



## 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.**

**November 21, 2018**

#### LEADERSHIP MATTERS

This report provides the Board of Trustees with information regarding Academy activities and the progress that we are making toward achieving our IMSA Impact and Outcomes Statement and Priority Outcomes. I organize the Report of the President, where appropriate, around the IMSA Impact and Outcomes document:

#### Three Pillars:

1. STEM Teaching and Learning
2. Operational Capacity
3. Stakeholder Engagement

#### One Strategy:

Strengthen Employee Engagement

#### Four Priorities for Academic Year 2018-2019:

- ❖ Guide the integration of UN 17 Sustainable Development Goals
- ❖ Advance equity and excellence
- ❖ Develop our international strategy
- ❖ Work on phase 1 of the innovation campus

I provide information, updates and general observations with IMSA stakeholders, including IMSA employees, students, and parents via my [Personal Reflections](#) throughout the year.

#### STEM Teaching and Learning

##### *Year of Inquiry*

The Year of Inquiry Research Team, under the direction of Dr. Amber Stitzel-Pareja, Executive Director, Office of Institutional Research and Ms. Katie Berger, Executive Director of Student Affairs, has been formed and is meeting on a regular basis. The team will initially look at the Challenge Success findings and work to identify an area of focus and develop research questions regarding mental health issues for students at IMSA. They have met several times with their research team, conducted focus groups, and are beginning to narrow their scope.

##### *PROMISE Program*

We have seen a significant growth in the number of applications to our Providing Opportunities for Mathematics and Science Enrichment (PROMISE) Program. Five years ago in 2014, we had 98 applicants for 60 seats in PROMISE. This year, we had 494 applicants, which is over twice the number of applicants we had for last year. We reallocated funds to expand the number of students served this year from 142 to 169. Much of this growth is due to our data agreement with the Illinois State Board of

Education that has allowed us to recruit more strategically across the state. Undoubtedly, having Dr. Anita White, Chemistry Faculty and full-time program director serving as the program manager has also added focus to our recruitment and services. At the October 13 family orientation, over 300 family members joined us at IMSA!

#### *2018 Illinois Report Card*

The Illinois State Board of Education is now including IMSA and several other special schools in the Report Card published October 31, 2018. We have been communicating with staff at the State Board because of errors in the information they published. The State does not collect information from IMSA. They agreed not to publish some of the data, i.e., low-income students; however, the IMSA report card still contains errors. [Here](#) is a link to IMSA's Report Card as published by the State.

#### *2019 Intersession*

Intersession 2019 will be January 7 – 11. As you know, intersession is a week-long learning opportunity offered between first and second semester. Sessions are offered by faculty, staff, students, alumni and outside guests. Intersession allows students to explore areas of interest outside the curriculum through a variety of offerings including special math and science topics, cultural studies, and off-campus education trips. I have been working with the Principal's Office to explore how IMSA can increase the opportunities offered to students and families who have financial needs. The catalog of approved sessions can be found [here](#).

#### *Honoring Leon Lederman*

We were very saddened to hear of the loss of our founder, Dr. Leon Lederman. To honor his memory, we held an assembly on October 12<sup>th</sup>. Dr. Eric Hawker shared his remembrances of Leon. We also viewed pictures and a video. We created a Care Card Box and asked students and staff, including faculty, to write notes of remembrance and appreciation to Dr. Lederman's family. Some of the notes were very moving. The notes were sent to Leon's wife Ellen. After informing the Governor's Office of Leon's contribution to IMSA and of his death, Governor Rauner issued a Proclamation on October 17 to honor Leon. Going forward, I would like to institutionalize a Dr. Leon Lederman Day at IMSA. I will be working with Cabinet to ensure that every three years, on October 3, we hold an assembly to honor the work and life of Dr. Lederman and introduce him formally to our students.

#### *Veterans Day Assembly*

As of the writing of this report, we plan to hold our annual Veterans Day Assembly on Friday, November 9<sup>th</sup>. Mark Czynski,'04, who served with the US Navy, will be our keynote speaker.

## **Operational Capacity**

#### *Board/Senior Leadership Retreat*

Based on the results of the Doodle poll, May 10 and 11 are the best dates for our Annual Board of Trustees Retreat. We will begin with lunch on May 10 and have an afternoon session that includes professional learning accompanied by IMSA's Senior Leadership Council. On May 11, we will hold our closed session for the President's evaluation and Trustee self-evaluation. The retreat will conclude with lunch at Noon on May 11.

### *Scholarship and Innovation Committee*

Dr. Kelly Page, Chief Innovation Officer joins me as co-chair of the IMSA Scholarship and Innovation Committee. This new committee is in response to the findings and presentation by Dr. Page on her Social Leadership Fellowship year. The purpose of the Committee is to develop a culture of strong scholarship and innovation at IMSA. Committee members will include representatives from academic departments, Principal's Office, Office of Institutional Research, Student Affairs, Information Resource Center, and Professional Field Services (Outreach). The initial objectives of the Committee are to create and communicate a vision for scholarship and innovation at IMSA; identify key multi-year priorities to invest resources; and identify and establish formal relationships with key external partners (e.g., universities, foundations, research center, innovation hubs, etc.).

### **Stakeholder Engagement**

#### *MacArthur Foundation Roundtable Discussion*

I was invited by the American Academy of Arts and Sciences to participate at the October 24 roundtable discussion hosted by the MacArthur Foundation to explore a possible new national initiative focused on K-12 education. The purpose of the roundtable was to discuss areas of opportunity, concern and promise in this effort. In preparation, I consulted with several faculty members and Professional Field Services staff who helped inform my contributions at the Roundtable.

#### *Chicago Tech Leadership Initiative*

Organized by the Civic Committee of the Commercial Club and co-chaired by Penny Pritzker and Chris Gladwin, the Chicago Technology Leadership Initiative held an introductory event for corporations and startups on October 24. The initiative dubbed "P33" has four drivers: Talent & Education, Capital & Finance, Business, Community & Culture, and Government & Infrastructure. I served on the Talent & Education Committee, which was co-chaired by Walter Massey and Mark Tebbe. For more information, see <https://bit.ly/2EPGbsM>.

#### *Governor's Cabinet on Children and Youth*

I continue to participate on the Governor's Cabinet. We meet approximately once a quarter to review progress on the Governor's initiatives.

#### *P-20 Council*

I am also a member of Illinois' P-20 Council, which "was established by the legislature in 2009 to foster collaboration among state agencies, education institutions, local schools, community groups, employers, taxpayers, and families, and to collectively identify needed reforms to develop a seamless and sustainable statewide system of quality education and support." The P-20 Council meets quarterly.

#### *Aurora Education Commission*

I continue to be an active participant in the Mayor's Education Commission. We are meeting on a monthly basis to move forward on the Commission's objectives.

#### *President's Student Advisory Council*

I have met with the Student Advisory Council several times (October 25 and November 8). We have had great discussions around topics that concern the students. Joining me at the meetings have been

Alvin Means, Connor Rhodes, Lyric Carter, Mehr Kaur, Shikha Adhikari, Sophia Pribus, Srivinay Tummarakota, Teja Guntupalli, Xiomara Medina, Zoe Mitchell, Abigail Light, Daniel Chen, Daniel Soto, Joseph Bertrand, Jay Dong and Tyler Fullilove.

#### *North Chicago, District 187, Strategy Session*

At the invitation of Ms. Robin Steans, Board Chair of the Steans Family Foundation, I joined several leaders from: the Steans Family Foundation, the Center for Urban Education Leaders at UIC, the Chicago Fund, and the IL State Board of Education in a strategic plan feedback session on October 29 for the Superintendent and the leadership team of District 187.

### **Strengthen Employee Engagement**

#### *Gallup Employee Engagement Poll*

At the suggestion of Trustee Pereira, we have asked the Gallup organization to provide us a deep dive into our employee engagement results. The representative from Gallup will join us via conference call during the November 21 Board meeting. There will be an opportunity for the Trustees to engage in discussions regarding the Gallup results and IMSA's current initiatives to engage our employees.

#### *New Employee Luncheons*

Another new effort to engage employees is lunch meetings with new employees. The purpose of the meetings is to personally engage with our new employees, gain an understanding of their onboarding to IMSA, listen to concerns that they may have and to ideas for improving IMSA. I am planning to meet with new employees to IMSA as close to their 4<sup>th</sup> month anniversary as feasible.

#### *Presidents' Faculty Advisory Council*

Another advisory that I established this year recently convened on October 16 and November 5. The purpose of the Faculty Advisory Council, composed of 12 to 15 faculty volunteers or selected by the faculty, is to engage in two-way dialogue between IMSA faculty and myself on the short and long term future of IMSA. We plan to meet approximately once per month.

### **Advance Equity and Excellence**

The Senior Leadership team has expanded with the participation of the Curriculum Assessment Leaders (CALs). During this year's first meeting, the team was introduced to the planning framework for the development of the Equity and Excellence plan that partially fulfills the Board's new Equity and Excellence Policy. The team is also continuing the work of incorporating the Franklin Covey's 4 Disciplines of Execution (4DX) principles to projects identified to improve employee engagement.

### **Develop our International Strategy**

#### *Market Research*

As a follow up to the September Board of Trustees meeting, we have defined the objectives and deliverables for a market research effort on IMSA's ability to recruit non-Illinois students. We received encouraging feedback from the Executive Committee during the October meeting regarding our scope of work. I shared our scope of services document with the IMSA Fund Board of Directors to solicit

their input. [Attached](#) is the most updated document containing objectives, the research population, and the focus areas for this research. At the September Board meeting, we will provide an update on our progress.

#### *Mission to China and Malaysia*

Each year, the Office of Trade and Investment at the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity hosts a trip to China. From November 1 to 15, Dr. Storm Robinson and Ms. Mary Collins joined the delegation to visit schools and government officials in Shanghai, Dalian and Shenzhen, China and in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Also on the trip were representatives from Benedictine University, Bradley University, Heartland Community College, Illinois State University, Southern Illinois University (Edwardsville), University of Illinois (Chicago), University of St. Francis and Western Illinois University.

#### *Taiwanese Students Visit with IMSA*

This past September, we hosted 10 students and two chaperones from Miaoli County, Taiwan for two weeks. While here, the students engaged in our classes, were taught by Sarah O'Leary-Driscoll, and made presentations concerning their culture, their educational experiences in Taiwan, and their new experiences at IMSA. The closing ceremony was held at Northern Illinois University, our partners on this venture.

#### *Japanese Super Science Fair (JSSF)*

Three of our seniors: Shubha Verma, Louise Lima and Jake Sutter are planning to attend the Japanese Student Science Fair November 14 through 18 in Kyoto. Our SIR team selected students based on the quality of their research. Thanks to the IMSA Fund, we sponsored the students' travel for this event. Each of the students are scheduled to present posters and Shubha is also scheduled to make an oral presentation. Dr. Eric Smith, one of our SIR coordinators, joined me in Japan and was the chaperone for the students. While attending JSSF, the state's Office of Trade & Investment was able to set up a series of meetings for me with Japanese officials and schools in Tokyo and Kyoto.

### **Leadership Update from Cabinet Members**

Updates from my Cabinet are attached.

### **Advancement and Public Affairs Update**

As the Board of Trustees knows, in addition to supervising five cabinet members, I also supervise Tami Armstrong, Executive Director for Development and Public Affairs, who does not serve on Cabinet. Below is an update on her responsibilities, which have focused on Stakeholder Engagement, Building the IMSA Ecosystem and Building Fiscal Sustainability through non-state appropriated sources.

#### Advancement

Through the first quarter of FY19 (July 1-September 30), we increased philanthropic gifts by 24% (\$127,939 in FY19 vs \$102,902 in FY18). The goal for this fiscal year is to raise over one Million dollars, an increase of 10% over total gifts received in FY18. On October 19, we began the annual fund drive that focuses on unrestricted gifts. In addition, we have sought grants of approximately \$220,000 for Academy science equipment and outreach programs. Finally, the IMSA Fund is matching dollar for

dollar up to \$100,000 of the total target of \$250,000 for the Save a Seat Campaign, which will launch beginning in January 2019.

#### Public Affairs

Subsequent to Trustee approval of the new IMSA logo on September 19, we began to rebrand over 250 print and digital assets for a January 2019 public launch. We published two key documents recently: The IMSA 2019 Profile and the Fall 2018 edition of IMSA 360. We have recruited and selected a new Alumni Relations Coordinator. Finally, the Student Committee for IMSA's Advancement (SCIA) finished a letter writing campaign to Illinois legislators showcasing their achievements, the work of IMSA and their appreciation. SCIA will host "Take Your Legislator to IMSA Day" on December 4 which is an opportunity for legislators to experience IMSA and engage with students from their districts.