

Annual Report
of the work in
IMSA's Archives

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

30 June 2019

Annual Report of the work in IMSA's Archives **Academic year, 2018-2019**

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 institutional repository, Digital Commons [DC]** It should be noted that some documents and images not available in IMSA's Archives are accessible through 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:

It has been a special year for the Archives. A most generous grant from the Hansen-Furnas Foundation has made significant progress possible as we continued the work to meet the standards of best practice, and to align with IMSA's 2022 Vision. We were able to hire an archive aide and a specialist in oral history. The Oral History section in the repository has now been restructured and edited, the interviews are available in a much more user-friendly format, and they have been shown among other places at Alumni/ae Weekend. As the Archive Aide worked on revising, updating and digitizing the Finding

*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/

Aid, the reorganization of the Record Groups (RG) was completed and all of the boxes have been either relabeled with the new RG names and the new IMSA logo, or are ready for relabeling. Moreover, in ways that go beyond these projects, the grant and the work of the two part-timers has fueled the enthusiasm and energy of the two volunteer professional archivists, and of the repository manager.

All of these changes, as well as the new computer, are facilitating better access to our collections and is making the work of the archivists much more efficient. With the new furniture, the Archives looks more inviting and provides improved workspace for patrons and staff. Lastly it should be mentioned that with the online Finding Aid and new means of making virtual and actual displays, the presence of the Archives in the community is expanding, indicated among other things by an increase in donations of materials.

Domains:

1. Maintenance of the current collections:

Much of the work again this year was focused on bringing our collections in line with current best practice. By the beginning of the academic year, we had reorganized RGs 1 through 6. With a newly hired archive aide to digitize the "Finding Aid," it became imperative to update the rest of the RGs. Throughout the year, therefore, we worked on reorganizing RG 7 through 63, some were renamed or renumbered, some were joined together, and others were split into several RGs. The RG "Faculty," for instance, was split up and each of the seven academic teams on campus received its own RG number. As more long time faculty retire, the collection of materials has expanded extensively making this change necessary. The RG "Personnel and Planning" on the other hand was split into two, with one dedicated to "Personnel" and the other to "Planning". The new numbering and labeling also follows a more logical order, with related RGs next to each other; with Research next to Planning, for example. Unlike with RG 1 through 6, however, the effort to re-organize, sort, and curate the content of individual RGs, with some exceptions, has been minimal. "Campus Speakers," "Student Publications," and the three RGs concerning Alumni, for example, have also been curated and reorganized. Work on the content of each RG is a process that will receive more attention in the coming year.

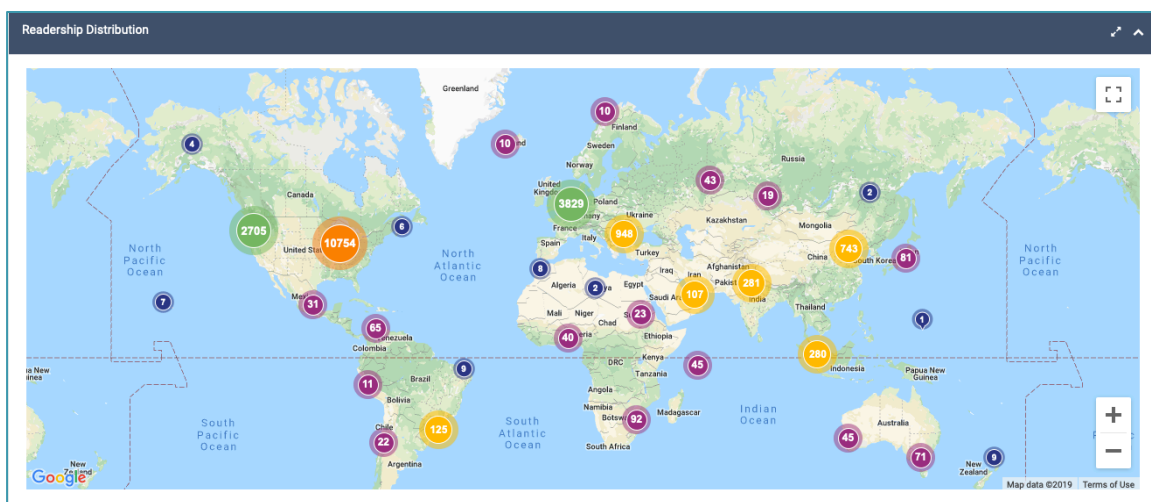
Not everything we were able to accomplish this year was related to the grant. We reorganized the material stored in the Annex, and we were able to dispose of or move things like disused picture frames to create more room and a workspace. We also rearranged the shelves and archive boxes in the Archives itself thus making more efficient use of the rather limited space we have. In addition, we had the IMSA Fund Board's annual report and the *IMS Alum* bound, thus adding to the collection of bound publications we can make available.

2. Collections Development and Accessibility:

The key accomplishments in this domain are clearly the work on the Oral History collection and on the Finding Aid. While significant numbers of the interviews in the collection were already available on DC, little if any information about the interview was included. The specialist in oral history designed a much more effective structure compatible with DC, which provides information about who is interviewed and when, supplies a synopsis, and gives more direct access to the video. With these changes, we have added three new interviews and will resume videotaping interviews with alumni/ae when the next opportunity arises.¹ The archive aide has created a structure for the Finding Aid and has now placed online key sections that reflect the reorganization of the collections.² The Finding Aid not only contains references to our in-house collections, but also to what we have in DC, and where appropriate, links to online materials.

It is a pleasure to report that important donations of archival materials have been made during this past year. We have received additional documents from the Principal's Office. The communications office added to our extensive clippings files as well as a significant number of original News Releases to what had, until now, been a thin collection. A retiring math teacher donated several archive boxes worth of teaching materials, and additional IMSA Wear has been added.

In addition, student workers have been scanning and making “flipping books” of old yearbooks and uploading them to DC making them more accessible. Of course, digitizing our Finding Aid is not just spurring the volunteer archivists to action, more importantly it is increasingly making access to our collections more accessible. Lastly, let me note that the Alumni Association Board has graciously allowed the Archives to add a monthly report to their facebook page called “News from the Archives.”



Available data: 12/16/2014 to 08/14/2019

¹ https://digitalcommons.imsa.edu/oral_histories/

² https://digitalcommons.imsa.edu/archives_finding_aid/

3. Services:

During the course of the year, the library staff and the archivists, planned, mounted, and in some cases, staffed a number of exhibits with materials from the Archives and the library. In July the International Student Science Fair held its annual conference at IMSA, the first held in the USA. Three exhibits were organized for that event, a large ~~one~~ display with gifts from previous participating schools, which were located on a world map. In addition, two smaller exhibits featured IMSA student, faculty and staff authors, and the last in the Archives itself, highlighted the nature of IMSA as an institution. It could be noted that this last exhibit led to an extended conversation with a teacher from a school in South Korea about the Archives' collection policy and the benefit of having an archive.

In the fall, one of IMSA's founders sadly passed away. The day we received the news, we quickly put up a small memorial exhibit that was later expanded into a borrowed display case, so we could include photographs, documents, and artifacts. The exhibit was expanded further and is now on a long-term loan that is being displayed in the school building's central hallway. We dedicated the new display case, we were able to purchase with the Hansen-Furnas monies, with a colorful display of IMSA Wear covering the life of the institution with sports, club, and event tee shirts and hats. There is even an apron for a faculty member who served breakfast to the seniors on the very first graduation day morning. A small exhibit of sample holdings in the Archives was put together for an open house held after the school year's concluding Community Day. One could add that the work of the two volunteer archivists was honored at that Community Day, when it was possible to make a brief presentation about the work that the Hansen-Furnas grant made possible.

The new Mondopad has seen good use. In Illinois a small percentage of monies spent on capital development projects is dedicated to purchase art created by artists resident in Illinois. A slideshow of all the art on campus was shown continuously to on and off campus visitors on the day IMSA's most recent acquisitions, made under that program, were dedicated and displayed. That slideshow proved useful on several other occasions during art-related events on campus. For example, the slides were shown during a celebration of student art at the end of the January Intersession, and as part of an exhibit of artwork done by IMSA's fine arts teacher. On a number of occasions, IMSA's interactive Timeline has been shown, as have several of the oral history interviews.

Saturday of Alumni/ae Weekend is an important day for the Archives. This year, displays were created for the graduating classes of 1989 (the Charter Class), 1994, 1999, 2004, and 2014. The displays included yearbooks, bound copies of student publications from the appropriate years, Presentation Day abstract catalogues, and so on. The Archives itself was open with the new furniture and labeling project being on display. In addition, we had a display of books by alumni/ae authors and several displays on the Mondopad, of which the oral history interview with Dr. Skinner and the collection of doctoral dissertations done by alumni/ae were especially popular.

Lastly it should be noted that we continued to serve walk-ins during our regular hours, processed new acquisitions, fulfilled requests from various parts of the institution, and searched for requested documentary or iconographic materials.

4. Operations:

Operations worked differently this year. Day to day operations continued to depend on two professional archivist volunteers and help from the library staff, especially from Jean Bigger. However, during the past year we had a budget thanks to the generosity of the Hansen-Furnas Foundation, which made it possible for IMSA to hire two part-time staff members. The grant also made it possible to make a number of purchases, including a new computer, the Mondopad, a display case, archive furniture, and supplies. In addition, there is a small fund, based on contributions from staff and alumni/ae, which this year like last, paid for the binding of IMSA publications.

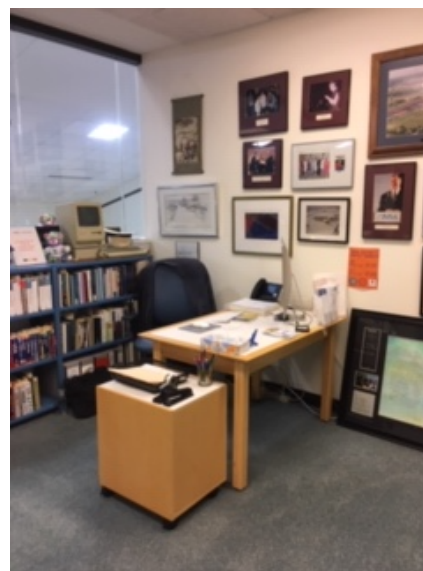
Below is a table of the hours contributed to the Archives since 1 July 2017, by the two volunteers, as well as the hours worked by the two part-time staff members. (The hours contributed by the Library staff are not included herein.)

| Person(s) | Hours |
|---------------------------------------|--------|
| ----- The two volunteer archivists | 436.25 |
| The two stipended positions | 422.75 |

Conclusion and Goals:

What a year it has been! With many, many thanks to the Hansen-Furnas Foundation and their very generous grant so much has been accomplished. Several years ago, the two volunteer archivists set out to bring IMSA's collections up to contemporary best practice. With the work of the past academic year, it is fair to say that the structure to accomplish that goal is in place, and the re-organization of the materials in each record group is well on its way. The ongoing work of digitizing the Finding Aide is expanding our ability to serve our public, and the Oral History Project has given us a solid start on making our extensive iconographic collections available. With the new Mondopad and display case, the visibility of the Archives within IMSA has expanded as seen in the attention paid to exhibits and in the increase in donations of documents, images and artifacts to the Archives. Lastly the new furniture has provided a more effective work environment for our patrons and Archives' staff.

The work of Archives supports two of IMSA's Priority Outcomes: *Build the IMSA Ecosystem*, which includes an indicator of the Number of alumni engaged, and *Strengthen Identity as a Learning Laboratory*, which includes an indicator of the Number of contributions from IMSA community members to any body of knowledge.



Two views of the new archive furniture. [Photos by the author]

The goals for the coming year are to continue the work that has moved us so far forward. Thanks to another generous grant, in this case from an alumnus, we will be able to hire the archive aide for another year. Her chief task is to continue populating the fields in the Finding Aid. In addition, she will assist in curating and reorganizing the contents of those RGs that still need it, there is still re-labeling to be done, and the Annex needs continued attention. Of course, the planning and mounting of exhibits, the normal processing of donated materials, filing and service to the institution as well as to our walk-in patrons will continue apace.

Respectfully submitted:

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