MAPPING OF THE LOW-INCOME STUDENTS OF GORDON COLLEGE FOR THE FIRST SEMESTER OF THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2023-2024: BASIS FOR PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

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INTRODUCTION

This investigation is a crucial initiative undertaken by Gordon College to gain a comprehensive understanding of its low-income student population and lay the groundwork for targeted program development. This mapping project aims to identify low-income students' unique challenges and develop effective strategies to support their academic and personal success within the college community.

Realizing the essence of ensuring equal opportunities for all students, regardless of their socioeconomic background, Gordon College has embarked on this mapping project to gather valuable insights into the experiences and needs of its low-income student body. By conducting an initial assessment of the student population during the first semester of the academic year 2023-2024, the college seeks to identify specific areas where additional resources and support can be provided to enhance the educational journey of low-income students.

The mapping project aims to explore various dimensions related to low-income students through a survey and data analysis, including their financial aid status, access to resources, academic performance, and personal aspirations. This comprehensive

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approach will help the college gain an overall view of the challenges and opportunities faced by low-income students, enabling the development of targeted programs and interventions that address their specific needs.

The outcomes of this mapping project will serve as a foundation for evidence-based decision-making and program development within Gordon College. Utilizing the insights gained from this study, the college can design initiatives promoting academic achievement, financial stability, and holistic support for low-income students. The ultimate goal is to foster an inclusive and equitable environment that empowers all students to thrive academically, personally, and professionally.

By prioritizing the mapping of low-income students, Gordon College demonstrates its commitment to creating an environment where every student has an equal chance to succeed. This initiative not only supports the immediate needs of low-income students but also contributes to the long-term mission of the college in promoting educational equity and social mobility. Through an evidence-based approach, Gordon College will continue to refine its programs and services, ensuring that they are responsive to the evolving needs of its diverse student body.

By understanding the unique experiences and challenges faced by low-income students, Gordon College can implement targeted strategies and initiatives that empower these students to thrive and reach their full potential within the college community and beyond.

At a Glance
- The Philippines' social class is divided into three clusters: a) low-income, b) middle-income, and c) high-income.
- As of 2021, 58.4% of Filipinos fall under the low-income class.
- There are 871 identified low-income students in Gordon College:
    1. College of Business and Accountancy: 31.3% or 273 students
    2. College of Education, Arts, and Sciences: 24.3% or 212 students
    3. College of Computer Studies: 16.6% or 145 students
    4. College of Hotel and Tourism Management: 15.2% or 132 students
    5. College of Allied Health Studies: 12.5% or 109 students
- Most number of low-income students based on college programs:
    1. Bachelor of Science in Customs Administration: 113 students
    2. Bachelor of Science in Business Administration
       Major in Financial Management: 74 students
    3. Bachelor of Science in Hospitality Management: 59 students
    4. Bachelor of Science in Tourism Management: 56 students
    5. Bachelor of Science in Computer Science: 53 students

- Out of 871 low-income students, 220 live outside Olongapo City. This finding shows that students from outside the city are entering Gordon College to avail themselves of the benefits of Republic Act 10931 and quality education.
- Low-income students in Gordon College belong to groups and government aid programs:
  1. Indigenous People: 13 students
  2. Pantawid Pamilyang: 28 students Pilipino Program (4Ps)
  3. Listahan 2.0:   8 students

Philippine Social Class

The Philippine social class is more than just the income of a person. The Philippine Institute for Development Studies (2018) defined social class as a group of people with similar socioeconomic status based on income level, education, and occupation. Generally, the Philippines has three primary social classes: a) Low-income, b) Middle-income, and c) High-income. Moreover, the middle class is further expanded into three clusters: a) lower-middle income, b) middle-middle income, and c) upper-middle income. In relation, Albert et al. (2018) have provided an indicative range of the monthly Filipino family income for a family of 5 based on the 2015 and 2017 Family Income and Expenditure Surveys (FIES) conducted by the Philippine Statistic Authority (PSA) (*see table 1*).

Table 1. Indicative range of monthly family incomes (for a family of 5): Philippines, 2015 and 2017

Income Cluster	Definition: Peer-Capita Income	Indicative Range	
		at 2015 prices	at 2017 prices
1. Poor	Less than the official poverty threshold	Less than PHP 9100	Less than PHP 9,520
2. Low-income class (but not poor)	Between the poverty line and twice the poverty line	Between PHP 9100 and PHP 18,200	Between PHP 9,520 and PHP 19,040
3. Lower middle-income class	Between two and four times the poverty line	Between PHP 18,200 and PHP 36,400	Between PHP 19,040 and PHP 38,080
4. Middle middle-income class	Between four and seven times the poverty line	Between PHP36,400 and PHP 63,700	Between PHP 38,080 and PHP 66,640
5. Upper middle-income class	Between 7 and 12 times the poverty line	Between PHP 63,700 and PHP 109,200	Between PHP 66,640 and PHP 114,240
6. Upper-income class (but not rich)	Between 12 and 20 times the poverty line	Between PHP 109,200 and PHP 182,000	Between PHP 114,240 and PHP 190,400
7. Rich	At least equal to 20 times the poverty line	At least PHP 182,000	At least PHP 190,400

Table 1 shows the income cluster of the social classes in the Philippines and the indicative range of monthly income per family. In the latest Family Income and Expenditure Survey (2021), only 1.4% is considered in the high-income class, while 40% falls in the middle class, and 58.4% is under the low-income class. As the majority of Filipinos are in the low-income class, the Chief of the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), Karl Chua, NEDA chief has defined *low income* as an income below the minimum wage of a region who are not necessarily considered poor as those below the poverty threshold (Chua, 2020).

Low-income class and Access to Education

One of the most pressing challenges of the low-income class is limited access to education. Families or households considered in the low-income class typically have a negative connection with academic achievement due to the limited availability of resources (Lacour &Tissington, 2011). In line with this, students from low-income families tend to delay or drop out of their educational institutions (United Nations, 2013). As the manifestation of limited access to education continues to prevail, crafting policies to address appropriately the growing concern has become a priority for the official government and educational institutions. In the Philippines, Congress passed the Republic Act 10931, or the Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act, in 2017 to promote the rights of students to a quality education at the tertiary level. Hence, all the state universities, colleges, local universities, colleges, and state-run technical-vocational institutions must adhere to the law.

Although the law has significantly positively affected poverty incidence, this is only the case for some regions of the Philippines. Yang (2022) exemplified the case of the Caraga region, where there has been a 3,000 increase in Tertiary Education Subsidy (TES) grantees since its implementation. However, poverty spiked from 31% to 28.3% in 2018. Undeniably, low-income students in an educational institution are inevitable. RA 10931 will only sometimes produce the same result for all the country's regions.

Gordon College Student Profiles

Anchored to the implementation of Republic Act 10931, Gordon College-Olongapo has adopted free tertiary education for its students. The following data were based on the first semester of the Academic Year 2023-2024.

Students in Gordon College based on Program and College, First Semester Academic Year 2023-2024

In the first semester of the Academic Year 2023-2024, 6,657 enrollees were identified in all programs, with CBA leading at 2,130, CEAS next at 1,618, CHTM next at 1,066, CCS next at 1,062, and CAHS last at 781 (*see table 2*).

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Table 2. Students per Program and College

Program	Colleges					
	CAHS	CBA	CCS	CEAS	CHTM	TOTAL
BSM	225					225
BSN	556				1	557
BSA		190				190
BSBA-FM		592				592
BSBA-HRM		314				314
BSBA-MKT		334				334
BSCA		700	1	1		702
ACT			53			53
BSCS			359	1		360
BSIT			414			414
BSEMC			235			235
BACOMM				147		147
BCAEd				111		111
BECEd				95		95
BEEd				231		231
BPEd				259		259
BSEd-E				231		231
BSEd-FIL				177		177
BSEd-M				84		84
BSEd-SCI				96		96
BSEd-SOC				166		166
TCP				19		19
BSHM					509	509
BSTM					556	556
TOTAL	781	2130	1062	1618	1066	6657

Low-income students based on College and Sex at Birth

Out of 6,657 enrollees, 871 were recognized as low-income students, approximately 13.08% of the identified enrollees. Figure 1 shows the distribution of low-income students per college, with CBA leading with 273 students, CEAS with 212 students, CCS with 145 students, etc. Among these low-income students, 61.1%, or 532 students, are female, and 38.9%, or 339 students, are male *(see Table 3)*.

Table 3. Sex at Birth of Low-Income Students

Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Male	532	61.1
Female	339	38.9
Total	**871**	**100**

Figure 1 below displays the distribution of low-income students per college. More low-income students belonged to the College of Business and Accountancy (CBA) with 31.3%, compared to the College of Education, Arts, and Sciences (CEAS) with 24.3%, which came in second. In addition, the College of Computer Studies (CCS) came in third with 16.6%, followed closely by the College of Hospitality and Tourism Management (CHTM) with 15.2%, and lastly, the College of Allied Health Studies (CAHS) with 12.5%.
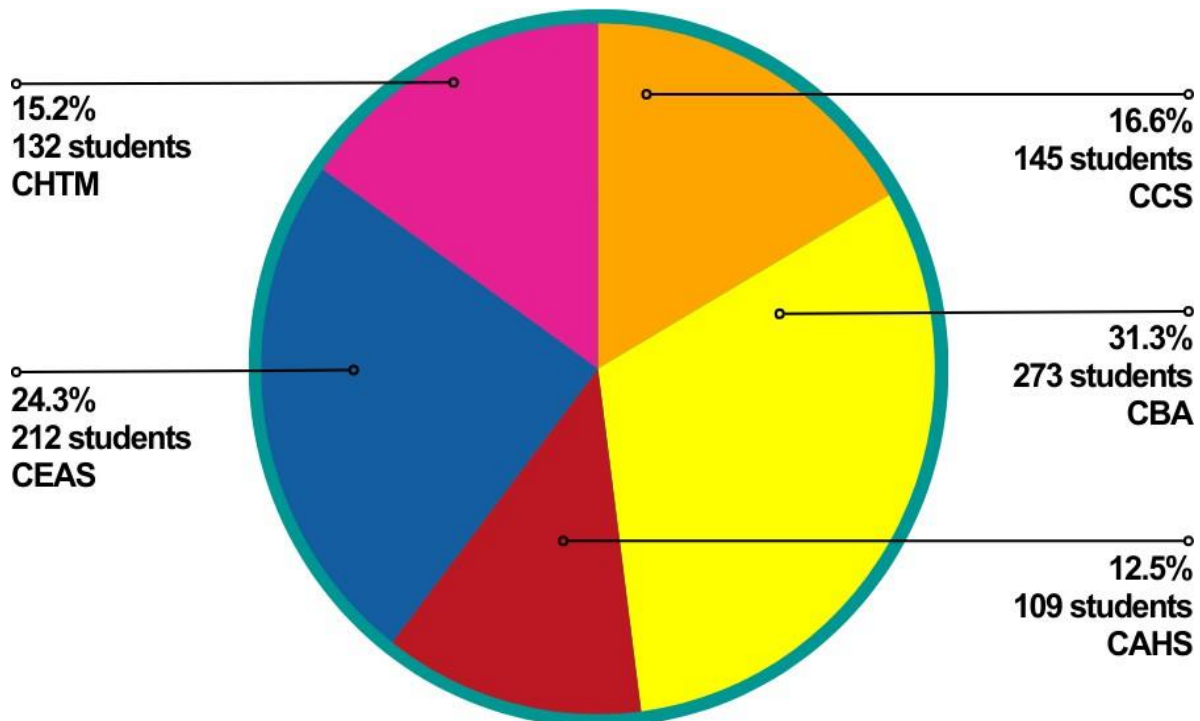

Figure 1. Distribution of the low-income students per college

Low-income Students based on the program
Table 4 below provides a comprehensive overview of the distribution of low-income students per program. Of the five colleges, CBA holds the most significant number of low-income students, followed by the CHTM and the CCS. Under the CBA, BSCA has 113 low-income students, and BSBA-FM has 74 low-income students. Then, under CHTM, BSHM has 59 low-income students, and BSTM has 56 low-income students. In the third spot under the CCS is the BSCS, with 53 low-income students. Similarly, the study by Samson et al. (2020) exhibited that students from low-income families consider the chosen college program based on the family's financial status and the in-demand program that can give the students a decent job after graduation.

Table 4. Distribution of the Low-Income Students per Program

| Program	Frequency	Percent
ACT	5	.6
BSCS	53	6.1
BSEMC	32	3.7
BSIT	46	5.3
CCS total	**136**	**16**
BSA	13	1.5
BSBA-FM	74	8.5
BSBA-HRM	50	5.7
BSBA-MKT	45	5.2
BSCA	113	13.0
CBA total	**295**	**34**
BSM	35	4.0
BSN	35	4.0
CAHS total	**70**	**8**
BSHM	59	6.8
BSTM	56	6.4
CHTM total	**115**	**13**
TCP	1	.1
BSEd-M	10	1.1
BSEd-SCI	13	1.5
BECEd	14	1.6
BACOMM	15	1.7
BCAEd	16	1.8
BSEd-SOC	21	2.4
BEEd	23	2.6
BSEd-FIL	30	3.4
BPEd	33	3.8
BSEd-E	36	4.1
CEAS total	**212**	**24**
Overall Total	**871**	**100.0**
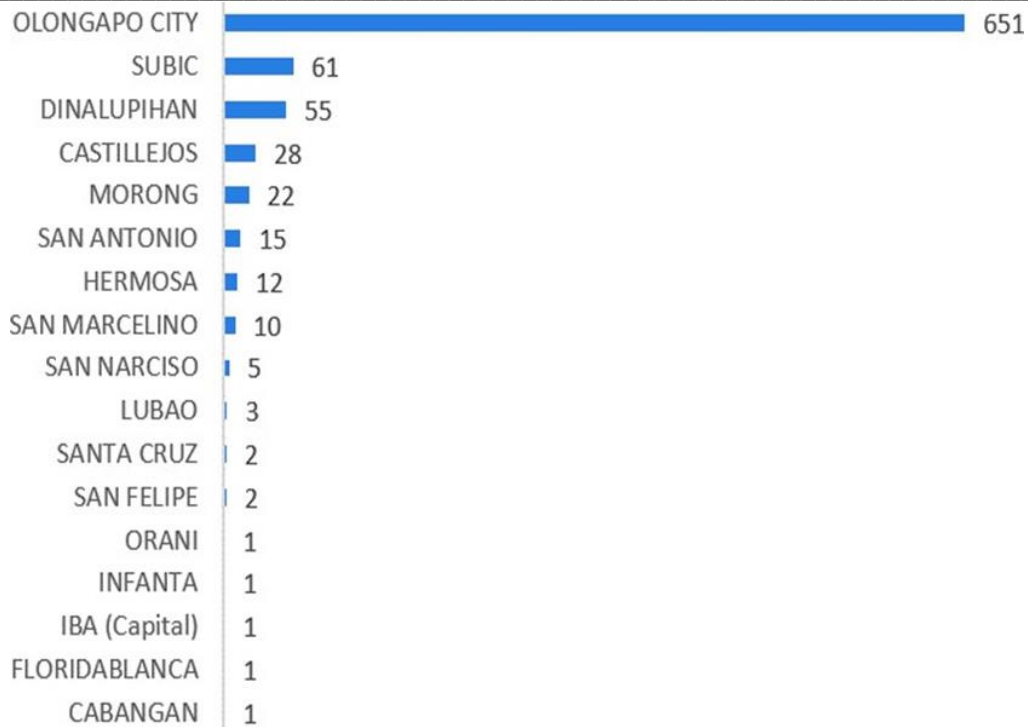
Figure 2. Distribution of low-income students as per location

Low-income students based on location

Based on this data of the low-income students in Gordon College, the locations are mainly from Olongapo City, with 651 students, followed by Subic, 61 students, and Dinalupihan, 55 students (*see figure 2*). Undeniably, the students from outside Olongapo City, such as Subic, Dinalupihan, Castillejos, Morong, and many more, only show the students from outside the city entering Gordon College to avail the benefits of Republic Act 10931 and a quality education. Similarly, the issue of the high density of students in the school is the primary concern of Jones (2017) in his article as school congestion continues to soar.

Low-income students based on Group and Aid Programs

On the other hand, the low-income students from Gordon College were also part of the indigenous groups and government aid programs such as the Listahan 2.0 and Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps). The Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps) has 28 out of the 871 low-income students, and eight students have been identified as belonging to the Listahan 2.0 program of the Department of Social Welfare and Development. While 13 out of 871 low-income students belong to the indigenous groups (*see table 5*).

Table 5. Distribution of Low-income Students per Group and Aid Program

	Frequency	Percentage
Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps)	28	3.2
Listahan 2.0	8	0.9
Indigenous Group	13	1.5

CONCLUSION

The mapping project conducted for Gordon College's low-income students during the first semester of the academic year 2023-2024 has provided valuable insights and data that will serve as the basis for program development and support initiatives. This comprehensive study has shed light on the unique challenges low-income students face within the college community. It has paved the way for targeted interventions to enhance their academic success and well-being.

The outcomes of this mapping project will guide Gordon College in developing evidence-based programs, policies, and initiatives that address the identified challenges and promote the academic, financial, and personal success of low-income students. The college aims to create an inclusive and empowering environment where all students can thrive by tailoring support systems and interventions based on the insights gained.

Furthermore, the mapping project reflects Gordon College's commitment to educational equity and social mobility. By prioritizing the needs of low-income students, the college is taking proactive steps toward dismantling barriers and ensuring that every student has an equal opportunity to succeed. This study's findings will inform ongoing efforts to refine and expand programs and services, fostering a campus culture that appreciates and supports the diversity of its student body.

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