optimize use of library resources, promote library cooperation initiatives and to ensure conformity with regulatory standards, laws and other policies affecting libraries; formulate plans and policies for optimum use of facilities and equipment; develop, design, implement and assess the library's information literacy program; develop and implement training programs to educate the library users on the use of the library and its resources; and widen and strengthen their involvement in activities geared towards promoting cultural heritage and services.

The curriculum design for the fourth year level will enable the LIS students to engage in the field of librarianship. At this level, the students will demonstrate and apply the professional and personal competencies in the industry at the local, national, and global arena.

Since the curriculum is at the center of academic institutions, there is a need for a continuous improvement of the curriculum that requires regular reviews to fit within and satisfy the needs of the stakeholders. Industry partners are invited to the curriculum review to discuss competencies that meet the industry's needs. Likewise, to prove that the program offered follows the CHED minimum standards, a compliance matrix is prepared to comply with CHED Memorandum Order (CMO) no. 24, series of 2015. The LIS programs offered by UM are the following:

Undergraduate Program:

- Bachelor of Secondary Education major in Library Science – until March 2008
- Bachelor of Library and Information Science (BLIS) – 2008 to present

Graduate Program:

- Master of Arts in Education major in Library Science – until March 2011
- Master of Library and Information Science (MLIS) – 2011 to present

PROFILE AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE FACULTY MEMBERS

The LIS faculty members are guided by the university's vision, mission, and core values, as well as program educational objectives and student learning outcomes. These are reflected in the course syllabi to ensure coherence of instructional goals and

classroom level up to the program level of educational objectives. The teaching competence of the LIS instructors are regarded highly by students, program head, and peers as evidenced by the consistently high ratings in the performance evaluation results for school year 2019-2020. Teaching performance is regularly monitored through the use of different evaluation tools referred to as:

- ETS – Evaluation of teachers by Students
- ETP – Evaluation of teachers by Peers
- ETD – Evaluation of Teachers by the Dean
- CETA – Classroom Evaluation of Teachers by Administrators

Currently, there are three faculty members for the BLIS program who are highly qualified to teach. Two of them already earned a degree in Doctor of Management and Doctor of Business Management while the other one has earned a master's degree in library science and currently working on her dissertation for her doctoral degree. Furthermore, all of the faculty have industry practice and are licensed librarians.

Applicants for a teaching position in the LIS program are screened via a panel interview, teaching demo evaluation, essay examination, and psychological test. The interview panel is composed of the Dean of the College, the program Head, Senior Faculty and Faculty Club President. In addition, seasoned librarians of the industry or professional fields are also invited as lecturers or resource speakers in student seminars in order to enrich classroom instruction.

In terms of practical exposure, all faculty members regularly attend in-house seminars/trainings organized by the university as well as offsite trainings provided by professional associations related to library and information science practice. The LIS faculty are active members of the Philippine Librarians Association, Inc. (PLAI), Philippine Association of Teachers of Library and Information Science, Inc. (PATLS), Mindanao Alliance of Educators in Library and Information Science (MAELIS), Philippine Association of Academic and Research Librarians, Inc. (PAARL), Philippine Association For Teachers and Educators (PAFTE), and the Philippine Society of Information Technology Educators Foundation, Inc. (PSITE). Table 1 shows the list of faculty for school year 2020-2021.

STUDENTS AND ALUMNI

Another pride of the program is its performance in the Librarian Licensure Examination (LLE) for the

Table 1*List of Current Faculty Members as of School Year 2020-2021*

NAME	QUALIFICATION	SUBJECT AREAS/ DESIGNATION
Rancis N. Vilchez	DIT MSIT BSCS	Dean, College of Computing Education
Brigida E. Bacani	Ed.D (DW) MAEd BSEd	Program Head, 2018 to present Introduction to LIS Organization of Information Resources Information Resources and Services Collection Management Library Practice
Garry L. Bastida	DBM MLIS BSEd-LS	Faculty (part-time), 2020 to present Educational Technology School/Academic Librarianship Information Processing and handling in LIC
Estela R. Dequito	DM MAEd MSLS BSEd	Faculty (part-time), 2010 to present Management of Libraries and Information Centers Web Technologies Preservation of Information Resources Introduction to Records Management and Archives Indexing and Abstracting Digital Libraries Library Materials for Children and Young Adults Information Literacy and Retrieval Indigenous Knowledge and Multi-culturalism Thesis/Research Writing
Ryan Ace O. Gamutan	MLIS (9units) BLIS	Faculty (part-time), 2019 to present Special/Public librarianship
Marife A. Ganas	MSIS	Faculty, 2006 to present Database Management in Libraries
Ryann F/ Pilapil	MIT BSIT	Faculty, 2009 to present Programming Fundamentals
Meljohn V. Aborde	DIT (DW) MIT BSCS	Faculty, 2010 to present System Analysis and Design
<i>Virginia I. Caintic</i>	<i>MLS AB-LS</i>	<i>Program Head 2005-2018 Retired</i>
<i>Rico B. Maghuyop</i>	<i>Ed.D MAEd BSEd</i>	<i>Thesis/Research Writing Collection Management Retired</i>

Table 2*Summary of Librarian Licensure Examination Results from November 2013 to September 2019*

DATE OF EXAM	NATIONAL PASSING	FIRST TIMER				
		PASSED	FAILED	COND	TOTAL	PASS%
September 2019	55.17%	6	0	0	6	100%
September 2018	49%	3	1	0	4	75%
September 2017	60.29	4	0	0	4	100%
September 2016	64.74%	7	0	0	7	100%
April 2015	47.04%	4	0	0	4	100%
April 2014	No Takers (first timers and repeaters)					
November 2013	45.80%	7	1	0	8	87.50%
AVERAGE	53.67%					93.75%

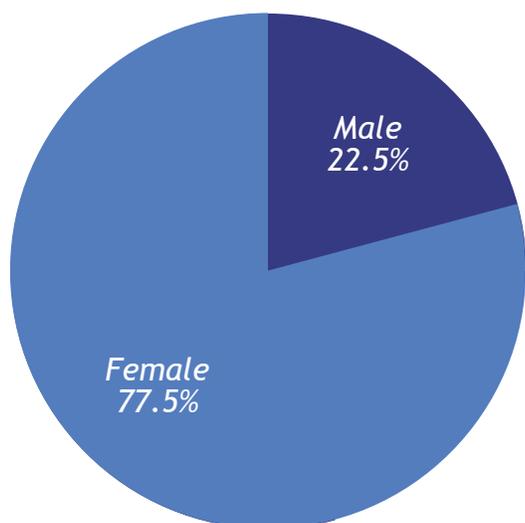
last seven years as shown in Table 2. UM posted a 100% passing rate for the September 2019 LLE. The university also had a topnotcher as Ryan Ace O. Gamutan placed Top 4 with a rating of 88.95% in the September 2019 LLE. UM has also been consistently posting a higher passing rate for first-time takers of the LLE compared to the national average, according to the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC).

A graduate tracer study for LIS graduates from 2000 to 2015 was conducted which aimed to develop a profile of LIS graduates, to trace their employability, and to determine how they have fared in the librarianship profession. The result of the tracer study of Bacani (2016) revealed that the LIS graduates of UM were employable with an employability rate of 85.36 percent. These graduates were employed in less than a month, one month to less than six months and some were already hired in a school and university libraries. Majority of the respondents have landed their job through the recommendation by someone, and 88% of them said that they had acquired work related to their careers. They also have

stayed in their work for quite some time due to salaries and benefits as well as career challenge, which showed that they wanted to explore, practice and enhance the competencies taught in college. Among the competencies found useful in their employment success were technical skills, multitasking skills, communication skills, human relations skills, instructional skills, technological skills, critical thinking, public relations skills, problem solving skills and leadership skills. The competencies as mentioned above and the right knowledge and values needed in their workplaces, the graduates signified and affirmed that the library science curriculum is relevant and useful in their assigned tasks.

Figure 1 shows the demographic profile of the BLIS graduates for the last 10 years (i.e., 2011 to 2020). There are 71 graduates, of which 16 or 22.5% are males, and 55 or 77.5% are females.

Furthermore, the UM Library and Information Science Alumni Association (UMLISAA) was established on July 25, 2019 with the first set of officers:

Figure 1*Demographic Profile of LIS Graduates*

President: Garry L. Bastida
 Vice President: Jeffrey Santiago
 Secretary: Khristine Brylle Mancao
 Treasurer: Angelita Bisares
 Auditor: Peter Cainglet
 PIO: Rodrigo Sumuob, Jr.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

In terms of research productivity, LIS teachers regularly contribute to the research goals of the college in terms of publication in refereed journals and paper presentations in local and international academic conferences. In addition, an attractive package of research incentives is provided by management to active researchers among the LIS faculty members.

Graduating students are required to produce and implement well-documented and research-based projects. Furthermore, BLIS students were also exposed to other libraries and other related institutions (museums, among others) through educational tours. The On-the-Job Training (OJT) Manual was published to guide the graduating students during their practicum internship, of which they yielded a Very High Satisfactory rating as evaluated by their practicum supervisors. A memorandum of agreement (MOA) for the practicum internships was signed by UM and the partner school.

Amid the current pandemic situation, the Research and Publication Center (RPC) of UM provides appropriate guidelines for faculty research. Research-from-home may be a form of work-from-

home arrangement, thus enhancing research productivity. Caution must be taken for residential experimentation (face-to-face), on-site field work and data-gathering activities, if ever these are allowed under quarantine conditions. Digital interviews, phone-in interviews and online surveys may be utilized during this time.

Furthermore, the community outreach of the BLIS program is dubbed as *Readers Development Advocacy Program (RDAP)*, which was started last January 2010 spearheaded by Prof. Virginia I. Caintic. This program intends to provide a functional library where students can freely access information resources, efficiently and effectively use information resources and create a reading culture within the school community. The objective is to catalog and classify the library resources and conduct an information literacy program for the students to help the students use the library and instill a love of reading and the importance of books. A MOA was signed with partner schools. Table 3 shows the summary of the beneficiaries of the extension program and the program's accomplishment.

Moreover, the Community Extension Center (CEC) is encouraged to explore ways to conduct community extension programs appropriate for the pandemic period, i.e., lesser or no residential extension services (face-to-face). Virtual or digital mode of extension services may be explored. More importantly, extension services for the frontliners such as food donations or relief operations must be prioritized during the pandemic period.

Co-curricular and extra-curricular activities are being practiced to provide purposeful experience to LIS students while enjoying their campus life. Activities such as echo-seminars, library tours to other schools, local seminar attendances, National Book Week involvements, book fair visits, quiz bees, and Christmas and acquaintance parties engage the students to be aware and updated of the new trends in the library science profession. Likewise, these activities aimed to develop their holistic experience as a student, thus motivate them to strive and give their best to achieve high academic performance. Moreover, for proper guidance and information, calendar of activities is posted and properly disseminated. These activities are also evaluated to determine their worth and relevance to the needs of the students and to the attainment of the objectives of the program.

As part of the co-curricular activities of the BLIS program, LIS lecture series was conceptualized to

Table 3

Summary of the Beneficiaries of the Readers Development Advocacy Program

PARTNER SCHOOLS	DURATION	ACCOMPLISHMENT
Rogationist Academy of Davao, St. Anthony's Boys Village-Davao Baracatan Road, Toril, Davao City	November 15, 2019 to present	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducted MOA signing • Donated materias use for cataoging of ibrary resources • Cataoged and cassified the ibrary coections • Repaired and mended books • Donated books • Ceebrated 85th Nationa Book Week with the foowing activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Story-Teing Contest ▪ Reader's Theater Competition
Welfare Action Foundation of Davao, Inc. (WAFDI) Boystown Davao, Ma-a Road, Davao City	October 2015-February 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducted MOA Signing • Donated materials use for cataloging of library resources • Donated one computer set and one card catalog • Cataloged and classified the library collections • Printed complete set of catalog cards • Conducted Information Literacy Program <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How to use the library ▪ How to use the card catalog ▪ Parts of a Book ▪ Bibliography making ▪ Introduce different information resources • Repaired books • Library tour at UM Learning and Information Center
Magtuod Elementary School Magtuod, Maa, Davao City	August 2014-August 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Donated the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Materials use for cataloging of library resources ▪ Story books ▪ 1 Steel Card Catalog ▪ 4 Bookshelves • Cataloged and classified the library collections • Repaired books • Celebrated the 84th National Book Week with the following activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Book parade ▪ Storytelling contest
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Gov. Duterte National High School •Maa National High School •Sta. Ana National High School •GSIS Heights Elementary School •Matina Aplaya Elementary School •Matina Pangi Elementary School 	January 2010-March 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducted seminar on "Reader's Development Advocacy Program in Organizing the Library Resources and Services" on January 28-29, 2010 • Donated school supplies for cataloging library resources • Cataloged and classified the library collections • Updated the card catalog • Repaired books • Celebrated National Book Week with the following activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Book parade ▪ Poetry in motion ▪ Storytelling contest

Table 4
List of LIS Lecture Series

SERIES	THEME	OBJECTIVES
1ST	“Libraries Transforming Communities”	To explore strategies/tools on how libraries engage and transform communities and to gain understanding of the approaches of library engagement with communities.
2ND	Embracing diversity in the Library and Information Science world	To explore the library and information science world <i>and</i> to discuss how to diversify a library workforce and the challenges of LIS professionals face in the workplace
3RD	Innovating Service Delivery Amid Pandemic	To discuss strategies on how to innovate library service delivery during the pandemic. (Webinar via Google Meet)

provide an update to students on the new trends in the librarianship profession. Table 4 shows the list of LIS series conducted for the BLIS students.

PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

The University’s quest for excellence and total quality education inspired the LIS faculty to keep LIS education viable, ensuring that the students are equipped with the necessary skills to build supportive and broad information services that will address the needs of the new learning environment. Specifically, the strategic objectives that are set for the future plans are as follows:

1. Continuously strengthen and enhance intervention programs and teaching-learning delivery;
2. Exceed the national passing rate in the LLE;
3. Sustain and upgrade the national accreditation and the ISO certification;
4. Improve outcomes assessment through the regular conduct of curriculum review and Program Advisory Council meetings;
5. Collaborate with other LIS schools nationally and abroad for future partnerships.

DECLARATION ON CONFLICTING INTERESTS

The author declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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