

Reaching Out: Expanding the Presence of IMSA's Archives

Final Report

INTRODUCTION

The Leto M. Furnas Information Resource Center and IMSA Archives stand on a solid foundation laid by the original vision of the Hansen-Furnas Foundation in the summer of 1986 before the school had even opened. IMSA is very grateful that the Foundation has continued to show support for the work of the library and the Archives with this 2018 grant, which has allowed staff to build and expand on that foundation. The 2018 Hansen-Furnas Grant has funded a major revision to IMSA's Archives Finding Aid and made both the Finding Aid and Oral Histories available online worldwide via IMSA's institutional repository, DigitalCommons (see Note below). Updating and digitizing the finding aid has been part of a larger project of reorganizing and curating current collections, among which was a set of oral histories that were in storage pending processing and publishing. Because of the 2018 Hansen-Furnas Grant, this ongoing project is now up-to-date.

NOTES:

"Finding aids are tools that help a user find information in a specific record group, collection, or series of archival materials. Examples of **finding aids** include published and unpublished inventories, container and folder lists, card catalogs, calendars, indexes, registers, and institutional guides." ... [IMSA] Archives.

(National Archives, <https://www.archives.gov/research/catalog/lcdrg/elements/findingtype.html>)

[DigitalCommons@IMSA](#) reflects the scholarly, innovative, and pedagogical culture of the Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy. The goal of this online repository is to share the intellectual output of IMSA and to increase visibility and impact through worldwide access.

STAFFING

In order to effectively staff these two very different projects, a decision was made at the start of the FY19 school year to hire two part-time assistants; an Archive Aide and a specialist in Oral History. The Archive Aide, Emily Holda, has three years of college-level archive experience and is currently a graduate student in Museum Studies (see attached CV). The specialist in Oral History, Sara Goek, is a 2006 IMSA alumna who researched and wrote her Ph.D. dissertation on Oral History. In addition, Dr. Goek has worked with Information Technology, both while at IMSA and afterward (see attached CV).

PROGRAM SUPPORT

The IMSA Archives provides essential programmatic support to the academy and its stakeholders. The 2018 Hansen-Furnas Grant made it possible for IMSA to purchase a new iMac with updated software specifically for Archives, a 2 TB external hard drive, a display case, a 55" MondoPad, and a digital image converter for viewing and digitizing slides and negatives. Funds were also available to purchase a 6' table for sorting and processing donated materials and a desk for the staff working in Archives.

The new iMac has vastly increased the effectiveness of the Archives' work, particularly on the Finding Aid and the Oral History Projects, and the Western Digital external hard drive allows staff to share and back up working files. The new display case, which arrived last month, is currently being used to exhibit a History of IMSA Apparel, and a new display is already being planned for the 30-year Alumni Reunion this summer.

For five days last June/July 2018, the Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy was host to approximately 40 international STEM schools during the 14th Annual International Student Science Fair, which was held for the first time on American soil. In addition to designing a 15' display case to recognize the global collaboration, Archives also created an IMSA Authors display of materials written by current and former faculty/staff and IMSA alumni/ae, and a Nature of IMSA Archives display was organized to coincide with the ISSF/ISSN Principal's Meeting in the Library.

Since fall, Archives has been using the new MondoPad to showcase photo galleries and video recordings that celebrate the life and vision of IMSA Founder and Nobel Laureate, Dr. Leon Lederman. Over the past several years, staff have been collecting, identifying, and digitizing a rich collection of materials by, or about, Dr. Lederman that are being shared through an IMSA Founders series in DigitalCommons: <https://digitalcommons.imsa.edu/lederman/>

The MondoPad's touch screen feature provides a more engaging method for displaying and interpreting Archives' collections, such as the IMSA Timeline, which was originally in print but has been recreated as an interactive timeline that links to primary source documents and takes full advantage of the touch screen functionality: http://staff.imsa.edu/irc/imsa_timeline.html

In March, the MondoPad was used during an art opening in the library to showcase the IMSA Campus Art collection, which is also available online: https://digitalcommons.imsa.edu/campus_art/

And this July, the MondoPad will be set at the Alumni Reunion for listening to the newly released Oral History interviews: https://digitalcommons.imsa.edu/oral_histories/

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The editing and digitizing of the Archives Finding Aid significantly facilitated a more extensive, ongoing project that has brought the organization of IMSA's Archives in line with current best practice. The architecture for an electronic version was created, the structure was built, and Emily Holda has also made significant progress in editing and uploading revised sections of the finding aid, which is making the collection much more accessible to our on and off-campus constituencies.

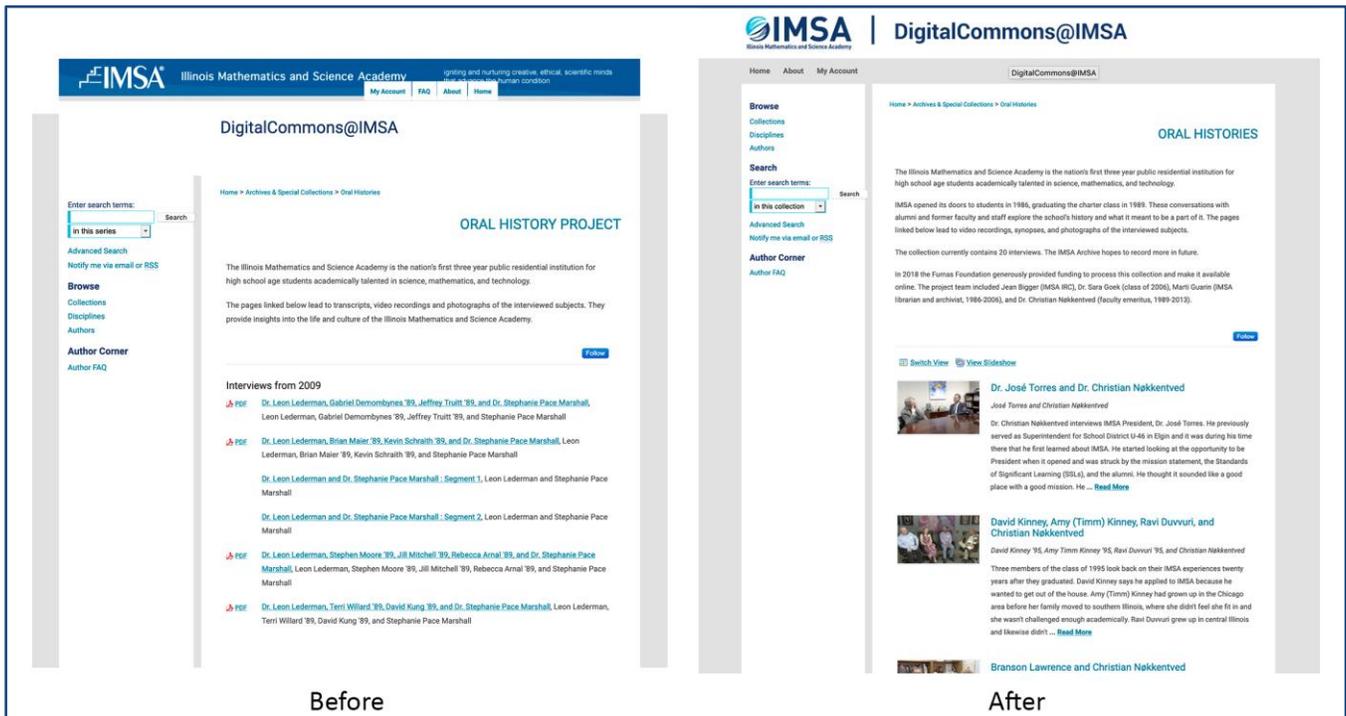
Archives Finding Aid: https://digitalcommons.imsa.edu/archives_finding_aid/

Identifying, digitizing, and sharing IMSA's unique historical collections from the Archives is expanding the academy's presence locally and worldwide, and it has led to a measurable increase in full-text downloads in DigitalCommons as the two maps on page four illustrate. The IMSA Archives is also experiencing an increase in contributions to its collections from current and former members of the IMSA community, some of whom have also shown interest in participating in the Oral History Project.

To date, most of the primary Archives collection has been reorganized and more than half has been relabeled to reflect current content along with the new IMSA brand colors and logo.



The IMSA Oral History Project has also moved forward with a newly conceived architecture and structure that reflects current best practice for oral histories and provides a more engaging user experience that fits within the parameters of DigitalCommons (before and after images below). Since September, Sara Goek has updated the six original segments and edited and uploaded eleven new segments making these videos, originally taped in 2014/2015, available for the first time.



An ancillary benefit of the Oral History project has been the development of a more standardized and streamlined procedure for interviewing, videotaping, and processing that has resulted in a faster turn around time for adding new content to the online collection. In addition to catching up on a backlog of oral history videos, three new interviews have been taped with current and retiring faculty/staff, and one new segment with IMSA’s current President, videotaped in February 2019, has already been processed and is available online: Dr. Jose Torres: https://digitalcommons.imsa.edu/oral_histories/18/

The 2018 Hansen-Furnas Grant has made it possible for IMSA’s Archives to expand its local and international presence, which aligns with IMSA’s 2022 Vision: “IMSA is a Recognized Global Leader and Catalyst in Equity and Excellence in STEM Teaching and Learning, Innovation and Entrepreneurship”



Cumulative downloads from [Archives and Special Collections](#) : 27 September, 2012 - 28 April 2019:
21,386 full-text downloads by 1,028 institutions in 145 countries



Cumulative downloads from [Archives and Special Collections](#) : 27 September, 2012 - 21 February 2018:
15,457 full-text downloads by 738 institutions in 135 countries