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2018 Annual Report of the work in IMSA's Archives

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Annual Report
of the work in
IMSA's Archives

“Preserving the present so the future
will know its past.”*

30 July 2018

Annual Report of the work in IMSA's Archives Academic year, 2017-2018

Preface:

The IMSA Archives, housed in the Leto M. Furnas Information Resource Center, serves to collect and preserve materials relating to the history and ethos of the Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy. The Archives includes both special and general collections with materials about IMSA's establishment, led by Dr. Leon Lederman and Governor James Thompson. There are materials about the Academy's opening in the fall of 1986 and its development since, as well as about its ideas and programs and how they evolved. We have sample curricula, presidential speeches, samples of student work, as well as material about and from partnership programs for educators and schools. We have both student and institutional publications and we have a great deal of iconographic material ranging from posters to snapshots. All of the materials illuminate the lives of IMSA's students, alumni/ae, faculty and staff on campus and out in the wide, wide world.

Documents and images from the Archives can also be found in the "Archives & Special Collections" section on IMSA's Digital Commons [DC]**. In addition, some documents and images not otherwise available in IMSA's Archives can be found in the DC.

[Disclaimer: In no way does the Archives attempt to fulfill IMSA's obligations under the State of Illinois' record-keeping requirements for state agencies. Those records that IMSA is required to keep are housed in separate repositories, like the Registrar's Office for student records.]

Introduction:

The archive of an institution plays a key role as the keeper of the institutional memory. That role can only be fulfilled if materials are gathered, preserved and made accessible. Moreover, IMSA's volunteer professional archivists and the Library staff have institutional longevity. Together we have known most students, now alumni/ae, as well as teachers and staff, including those no longer at the institution, and this knowledge has significantly aided our work. Like last year, the archivists have continued developing collections and making them available on Digital Commons [DC], work that continues to be made possible by the expertise and creativity of Jean Bigger and her work on DC. In

*The quote on the title page was inspired by the collections campaign slogan of the Danish National Museum, seen in Copenhagen April, 2015. [Trans. by Nokkentved]

** "Archives and Special Collections," *Digital Commons @ IMSA*, http://digitalcommons.imsa.edu/special_collections/

addition, our work continues to strengthen and bring up to date the organization of collections in general, to build new collections, and to make the Archives more accessible to administration, faculty, staff, students, alumni/ae, and the general public. To that end the volunteer staff have delineated four domains that together constitute our work.

Domains:

1. Maintenance of the current collections:

It has been a busy year. First and foremost we have done a lot of sorting and filing as we continue the work of reorganizing collections. The papers related to the funding crisis of 1987-88, have now been organized by type and date, so that material is now readily available. This includes material about IMSA holding classes in the Rotunda of the Statehouse in Springfield, as part of the effort to bringing the issue to the attention of legislators. While there is a great deal in the clippings files on the crisis, that material is already readily available and remains in the clipping file. We have yet to create an image gallery relating to these events. As part of the ongoing work, descriptions of each collection have been crafted and added as the first item in a collection. These descriptions will ultimately appear in our finding aid, as we bring it up to date.

The Record Group: Personnel and Planning, later renamed HR, is a work in progress. It is a large collection and arrived in the Archives essentially as working office files, but we have begun sorting and rearranging according to archival best practice. The collection includes a mixture of papers, some of archival interest, some not, and some belong elsewhere. Included are also the papers of Connie Jo Hatcher, which will most likely become its own collection.

Student and institutional publications have received a lot of our attention again this year. We arranged to have the complete run of IMSA Annual Reports and four volumes of IMSA360 bound. Back-up copies have been reorganized and excess copies have been removed. We have a number of collections in three ring binders, like Strategic Plans, for instance. We have disposed of many of the binders and filed the contents of them in more archive appropriate ways, without changing the organization of the contents. Here too we have checked for excess copies, since our space is at a premium. Lastly let me note that all of the works by IMSA authors in the Archives are now labeled, and those in circulation have been identified as such in the library catalogue, but still require a mark on the spine.

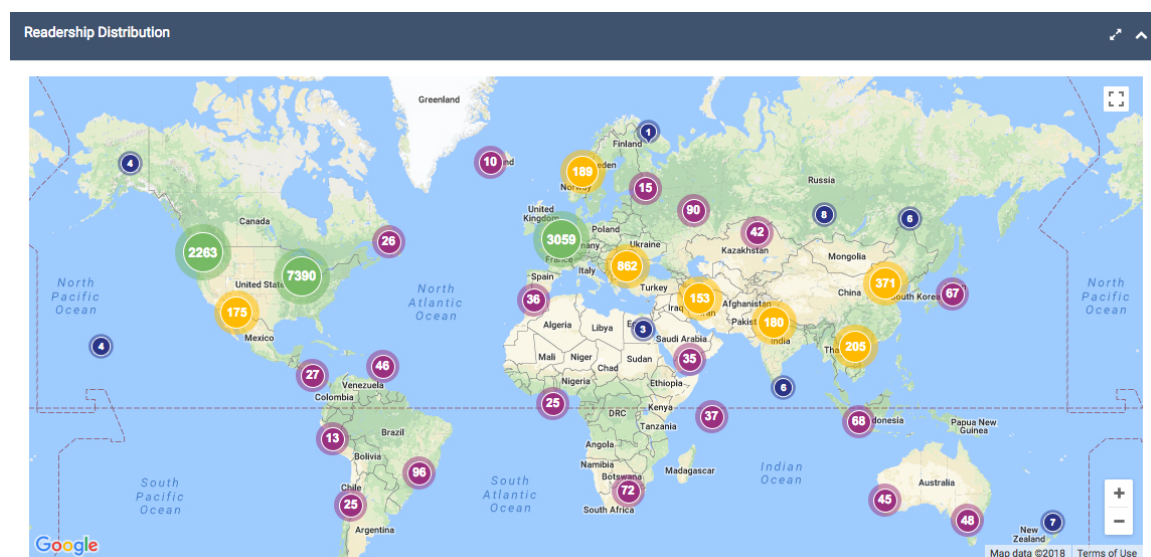
2. Collections Development and Accessibility:

We are pleased about and grateful to the Hansen-Furnas Foundation for giving us a substantial grant. The core of the Archive's application asked for monetary assistance to expand our presence on campus and in the world. We will purchase equipment to make increased displays of physical materials possible for the IMSA community and any guests on campus. We also requested electronic equipment to display digital materials, like

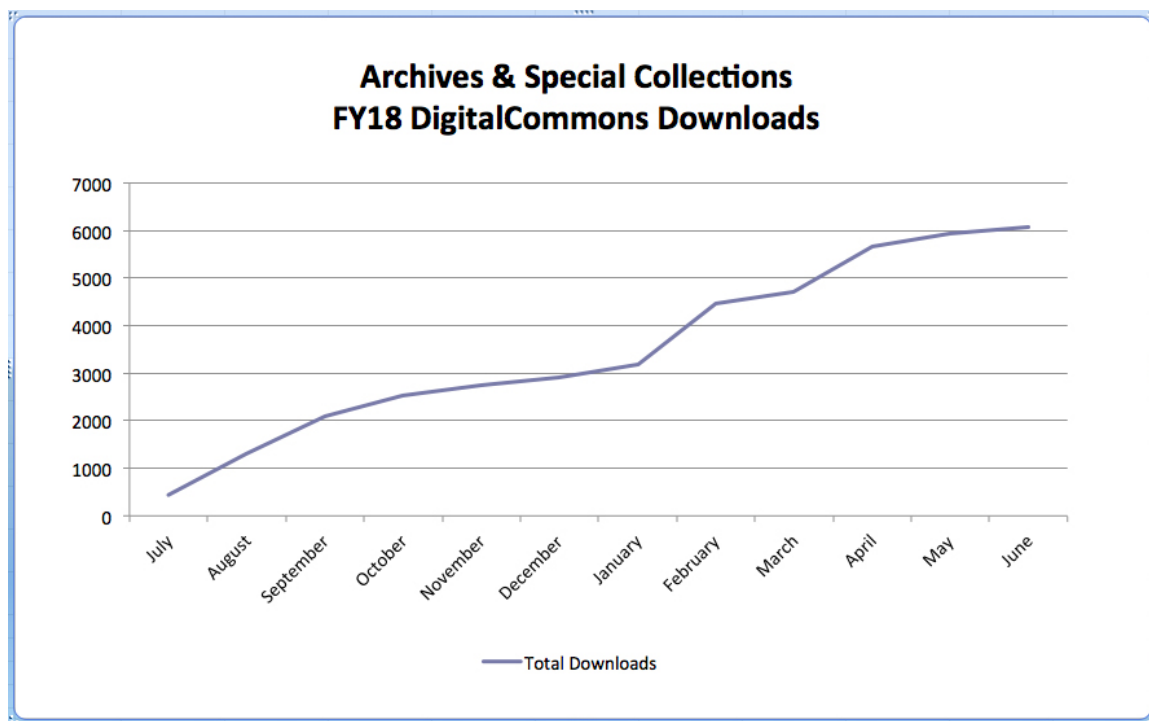
photo galleries and our interactive timeline to name but two types, on campus and to make it possible to add more to Digital Commons. In addition, we asked for funds for two stipends so we could pay two people for two separate projects. The first is to organize and make available the videos that are part of our Oral History Project. Some of the videos are currently available via DC, but are without sufficient information and support and more are awaiting processing. This material includes recorded conversations between Stephanie P. Marshall and Leon Lederman, interviews with alumni/ae and at least one conversation with a retired teacher. We are anxious to make this material available and we have now found someone who can create an on-line format to provide context for this material and to make it searchable. Once we complete what we have, the plan is to gather more interviews, conversations and possibly other materials and thus to expand our collection of oral histories. The second project is to update our finding aid. Given the updated organization of our physical collections and the expansion of the “Archives and Special Collections” section on DC, the finding aid requires significant updating and catalogue numbers or location or both of specific items should be added.

We received two new collections this year. One came from the Communications Office, which contains copies of publications, news clippings and news releases as well as a few other things. Some of this material we already have in our collections. Many of the news clippings, for example, are duplicates. Since we had so few, the collection of news releases is, however, a very much-appreciated addition. All of this has been integrated into the appropriate collections. In addition, a retiring math teacher left us some of her teaching files, probably enough for two or three archive boxes once that material has been processed. Furthermore, in the course of the year, we have received many items for existing collections, hence some of the time spent on sorting and filing.

As the above indicates, our work with Jean Bigger to build up the “Archives and Special Collections” on DC is ongoing. The user data we receive from DC indicates that significant interest in our site continues and is even growing. As the screen shot below shows, requests for downloads from “Archives and Special Collections” made between



27 September, 2012, when the site became active and 14 August 2018, when the screen shot was taken, have come from all over the world, but especially from users in the Mid-West. The line graph below further shows the significant increase in downloads by month for fiscal year 2018, all indicating a widespread and increasing use of IMSA materials from DC.



3. Services:

The Archives continues to provide programmatic support to the institution, and to individuals. Per tradition, the Archives was open and had mounted exhibits for the Saturday of alumni/ae weekend. While there seemed fewer visitors this year, the ones who came typically stayed longer and were more engaged in conversation around the exhibits. We had borrowed a Mondopad for various displays including one about the availability of alumni/ae materials on DC. All were quite popular. It is an indication of how useful this device would be for us as a permanent feature, especially as we can easily vary exhibits. Also per tradition, we mounted an exhibit, with the help of library staff, of IMSA ornaments, given to faculty and staff. There is one for each year that IMSA has been open.

This year the International Student Science Fair was held at IMSA, the first year the ISSF was held in the USA. The Archives contributed artifacts to one exhibit honoring the ISSF and its participants, and the Archives mounted another two, one in the Library where teachers and principles of visiting schools gathered, and one in the Archives. The exhibit in the library included examples of books published by IMSA authors, i.e. alumni/ae, staff and faculty, and of internal publications like the student literature

magazine, a student science magazine and a math magazine written mostly by faculty but including some student articles. The Archive exhibit was designed to give an impression of who and what IMSA is.

We continue to have open hours and to talk with walk-ins, and have many conversations about IMSA's history. We maintain cordial relations with faculty and staff, encouraging all to think of the Archives when they have material that is no longer needed.

4. Operations:

Operations continue to depend on two professional archivist volunteers, student volunteers, and help from the library staff. Here it should be noted that without the expertise and work of Jean Bigger we would not have been able to make so much of our material available on DC as we have. Furthermore, she is of signal help also on practical matters like mounting an exhibit, or supervising student volunteers. This past year we continued to operate without a budget, except for a small fund based on contributions, including from Dr. Jose Torres, IMSA's President. To be sure, the Library includes supplies for the Archives in its purchase orders. In the coming year, we will have a budget, thanks to the very generous donation by the Hansen-Furnas Foundation. We hope to get a lot accomplished by this time next year.

Below is a table of the hours contributed to the Archives since 1 July 2017 by two volunteers as well as several student workers. (The hours contributed by the Library staff are not included herein.)

Person(s)	Hours
----- The two volunteer archivists	330
Students assigned to the Library	40

Conclusion and Goals:

We have had another good year in the Archives. We have acquired two significant contributions of materials, and a good deal has been added to existing collections. Progress has been made in our continuing efforts to reorganize several significant collections. Works by IMSA authors are getting more attention, especially with the permanent exhibit of works that are part of the Library's circulating collection and the on-line catalogue of those works. The responses to the exhibits, we mounted, have been positive. The alumni/ae spent more time than in the past looking at and talking about the honor year exhibits, and the exhibits on the Mondopad also drew much interest (at least

to gauge from the number of people and the time they spent looking). The exhibits that were up while the participants of the ISSF were on campus also drew attention and comments. One teacher, for example, who especially spent time looking at the exhibit in the Archives itself, and who spoke to us at length, was inspired, he said, to start an archive in his school. We were able to get several important institutional publications bound so they are now readily available, and we now have a significant collection of bound publications. We may even expand that collection in the coming year. IMSA's Digital Commons, including the "Archives and Special Collections" section continues to draw an expanding audience around the world. We hope that continues, and we certainly expect to continue working with Jean Bigger to broaden the Archives' presence on DC. Moreover, we will continue to identify collections and images for digitization, and where appropriate, add collections designed to preserve IMSA's history and ethos as well as to inform and engage our stakeholders.

The big news for the past academic year is, of course, the very generous grant from the Hansen-Furnas Foundation. Our priorities for the coming year will, needless to say, be to implement that grant. We have already begun the process of filling the two stipended positions. For the one project, we have spoken with an alumna who has direct experience with oral histories and with electronic media and she has agreed to work on our oral histories. We have had lengthy discussions over the past year about how best to update the finding aid and we have contacted a person, currently working part time at IMSA, who has the attention to detail we need, and who could fill the second stipended position. Some of the major equipment we included in the grant is being ordered, and we are currently planning for the uses of that equipment, like exhibits to show on the Mondopad and to mount in the display case.

Besides the work to be done by the two assistants paid for by the grant, we plan to maintain the current level of activity. The regular hours have proven helpful and will be maintained. Student workers have been productive and we have plenty for them to do. The library staff has been very supportive, for which we are grateful and which we anticipate will continue.

Respectfully submitted:

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