

A Brief History of the Library and Information Science Program of the University of the East

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Abstract

This paper details the history of the LIS program of the University of the East (UE). The College of Arts and Sciences closely works with the LIS faculty and alumni to strengthen the program and increase the number of students. They discuss plans and strategies to market the program and look for possible actions such as introducing its students to international activities for LIS students and encourage them to join international discussions on LIS education.

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

The University of the East (UE) was formerly known as the Philippine College of Commerce and Business Administration (PCCBA). It was established in September 1946 and is currently located at 2219 Claro M. Recto Avenue, Manila, Philippines.

The Library Science course was first offered as a minor or major subject under the College of Education during the school year (SY) 1952-1953. The first course was named as Library Science 1 – Elementary Reference with morning and afternoon sessions. Ms. Victoria F. Valenzuela-Ahrens Dorf, UE chief librarian from 1948 to 1957, handled the morning session composed of 18 students, while Dr. Concordia Sanchez taught the afternoon session with 17 students. There were eight students in the first batch of graduates of BSE major in Library Science, and 10 students in the batch of graduates of BSE minor in Library Science (Tampico, 2011).

The UE Library Science Club, the first Library Science student organization, was organized in 1953 with Mr. Lorenzo Barrela as president. However, it only existed up to 1972 due to the school administration's move to abolish all campus organizations (Tampico, 2011). In 1978, through the leadership of Mrs. Sarah De Jesus and assistance of Ms. Rosa Ricanor, the UE Library Science Alumni Association, Inc. was founded. In the following year, the first set of officers of the association was inducted into office. Unfortunately, the association did not survive for so long due to the lack of active support from the members. Fortunately, the alumni association was revived on April 10, 1983 during the first Library Science Alumni Homecoming event that was held at the UE Main Library (Tampico, 2011). The association is currently registered under the Securities and Exchange Commission with its new name, UE Library and Information Science Alumni Association, Inc. (UELISA AI).

Other developments in the program ensued in the following years. Dr. Juan C. Buenrostro, Jr., a visiting professor of Library Science in UE initiated the establishment of the Department of Library and Information Science under the College of Arts and Sciences in consonance with Republic Act No. 6966 otherwise known as the Philippine Librarianship Act. Eventually, the title of the program was changed from BSE major/minor in Library Science to Bachelor of Science in Library and Information Science (BSLIS) with Dr. Buenrostro as the first department chairman (Tampico, 2011). In 1996, the curriculum was revised to adapt to the latest trends. In 1997, Prof. Helen P. Jamin succeeded Dr. Buenrostro as the head of the department. In 2002, the university had its first batch of graduates under the renamed Bachelor of Science in Library and Information Science (BSLIS) program. Thereafter, Prof. Aquilino Abenojar took over as the department chairman in 2005 onward. In 2009, the curriculum was again revised, and the BSLIS program was changed to Bachelor of Library and Information Science (BLIS) in accordance with the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) Memorandum Order No. 08, series of 2005. This new curriculum contained competencies essential for effective provision and delivery of information to clients. In the year 2019, a new curriculum was released in compliance with CHED Memorandum Order No. 24, series of 2015, composing of LIS core courses, additional information and communication technology courses, special topics, LIS electives and a foreign language.

FACULTY MEMBERS

At present, the BLIS program is continuously operating under the university's College of Arts and Sciences, while the Master of Library and Information Science (MLIS) program is under the Graduate School of the university.

The faculty members of the Department of Library Science when it was still starting then were Prof. Narcisa F. Tioco (deceased), Prof. Nenita L. Agustin, Prof. Sarah De Jesus, Dr. Juan C. Buenrostro, Jr., Prof. Rufo Q. Buenviaje (deceased), Prof. Helen P. Jamin (deceased), Prof. Rene Salvania, and Prof. Aquilino M. Abenojar. Later, more professors were hired to teach in the BLIS and MLIS programs. They were Prof. Helen De Castro (deceased), Prof. Milagros Santos-Ong (deceased), Prof. Shirley L. Nava, Prof. Elvira Calig (now based in the United States), Dr. Wilhelmina Borjal, Dr. Angelina P. Resurreccion, Dr. Nora J. Claravall, Prof. Corazon M. Nera, Prof. Lourdes T. David, Dr. Rolando Lansingan, Prof. Marilou Diaz, Dr. Dolores Flora, Prof. Frederick Guerrero, and Prof. Dick Orense.

As the university continues to offer the LIS program, there is a new generation of faculty members who are also UE graduates. Currently, the faculty members are Prof. Aquilino Abenojar, Prof. Raymond Teodoro, Prof. Jessica Tampico, Prof. Venus Oruga, Dr. Dolores Carungui, Mr. Kevin Conrad Tansiongco, and Ms. Judy Mae Paampag.

STUDENT ACTIVITIES

Along with the changes in the curriculum, more active student engagements were in place. Through the initiative of Dr. Buenrostro, the UE Association of Students of Library and Information Science (UE-ASLIS) was established in 2004. UE-ASLIS is the university's recognized student organization of LIS students. Mr. Frederick Guerrero was elected as its first president, while Prof. Abenojar and Dr. Buenrostro served as the association's first advisers.

UE-ASLIS leads the students for all university-wide activities—from academic, literary, recreational, to sports, especially during pre-pandemic. For the students to be active in various professional activities of the LIS field, UE-ASLIS introduces various professional seminars and conferences where students can attend and participate. The association also joins and supports interschool activities, such as the annual LIS Congress organized by the University of the Philippines Library and Information Science Students Association. This gives an opportunity for UE students to get to know and collaborate with other LIS student organizations from different universities in the Philippines.

The student members are also active in collaborating with the UE Department of Libraries' activities—from onsite and virtual programs to the marketing of the department's programs and services. UE-ASLIS continues to organize forums and webinars that will enhance students' understanding of the LIS profession. The association invites alumni to share their experiences in a forum as a regular activity of the association. This will help encourage students to continue studying under the program. Scheduled educational tours to different libraries in Metro Manila were also organized. With the current pandemic, UE-ASLIS is planning to have library virtual tours for the students.

FACULTY AND STUDENT ACHIEVEMENTS

In SY 1996-1997, two library science students studied under a scholarship grant from the Philippine Association of Teachers of Library and Information Science, Inc. (PATLS). Moreover, UE students have participated in the annual PATLS-sponsored Library and Information Science Quiz Bee since 1992. The

contestants from UE would consistently garner top places in the quiz bee, which is joined by students from various LIS schools in the country. From 1992 to 1996, UE placed either as second or third, and in 1997 and 1998, UE became the champion. In 1999, UE's contestant got the second place. And in 2000, 2001, and 2010, brought back the trophy again as champion. At present, the university continuously send students to join the quiz bee, which is now known as the *PATLS LIS Wizard*.

In 2015, BLIS student Mr. Kevin Conrad T. Tansiongco was one of the chosen delegates for the Ayala Young Leaders Congress (AYLC) and the very first time that UE had a delegate. AYLC is a nationwide student leadership summit designed to build confidence, hone leadership skills, nurture commitment, foster nationalism and idealism, and encourage faithful stewardship. Another student from the College of Business Administration joined Mr. Tansiongco in this event.

Various alumni also exhibit exemplary performance in their field of work. For instance, in 2020, UE alumna Ms. Emilita Lapuz-Villanueva (BSEd Library Science 1981) received the Professional Excellence Award in the field of Government Service sponsored by the Philippine Federation of Professionals Association (PFPA) in giving an outstanding contribution and service to the public as a public librarian.

The current faculty of UE have significant contributions and exposure in the international arena of LIS. In 2021, one of its part-time faculty, Mr. Tansiongco was featured in the Building Strong Library and Information Science Education (BSLISE), IFLA Student Spotlight Social Media Campaign. Two of his students who joined him were Ms. Michaela Lutap and Mr. John Benedict Aquinde. Also, Mr. Tansiongco presented the UE LIS program on a webinar entitled "Webinar Series for Library and Information Science Students" organized by IFLA Division IV Education and Training Section. In the same year, he was awarded the Special Libraries Association (SLA) – Asia Young Professional Librarian Award. This award is given to a young SLA member who works in Asia for an opportunity to attend the annual SLA conference.

LICENSURE EXAMINATION PERFORMANCE

In 1994, two UE graduates were topnotchers of the 1994 Librarian Licensure Examination (LLE). They were Ms. Dalisay Santos (3rd Place) and Ms. Liza Bandy (5th Place). Eleven examinees from UE also passed the LLE. In 1995, 9 out of 17 graduates

(52.94%) passed the LLE. In 1996 and 1997, there were 16 passers out of 23 examinees (69.57%) from UE. In 1998, another topnotcher in the name of Ma. Antonia Cubarubbia (3rd Place) led a total of 10 passers out of 12 examinees (83.33%) from UE.

In 1999, Ms. Rosalie O. Julian (2nd Place) was one of the 15 passers out of 24 examinees (62.50%). In 2000, another UE graduate ranked in the top 10, Ms. Gina B. San Buenaventura (2nd Place). There was a total of 13 out of 18 examinees (72.22%) who passed that year. In 2001, 13 out of 20 examinees (65%) made it to the list of passers. In 2002, 14 out of 17 examinees (82.35%) joined the list of passers from UE. In 2003, 4 out of 8 examinees (50%) successfully passed the LLE. The year 2004 had the lowest percentage of passers from UE, with only 3 out of 15 examinees (20%). In the following year, UE tried to bring to back its glory by ranking second in the top performing schools based on the number of passers. UE then had 8 passers out of 12 examinees (67%). In 2006, there were 5 successful examinees out of 11 (45.45%). In 2007, there were 7 passes out of 18 examinees (39%) from UE and Ms. Riza Elica placed 7th. In 2008, the passers were 8 out of 21 (38.10%), and in 2009, there were 6 passers out of 16 examinees (38%).

The examination results in 2010 and 2011 were not favorable as UE only had 2 passers out of 14 examinees (14.29%), and 2 passers out of 17 examinees (11.76%), respectively. However, in 2012, another history was made by the UE graduates who took the LLE. Mr. Mark Anthony Santos placed 2nd and Ms. Ma. Victoria Lago placed 10th. The passing rate was 100% for the first-time takers of the examination. In 2013, another victory was achieved for UE as Mr. Juan Paolo L. Balao placed 10th, and with a 100% passing rate for the first-time takers. Overall, there were 4 passers out of 12 examinees (33.33%). In the year 2014, 2 out of 6 examinees (33.33%) passed the LLE, and in 2015, 9 passed out of 14 examinees (64.29%).

The year 2016 was another milestone for UE in the LLE as they reached the highest record of having 84% passing rate compared to its recent past records. Aside from this, Ms. Roana Marie L. Flores placed 5th. In 2017, another set of graduates took the LLE with 6 passers out of 12 examinees (50%). In the following year, 9 out of 19 (47.37%) passed, and in 2019, 10 out of 17 (58.82%) passed the examination.

With the abovementioned performance, UE LIS graduates continue to keep and maintain an outstanding record in the LLE.

FUTURE PLANS

The College of Arts and Sciences closely works with the LIS faculty and alumni to strengthen the program to make it more appealing in order to increase the number of students. They discuss plans and strategies to market the program and look for possible actions such as introducing its students to international activities for LIS students and encourage them to join international discussions on LIS education.

The LIS program in UE continues to dream to grow the LIS family in the university in pursuit to its mission to train and hone future ‘warrior’ librarians that are morally upright and competent leaders in the profession, imbued with a strong sense of service to their fellowmen and their country.

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AUTHOR BIOGRAPHIES

Juan C. Buenrosto, Jr., Ed.D. is a retired Library Science professor and Chief Librarian of the Baliuag University, Bulacan. Dr. Buenrosto also served as a professor of Library Science at the University of the East, and a former full-time faculty member at the UP Institute of Library Science (now UP School of Library and Information Studies). He was also a librarian and instructor at the Philippine Normal University, and a classroom teacher at Claret School and A. Luna Elementary School, Department of Education, Manila. He has published several notable books on Library Science in the Philippines, as well as reviewers for the Licensure Examination for Librarians.

Kevin Conrad T. Tansiongco is a graduate of Bachelor of Library and Information Science and currently taking his Master of Library and Information Science at the University of the East (UE) – Manila.

He is currently working as a Senior Product Manager for Electronic Information Solutions Inc, a library technology service provider, and a part-time LIS Faculty in UE. Mr. Tansiongco is the Chief Volunteer Librarian of Magbasa Tayo Movement, which provides awareness on the importance of reading centers in order to enhance the culture of reading in the country. He was awarded as the Special Libraries Association (SLA) – Asia Young Professional Librarian Award 2021. He is the current President of the UE Library and Information Science Alumni Association, Inc. (UELISAAI) and a Board of Director of the Association of Special Libraries of the Philippines, Inc. (ASLP). He is also a member of SLA, Philippine Librarians Association, Inc. (PLAI), and the Philippine Association of Academic and Research Librarians, Inc. (PAARL).

Aquilino M. Abenojar obtained his Bachelor of Science in Education Major in Social Studies from the University of the East (UE) Manila in 1991, and his Master of Library and Information Science in 2004. Prof. Abenojar is a licensed teacher and librarian in the Philippines. Currently, he is the Assistant Director of the Department of Libraries, University of the East-Manila Campus. He was the Head Librarian from 1996 to 2005, and later became the University Archivist from 2005 to 2019. From 1996 up to the present, he serves as a faculty member of the Library and Information Science program, under the College of Arts and Sciences, UE. He is an active member of different library associations in the country such as PLAI, PAARL, PATLS, UELISAAI.



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