



Diversity Plan
Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy[®]

IMSA Board Approved - July 2014



Preface

The Multicultural Committee was formed during the 2013-2014 Academic Year and charged with the task of updating the Diversity/Multicultural Development Plan, initiated in 2003 and last updated in 2011. The committee consists of 23 faculty and staff from the following departments: President's Office, Principal's Office, Student Life, Residential Life, Science Department, Wellness Department, Foreign Languages, Human Resources, Maintenance, Information Resource Center, Development Office, Enrollment Management and Academic Opportunities, Innovation and Entrepreneurship, Professional Field Services, IT, Marketing and Communications and the Business Office. With direction from the Multicultural Education Specialist, this committee is responsible for overseeing the implementation of this plan. The process to ensure the Multicultural Committee made informed decisions regarding the update included:

1. Review of:
 - a. IMSA's current Multicultural Development Plan (MCDP)
 - b. Multicultural Vimeo presented to the Board of Trustees in 2011 on diversity initiatives at IMSA and IMSA student focus group results regarding the diversity climate at the academy,
 - c. Harvard University Implicit Association Test taken to examine personal bias.
2. Participation in Diversity Training that included related theory and an examination of class, race, gender, and sexual orientation.
3. Conducted an assessment utilizing the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS). The CAS standards assert the importance of affirming the existence of diversity and considering its influence when creating and implementing educational and developmental initiatives. In an increasingly complex and shrinking global environment, it is essential that students learn to function effectively and justly when exposed to ideas, beliefs, values, physical and mental abilities, sexual orientations, gender expressions, and cultures that differ from their own. Key areas focused on in this updated MCDP are:
 - a. Connection to current IMSA diversity practices including the IMSA mission, belief and vision statements, Standards of Significant Learning II.A and V.A, and performance evaluation.
 - b. Inclusion of subcultures of IMSA's population including students, faculty, and staff from: underrepresented populations, women, LGBTQ, and people with disabilities.
 - c. Discussion of facilities and technology as related to meeting diverse needs of IMSA community.
4. Committee work was coupled with Academy-wide input. IMSA faculty and staff were offered a Diversity/Social Justice questionnaire to complete that focused on defining diversity, incidence of social injustice, importance of addressing social injustices, specific diverse issues and concerns, and fostering a more diverse environment. A total of 58 faculty and staff participated, and the top two areas of concern were:
 - a. Lack of Diversity among Students, Faculty, and Staff
 - b. Lack of Cultural Awareness, Acceptance, Respect and Understanding



Diversity Mission Statement

The IMSA diversity mission is to create, support and sustain a community that genuinely demonstrates the value of diversity of all of its members.

Diversity Vision Statement

IMSA's diversity vision is to support and encourage an environment of trust and sensitivity to all cultures, beliefs, and viewpoints regardless of race, ethnicity, geographic origin, gender, religion, age, nationality, sexual orientation and abilities.

Diversity Stance

The affirmation, appreciation, and inclusion of multiple cultures are vital to ensure that all students, faculty, and staff and the IMSA community will be able to thrive in a multicultural academic and residential environment. From this perspective it is important that community members be effective at interacting across cultures, which is essential to IMSA's vision of "*igniting and nurturing creative, ethical scientific minds that advance the human condition*". IMSA's diverse cultural groups also include the political orientations, statewide regional cultures, and the multiplicity of beliefs, ideas, and visions that are critical to fostering an educational environment where students, faculty, and staff exchange ideas freely, encourage critical thinking, and reexamine their personal perspectives.

Diversity Goal

The overarching diversity goal, consistent with Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy law (105 IL CS 305/), is:

To inspire multicultural populations in the state of Illinois, through IMSA's residential and extension programs, to engage in mathematics and science education in an effort to promote a diverse STEM workforce.



Context for Diversity at IMSA

In order to provide a context for this *Diversity Plan (formerly the Multicultural Development Plan)*, the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education, a powerful framework based on a national model of effective programming and services was utilized to inform the plan. The plan was then connected to Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy Law (105 ILCS 305/), IMSA's beliefs, Standards of Significant Learning, Career Development Reinforcing Excellence (CADRE, and Performance Evaluation; all of which support the importance of diversity and demonstrate that everyone in the IMSA community is responsible for its implementation.

We Believe That...

- All people have equal intrinsic worth.
- All people have choices and are responsible for their actions.
- Belonging to a community requires commitment to the common good.
- Diverse perspectives enrich understanding and inspire discovery and creativity.
- Honesty, trust and respect are vital for any relationship to thrive.
- Learning never ends.
- Meaning is constructed by the learner.
- No one's path in life is predetermined.
- The ability to discern and create connections is the essence of understanding.
- We are all stewards of our planet.

Standards of Significant Learning

- **II.A** Identify unexamined cultural, historical, and personal assumptions and misconceptions that impede and skew inquiry.
- **V.A** Identify, understand, and accept the rights and responsibilities of belonging to a diverse community.

Career Development Reinforcing Excellence (CADRE)

CADRE combines performance assessment and professional growth, empowering the IMSA faculty to define itself, hold itself accountable, and become leaders in educational transformation.

- Domain 1: Planning and Preparation
 - *1b: Demonstrating knowledge of students*
Teacher actively seeks knowledge of students' backgrounds, cultures, skills, language proficiency, interests, and special needs from a variety of sources, and attains this knowledge for individual students.

Performance Evaluation – Diversity/Multiculturalism

- Supports and encourages an environment of trust and sensitivity to others' cultures, beliefs, and viewpoints (race, ethnicity, geographic origin, gender, religion, age, sexual orientation, and physical or mental ability)
 - Works effectively with groups/individuals to solve and/or prevent problems and complete projects.
 - Supports an environment in which staff members feel respected and empowered to make meaningful contributions.
 - Engages in dialogues and activities that build cross-cultural understanding and mutual respect (i.e. shows respect for others, listens to other's perspectives and needs, works cooperatively with diverse groups, etc.).
 - Appropriately challenges the unjust, unfair or uncivil behavior of others (individual or group).



Objectives for Diversity Development

Objective 1 (*President's Office, Information Resource Center, Human Resources, Development Office*):

To develop IMSA students, faculty, staff, alumni and parents who understand, respect and appreciate cultural and religious differences and who can communicate and interact effectively across these areas.

Short-term Strategy (1-2 years)

- Provide skill development training to learn to appropriately challenge social injustices, the unjust, unfair or uncivil behavior of others;
- Provide opportunities for diverse interactions, exchanges of ideas and reflection;
- Provide educational programs that focus on awareness of cultural difference, cultural commonalities;
- Work to establish a Multicultural Resource Corner featuring literature for each Diversity Awareness Month; as well as virtual resources that promote diversity.

Long-term Strategy (3 – 5 years)

- Design a comprehensive multicultural educational training program for all students, faculty, and staff;
- Develop and implement plans to secure appropriations, gifts, grants and sponsorships to support the objectives for multicultural development;
- Encourage diverse professionals to join the Board of Trustees, Fund Board and other advisory groups;
- Encourage diverse alumni to become more involved with the IMSA community (i.e. alumni awards, speaking engagements).

Objective 2 (*Admissions, Enrollment and Academic Opportunities, Professional Field Services, Development Office, Marketing and Communication*):

To develop, recruit, enroll, support, and graduate in IMSA's residential program highly qualified students from historically underrepresented populations (i.e. Black/Latino, Women, Rural, and Economically Disadvantaged) who will pursue degrees and careers in STEM.

Short-term Strategy (1 – 2 years)

- Utilize PROMISE and other STEM enrichment opportunities at IMSA to prepare a diverse array of students from the state of Illinois for a rigorous STEM curriculum;
- Address the educational needs of URP students who are struggling academically;
- Work to establish a URP alumni group to mentor URP students.

Long-term Strategy (3 – 5 years)


- Address the racially-based and income-based educational achievement gaps;
- Institute personalized learning plans to support URP students.

Objective 3 (*Professional Field Services, President's Office, Development Office, Marketing and Communication*):

To engage IMSA's external constituents (elementary/middle school students, teachers, community members) from all cultural groups, especially those from underrepresented populations, in STEM learning experiences.

Short-term Strategy (1 – 2 years)

- Design and develop enrichment opportunities to expose the State of Illinois URP students to STEM;
- Create and implement professional development programs to advance STEM education in URP groups throughout the State of Illinois.



Long-term Strategy (3 – 5 years)

- Establish strategic partnerships with individuals, school districts/educational institution, surrounding communities, businesses, alumni, civic organizations, and IMSA parents related to multicultural development.

Objective 4 (Human Resources, President’s Office, Principal’s Office, Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness):

To build the capabilities of IMSA faculty and staff to meet the needs of students from diverse cultural backgrounds and address cultural issues.

Strategy (1 – 5 years)

- Develop and implement plans to secure a diverse pool of highly qualified candidates for all IMSA positions and to hire, develop and support a more diverse faculty and staff;
- Develop and implement programs/provide professional development opportunities to ensure that all IMSA faculty and staff are aware of and prepared to help address multicultural issues and needs;
- Support faculty/staff conducting research that focuses on the differences and commonalities that exist among the subcultures of IMSA’s population (i.e. female students in STEM).

Objective 5 (President’s Office, Student Life, Residential Life):

To provide diversity/multicultural programming for students to enhance their understanding of cultures and historical experiences in an effort to establish intercultural relationships.

Short-term Strategy (1 – 2 years)

- Utilize student organizations to provide diversity programs on campus that establish and promote multicultural interactions;
- Encourage faculty/staff to be more involved in multicultural student programming;
- Provide leadership and diversity resources to the various groups that address social injustice based on race, sexual orientation, gender, religious/non-religious affiliations through the Peer Multicultural Education Board and Student Council.
- Address adversities that males may face and promote positive male characteristics.

Long-term Strategy (3 – 5 years)

- Develop and implement programs and services that promote multicultural awareness, understanding and appreciation among IMSA students;
- Ensure that multicultural student programming is meaningful and progressive;
- Work with advisors of student organizations to ensure they have the knowledge and resources needed to guide student diversity-related programming.

Objective 6 (Principal’s Office, Curriculum Assessment Leaders, President’s Office, Information Resource Center):

To integrate the diversity focused Standards of Significant Learning II.A and V.A into the curriculum of all academic disciplines where appropriate.

Short-term Strategy (1 – 2 years)

- Provide academic departments with online diversity resources and tools;
- Encourage academic disciplines to work with the IRC, whose collections represent the diversity of people and ideas in our community.

Long-term Strategy (3 – 5 years)

- Develop a social justice/diversity/multicultural curriculum in which students can earn academic credit;

- Implement strategies to incorporate diversity in academic courses, where appropriate.


Objective 7 (Student Life, Residential Life, College and Academic Counseling, Human Resources, Security, Student Inquiry and Research, Innovation and Entrepreneurship):

To ensure that the various cultures within IMSA’s population have the resources and support needed to feel safe and valued in a diverse community.

Strategy (1 – 5 years)

- *People with Disabilities*
 - Ensure that students, faculty, and staff who identify as having a disability receive appropriate support regarding services and accommodations;
 - Ensure students, faculty, and staff who identify as having a disability have access to services and accommodations;
 - Ensure that students, faculty, and staff with disabilities receive reasonable and appropriate accommodations as to have equal access to all institutional programs and services regardless of the type and extent of the disability;
 - Support victims of bias-related incidents.
- *LGBTQ Populations*
 - Promote and advocate for services and programs addressing the unique needs of LGBTQ students, faculty, and staff;
 - Provide coming-out support with particular attention to multiple identities, especially race, ethnicity, disability, religion, and family-of-origin issues;
 - Identify and support individuals facing difficulties regarding gender identity and expression and for those experiencing internalized transphobia;
 - Provide services for victims, survivors, and perpetrators of homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia;
 - Support for LGBTQ victims of bias-related incidents;
 - Provide resources and training for staff and faculty on responding to and working with students who identify as LGBTQ or are questioning gender identity or sexuality.
- *Women*
 - Empower students, faculty, and staff to create a campus climate that values all women and their diverse identities and experiences;
 - Provide resources on issues that disproportionately affect women such as sexual harassment, relationship violence, sexual assault, and body image issues;
 - Discuss Women’s colleges as an option for higher education.
- *Underrepresented Populations (URP) i.e. Black/Latino/Rural/Economically Disadvantaged – as defined by IMSA*
 - Provide an opportunity for URP faculty/staff to convene to discuss related issues and provide an additional level of support for URP students;
 - Create and implement programs to ensure that underrepresented populations have equal access and support to be successful in our academic offerings in STEM;
 - Discuss Historically Black Colleges and Universities and Hispanic-Serving Colleges and Universities as options for higher education.

Objective 8 (Human Resources, President’s Office, Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness):



To ensure compliance with any federal, state and local laws, policies, and guidelines, as well as current trends that pertains to social justice/diversity/multiculturalism.

Strategies (1 – 5 years)

- Review and align IMSA policies and procedures with federal guidelines annually;
- Assess the diversity climate at IMSA and evaluate diversity/multicultural program effectiveness to document achievement of stated goals and objectives, demonstrate accountability, and provide evidence of improvement.

Objective 9 (Facilities, Residential Life, Business Office):

To create and maintain facilities sensitive to the needs of persons with disabilities as well as the needs of other constituencies.

Short-term Strategy (1 – 2 years)

- Ensure facilities include the following features:
 - Accessible offices and program spaces;
 - Adequate and appropriate spaces when administering accommodated exams;
 - Conference room and training space adequate to accommodate persons who use wheelchairs and scooters;
 - Nearby availability of accessible rest rooms, water fountains, elevators or ramps, and corridors;
 - Adequate accessible parking convenient to the facility;
 - Multisensory emergency warning devices.

Long-term Strategy (3 – 5 years)

- Modify existing facilities as needed to further support diverse population needs.

Objective 10 (Information Technology Systems, IMSA Media Services, Information Resource Center, Enrollment and Academic Opportunities):

To provide access to current and appropriate assistive technology.

Strategy (1 – 5 years)

- Secure and maintain assistive technology resources suitable to the academic environment. Examples of assistive technology include assistive listening devices, alternative keyboards and other input devices, touch screens, large print word processors, note-taking devices, e-text readers, speech-to-text software, text-to-speech software, closed captioning, predictive text software and screen readers;
- Inform students, faculty, and staff on the legal and ethical implications of misuse of these devices as it pertains to intellectual property, harassment, privacy, and social networks.

Conclusion

The *IMSA Diversity Plan*, with approval and oversight from the IMSA Board of Trustees, is an organic document developed and maintained by the Multicultural Development Committee, led by the Multicultural Education Specialist. Through the establishment of IMSA's goals, objectives and strategies, this plan furthers IMSA's commitment to an outstanding educational environment; one that appreciates, affirms, and includes students, faculty, and staff from a multiplicity of cultural backgrounds, who have high talent and interest in mathematics and science. The *Plan* is the catalyst for a dynamic, multi-year process that requires IMSA's administrative units, student/residential life, academic departments, and external programs to implement, support, provide resources,



and evaluate specific strategies that address diversity/multicultural development. The results of these efforts will be documented in an annual report to the IMSA Board of Trustees and shared with the IMSA community.