

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT

Evan Glazer

January 10, 2022

Leadership Matters

I'd like to begin my report this month to welcome Dr. Tina Halliman to the IMSA Board of Trustees. Appointed by the Illinois State Superintendent of Education, Dr. Halliman brings fifteen years of school division leadership, currently serving as superintendent for SPEED Special Education Cooperative District 802. She is also the parent of an IMSA alum, and thus will bring multiple perspectives that add value to our advancement. Please see her bio enclosed to learn more about her background and accomplishments.

This report provides the Board of Trustees with an overview of progress on Academy priorities over the past month. Through our summer retreat, the IMSA Cabinet has identified a core goal for this school year: By the end of 2021-2022 IMSA will cultivate a healthy culture for learning, working and impact through a lens of Equity and Excellence. We have identified three crucial pillars for our success this year: Well-being, Equity and Excellence, and Impact. Each pillar has a set of priority outcomes with indicators described on the Operational Excellence Dashboard shared at regular board meetings. Below are some strategy updates in each of these domains.

Well-being

- COVID rates picked up slightly before winter break, however did not impact our operations. The Kane County Department of Health labeled the cases an outbreak because there were multiple transmissions. As an added precaution, we will have SHIELD testing twice a week through the end of January, which allows us to detect the virus early and respond quickly. We will continue to monitor mitigation measures, especially during winter months when rates may increase with the more contagious variant Omicron. For example, we will expect students to remain on campus in January and limit travel for students except for essential reasons. We will also continue with vaccination/booster clinics on campus.
- The Cabinet has also developed contingency plans to move to remote learning in the event we have a spike in COVID cases. Our first plan is to support hybrid learning where students can access classrooms through Zoom if they have been impacted by COVID as a direct contact, keeping in mind students who may be ill are not expected to participate in remote learning. We are also providing guidance to faculty and student affairs teams regarding preparations for remote learning.

- The School Counselors and Residence Life team continue to pilot new approaches focused on student well-being, including group exercise opportunities and the Mental Health Monday program. The counselors have been providing individual support with over 1250 contacts this fall term. Resident counselors in 1502 created a relaxation space in the hall commons for student use. In January 2022, students will have the opportunity to take excused mental health days as IMSA adopts the mental health days law signed by J.B. Pritzker. Also in January 2022, the Residence Life team will participate in Mental Health First Aid training. Please refer to the Student Affairs updates for more details.
- This school year we have been piloting a hybrid work arrangement to offer flexibility to colleagues during the pandemic. We obtained [midyear feedback](#) from colleagues and have made [some refinements](#) to address colleague needs.

Impact

- We are reaching out to legislators where we don't have representation among the student body or where we will be losing representation after the class of 2022 graduates. We are also working with PAC to organize virtual events for parents/students from these areas. As of Dec. 3, applications for Class of 2025 are representative from 59 of 59 Senate Districts (recruiting for District 1) and 102/118 House Districts.
- On January 23, our Enrollment Management team will offer a virtual Open House as we approach the admissions deadline of February 15. Please see the Strategy Leadership report for additional enrollment management updates.
- We are recruiting Alumni for CTL's Mars and Space STEM League program who are professionals within the field to participate in a one-time virtual session with students to give them exposure to career opportunities and/or real-world applications. Please see the Strategy Leadership report for more details on recent alumni engagement.
- Student (SSI) and Educator (SEO) outreach opportunities this month will be virtual. Please refer to the enclosed schedule of events.

Equity and Excellence

- Members of the SLT will be launching a Racial Equity Task Force to work collaboratively with the IMSA community to openly discuss race, solve vexing racial problems, and enact strategies to engender and sustain racial equity at IMSA. The USC Race and Equity Center will be working with our team, as well as offering a series of workshops to all colleagues during the second half of the school year.
- This month our DEI team is launching a self-paced cultural competency course for colleagues. Board members are encouraged to participate in a joint effort with colleagues to advance our cultural proficiency.

- The IMSA DEI team, ITMC and OPA offered a campus-wide MLK celebration on January 18 featuring keynote speaker Courtney Thompson ('03), co-founder of the IMSA Black Alumni Association.
- The February 18 Community Day, from 8:30-12:00 will be an opportunity to continue professional learning on cultural competency. Dr. Siri Brown, Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs and Student Success at Peralta Community College will be our keynote, followed by sessions on *Meaningfully integrating racial topics in STEM curriculum*, and *Affirming students' racial and cultural identities in curricula*. The sessions will be offered virtually, and the Board of Trustees are encouraged to attend.
- We are recruiting Black and Latinx Alumni to tutor math/science subjects to help our PROMISE and Excel students during scheduled study sessions.

Other updates

- Intersession occurred on January 10-14, 2022 ([see program booklet](#)). 56 elective options were available for students in a wide array of subject areas that aim to provide enrichment and exposure to topics not readily available in our curriculum (see attachment). This year sessions were facilitated remotely via Zoom for the following reasons: increased access to alumni, parent, and guest presenters (over 20 in this year's program); reduced COVID exposure to our IMSA community; ensure consistency in planning in the event the pandemic worsens over the holidays; provide students with more time at home. IMSA intends to provide in-person and travel study intersession opportunities again in 2023.
- The Cabinet participated in a mid-year workshop in December to review important priorities for the next few years, leadership experience/skills needed, and potential gaps so we can understand what Cabinet roles we should pursue in the future. We will not necessarily backfill existing positions, but rather pursue roles that support successful pursuit of our priorities. We intend to conduct a national search in an effort to attract a diverse talent pool.
- The current organizational chart for the remainder of the school year is enclosed. Minor adjustments were made with the transition to Dr. Hernandez and Dr. Gay who are serving in interim roles. For example, DEI is now reporting jointly to the President and Student Affairs.
- We started the school year down three faculty positions: two math and one history, as well as one CAC. I am pleased to report all have been hired to start in January 2022. Unfortunately, we are still short with resident counselors and continue our recruitment efforts.
- Starting this month, I will begin serving on the Board of Directors for the Illinois Association for Gifted Children (IAGC).
- Later this month, I will be attending the NCSSES Leadership Summit with Dr. Comfort Akwaji-Anderson. The summit focuses on putting diversity, equity and inclusion at the forefront of our work.

- We are in process of meeting with financial institutions and local government to explore financing options to support development of new residence halls. The Board approved a development plan two years ago, however that was put on hold with the onset of the pandemic. Please refer to the report in the Board Discussion item on strategy for capital development for more information. I will continue to update the Board as I gather more information.
- Our food services provider has had difficulty this year with increased food prices and labor shortages. While they are asking for a modification in the contract, it is comparable to contracts from previous years, adjusted for inflation (see data enclosed in consent agenda).
- During the COVID pandemic, we have postponed review and potential updates to 19 Board policies. Enclosed is a [policy matrix](#) to catch up by the end of July. First read will occur in the Executive Board meetings in the month prior to the Board review date.
- Board members are invited to participate in the Admissions Review Committee on March 10 and 11 (by Zoom). Please connect with Glenn Engelberg, Executive Director of Enrollment Management.