

Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy®

igniting and nurturing creative, ethical, scientific minds that advance the human condition

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT

José M. Torres, Ph.D.

March 15, 2017

LEADERSHIP MATTERS

The following provides an update on my leadership of the Academy.

IMSA Leadership Profile

To provide Trustees with a report of activities and efforts of note, I organize the Report of the President, where appropriate, around the **Priorities for 2016-2017** (a) Finalize and publish an “IMSA Operational Excellence Dashboard;” (b) Strengthen identity as a learning laboratory as expressed through grand challenges; (c) Develop and nurture my direct reports’ leadership orientation, equity commitment, and systems level management; and (d) Prepare original material suitable for publication as evidence of IMSA thought leadership and the **Leadership Profile Components** used by the Trustees to evaluate the President’s performance: (1) Institutional Planning (and Executing); (2) Financial/Business Model; (3) Innovations in Teaching and Learning and in STEM Talent Development; (4) Institutional Research and Scholarship on Program Effectiveness and RoI; (5) Thought Leadership in STEM Education Policy; and (6) Stakeholder’s Positive Action(s) on Behalf of IMSA. For additional information and updates on IMSA, please see my [Personal Reflections](#) that provide general observations shared with IMSA stakeholders throughout the year.

Strengthen Identity as a Learning Laboratory as Expressed through Grand Challenges

I appointed Principal Dr. Marie Dahleh, Executive Director of Student Life Dr. Robert “Bob” Hernandez, Vice President of External Engagement Dr. Jeffrey Margolis, and Executive Director of Professional Field Services Dr. Norman “Storm” Robinson as co-chairs of the Advancing the Human Condition (AHC) Oversight Team. Each month, the AHC meets in three subcommittees.

Education & Awareness Building	Academic Outcomes & Evaluation	Grand Challenges Framework Development
<i>Lead:</i> Adrienne Coleman, Multicultural Education Specialist	<i>Lead:</i> Peter Clancy, Science Faculty	<i>Lead:</i> Gwen Seeley-Joosse, Director Statewide Student Initiatives (SSI)
Bud Bergie, COO/CIO	Dave Devol, Science Faculty	Becca Calvillo, Residential Area Coordinator
Alexandra Johnson, Residential Area Coordinator	Carl Heine, Program Director CoolHub/TALENT	Traci Ellis, Executive Director Human Resources
Rob Kiely, History/Social Science Faculty	Sanza Kazadi, Director SIR	Derek Lough, Residence Counselor
Christine Moskalik, SSI Specialist	Amber Pareja, Executive Director OIR	Britta McKenna, Chief Innovation Officer
Namrata Pandya, Math Faculty	Amy Woods, Student Activities Coordinator	Eric Smith, History/Social Science Faculty

Develop and Nurture my Direct Reports' Leadership Orientation, Equity Commitment, and Systems Level Management

Since the end of January, my Cabinet and I have been using *The 4 Disciplines of Execution (4DX)* principles to focus on employee engagement based on the results of our most recent survey. The 4DX is an approach to goal attainment through which we identify wildly important goals, leading indicators, a scoreboard to keep track of our progress, and weekly commitments to each other. Based on the results of the Gallup poll we conducted in the fall that showed we have a significantly high number of disengaged/actively disengaged employees, our wildly important goal is to improve employee engagement. Our efforts have been focused on recognizing the important work of our employees, as well as spending more time learning about who they are, what their concerns are, and how we can make IMSA a better place for them to work.

In mid-February, we conducted a short Gallup Pulse survey to identify what type of recognition our employees preferred. Employees say they feel appreciated when they receive thank you notes and/or are recognized at all employee events such as Community Days. We will be conducting a follow-up Gallup survey in May and expect to see significant improvements in employee engagement.

As I wrote to the Trustees in February, we had to use a different strategy for conducting the 360-degree feedback that we are looking to provide Cabinet members and me feedback from different levels of the organization. Our plan to use the Gallup survey technology is on target and the 360-degree survey will be released by mid-March. We should receive the results by the end of March. This survey is not designed for performance evaluation, but rather for professional growth and development of Cabinet members.

Institutional Planning (and Executing)

Governor Bruce Rauner delivered his budget address on February 15, 2017. As required by statute, we submitted our budget tables and narrative for our FY 18 request to the Illinois State Legislature on Friday, February 17th. Our budget hearing before the House Appropriations Committee is scheduled for April 6, 2017. We do not yet have a date for the Senate Appropriations Hearing.

Attorney General Lisa Madigan's request for the St. Claire County Circuit Court to vacate their order to pay state employees their regular salaries in spite of the lack of a state approved budget was denied on February 16, 2017. She has appealed the decision to the State Supreme Court, but there is no additional information to report. The contingency plans that we developed approximately a year ago are still applicable and will be reviewed and executed as needed.

We have had several meetings with the Capital Working Group of the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE). Thanks to Chairman Tom Cross, IMSA has a permanent seat on this group. I've appointed Chief Operating Officer/Chief Information Officer Mr. Lawrence "Bud" Bergie as IMSA's representative. Our replacement of the existing heating and cooling system (\$3.4 million) is #7 on the capital priority list and the phase II residence halls renovation is listed as priority 17.

We have continued to work with students and staff on how best to respond in the short and long term to the recent Facebook incident at IMSA regarding race matters. Student Council members and I are

holding a series of meetings to ensure IMSA implements the best ideas that provide inclusive environments for all at the Academy.

Innovations in Teaching and Learning and in STEM Talent Development

On March 3rd we held our annual Multi-County Professional Development Day. Approximately 200 area teachers participated in a day of training that included STEM related content and a separate strand for History teachers.

On Wednesday, March 8th we hosted the annual Junior High Math Contest. Students from twenty-seven middle/junior high schools participated in the event. Some students came from as far away as Belleville. As you might know, this event is run completely by IMSA students under the supervision of mathematics faculty member Dr. Janice Krouse.

On March 9th, I participated in the Governor's Children Cabinet. Secretary of Education Dr. Beth Purvis co-chaired this meeting, which is chaired by Governor Bruce Rauner and attended by each State Agency head. In conjunction with the Department of Public Health, I provided an update on the successful lead hackathon we held on January 13 and 14, 2017 at IMSA.

IMSA competed in the HiMCM International Mathematics Modeling Contest, which involves teams from around the world competing in a 36 hours math contest culminating in a paper outlining a solution to a problem. Out of the 840 teams entered, only nine were awarded "National Outstanding Papers." One of these nine papers was from an IMSA team of sophomores! Another IMSA team, composed of seniors was also recognized as a "National Finalist" for their submission.

We are finishing the documentation for our AdvancEd accreditation. All of the information needs to be submitted by the end of March. The review committee will visit IMSA on May 1 and 2.

Thought Leadership in STEM Education Policy

On February 14th Ms. April Wells, Coordinator for Gifted, Advanced Placement, Academies, and World Languages in Illinois School District U-46, presented "*Working with Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Gifted Students.*" Both the noon and 4:30 sessions were very well attended by our staff.

The theme of our February 17th Community Day was "*Creating a Diverse and Inclusive Environment.*" Dr. Peter Dong, science faculty, provided the results from the Student Diversity Climate Results survey. Dr. Adrienne Coleman, Multicultural Education Specialist, introduced the Peer Multicultural Education Video that the Board of Trustees saw in a previous meeting. Our guest speaker, Dr. David Stovall, a professor from the University of Illinois Chicago, challenged our staff, including faculty, to continue to be inclusive at IMSA while examining ourselves from a critical perspective. After Dr. Stovall's presentation, our staff worked in small groups to develop brainstorm diversity and inclusion strategies and made individual commitments to make IMSA a more inclusive environment.

The English Department and the Instructional Resource Center (IRC) sponsored our third African-American Read-In immediately after classes concluded on February 28th. Staff, including faculty, and students read poems and other short stories by African American authors. Dr. Eric Smith, history faculty member, reminded us that African American history is American history.

Power Pitch 9 was conducted March 4th in IN2. Twenty-four teams from 7 local schools participated in the Qualifying Rounds and 8 teams progressed to the Final Rounds. Seven teams represented Avery Coonley, Granger Middle School, Hinsdale South, Naperville Central, Park Junior High School and Still Middle School; the remaining seventeen teams were comprised of IMSA students. Of the 8 teams that moved onto the finals, 6 were from IMSA. The teams competed in two areas—Social Good Category and Other STEM Category. The Social Good winners are:

- Blabl—A mobile application that engages speech impaired children in conversation with an avatar
- Heat2Heal—A hands-free, self-powered Arthritis Wrap that converts body heat into electricity to provide targeted massaging and heat therapy for stiff joints
- Rethink Numeracy—Teaching numeracy to children with Down Syndrome, leveraging their learning strengths
- Double-Check—A protective biometric alternative to prevent ID theft

The Other STEM Category winners are:

- FastExit—A life-saving solution for managing exit signs
- Shop Cheetah—A ground breaking store navigation system that saves time and routes customers through the store
- Swelly—A mobile app that allows users to get flexible insurance on personal items in an instant
- Flameless—Extinguishing cooking fires automatically with sound waves.

The top 3 high schools teams (Blabl, Heat2Heal and Flameless) will be advancing to the Next Launch regional competition in Indianapolis on May 17th. We wish all of the teams the best of luck.

Stakeholder's Positive Action(s) on Behalf of IMSA

On February 27th I had another conversation with Stuart Layne the Executive Director of the state's Bicentennial Office and Lisa Post, Director of Events and Project Development. Stuart is very interested in designating our Fusion program as one of the Bicentennial's legacy projects. He reconfirmed that the Bicentennial Committee will be a supporter of our 2018 International Student Science Fair. We are looking forward to working with him and his staff on these very exciting projects.

On March 7th representatives from the Sabah-Al Ahmed Center for Giftedness and Creativity, State of Kuwait visited IMSA. Dr. Omar Al-Bannai, General Manager and Mr. Richard Littman, Lawyer, were our guests for the day.

On March 13th I participated in the P-20 Council meeting held at Aurora University. I provided an update on IMSA and emphasized to participants that IMSA welcomes them to visit at their convenience.

Leadership Update from Cabinet Members

Dr. Dahleh, Dr. Margolis, Mr. Bergie, Ms. Ellis, and Dr. Robinson will provide brief updates during our March 15, 2016 Board meeting. These will appear as attachments to my report.