

## REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT

**José M. Torres, PhD**

**January 15, 2020**

### 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

### And two continuing priorities for Academic Year 2019-2020

1. Advance Equity and Excellence-- Supports IMSA Impact and Outcomes Statement
2. Implement our Global Strategy (formerly “International Strategy and includes Innovation Campus, Phase 1) --Supports IMSA Impact and Outcomes Statement

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

#### *Recruitment of IMSA’s Next Principal*

As a result of the retirement announcement by Dr. Robert Hernandez, we have begun the recruitment process for IMSA’s next Principal and Chief Academic Officer. I ask the Board and other readers of this Report to help us recruit our next Academy leader using the posted announcement (<https://bit.ly/37HAerC>). Timeline and process is attached.

Since IMSA’s founding, we have had nine principals. Below is their name and tenure:

- Joe Meyer, 1986-1987 (part time) - One year
- John Court, 1987-1993 - Six years
- Harold Burshtan, 1993-1994 (temporary) - One year
- Gregg Sinner, 1994-1999 - Five years
- Eric McLaren, 1999-2012 - 13 years
- Diana Sharp, 2012-2013 - One year
- Branson Lawrence, 2013-2015 (Interim) - Two years
- Marie Dahleh, 2015-2017 - Two years
- Bob Hernandez, 2017-2020 (Interim and Permanent) - Three years

### *IMSA Local 604-IFT-AFT*

As I mentioned before, on Wednesday, December 11, 2019, I received a letter from our IMSA faculty announcing the formation of a teachers union, IMSA Council, Local 604 - IFT - AFT. They filed a majority interest petition with the Illinois Educational Labor Relations Board (IELRB). We received and complied with the IELRB letter stating IMSA's obligations, including posting a Notice to Employees. On January 3, 2020, we corresponded with the IELRB, including providing them proof of the posting and list of employees with sample signatures.

### *Intersession 2020*

IMSA's Intersession is a fantastic opportunity for students to engage in learning hobbies, skills, life skills, to include content, from IMSA faculty, staff, students, alumni, and outside guests. In short, during intersession students have the opportunity to explore their interests outside of IMSA's curriculum. Thanks to the generosity of the IMSA Fund, we were able to provide scholarships for students in Tier 1 and 2 to offset their expenses for domestic and international trips. See the 2020 catalog here: <https://bit.ly/2TbMg8P>.

### *Student Engagement and Support*

Field experience is an important part of IMSA's educational opportunities. This past semester, I joined several student groups as they visited Rush University Anatomy Lab (November 5), Cantigny Museum (November 12), and students presenting at Fermi Lab on December 5, 2019. Over the past months, I have served as sponsor for EPOCH, a new computational and data science club at IMSA whose purpose is to provide resources for the IMSA student community to run machine learning jobs or other computationally-intensive tasks. As their sponsor, I supervised EPOCH's student-led Intersession on Computational Finance.

### *Two IMSA Faculty Renew National Board Certification*

Mary Myers, IMSA Wellness Faculty, and Dr. Sowmya Anjur, IMSA Science Faculty, were two of nearly 4,000 teachers across the United States to renew their certificate as a National Board Certified Teacher (NBCT). Kudos to Mary and Sowmya, who have proven that they teach to the highest standards – and they have put in the work to show their commitment to their practice and their students.

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards process reinforces high standards, commitment to excellent teaching, and is seen as the profession's mark of accomplished practice. Their mission is to advance the quality of teaching and learning by: (1) maintaining high and rigorous standards for what accomplished teachers should know and be able to do; (2) providing a national voluntary system certifying teachers who meet these standards; and (3) advocating related education reforms to integrate National Board Certification in American education and to capitalize on the expertise of National Board Certified Teachers. Recognized as the "gold standard" in teacher certification, the National Board believes higher standards for teachers means better learning for students.

## **Operational Capacity**

### *Cabinet Retreat*

On December 16 and 17, 2019, Cabinet and I returned to the Universal Technical Institute in Lisle for our winter retreat where we spent considerable time reviewing our Operational Excellence Dashboard indicators that support IMSA's Impact and Outcomes Statement, which states "by 2022, IMSA is a recognized goal leader and catalyst in equity and excellence in STEM teaching and learning, innovation and entrepreneurship." Additionally, we revisited our decision-making protocols, discussed DiAngelo's White Fragility book, and discussed how we can bring clarity to IMSA's innovation strategy.

### *Senior Leadership Team*

Our Senior Leadership Team meeting was on December 12. After our 15-minute 4DX cadence of accountability session focused on Alumni Engagement, Employee Engagement, and Contributions to the Body of Knowledge, I led a discussion on the four decision-making methods outlined in Crucial Conversations which include: command, consult, vote, consensus. We brainstormed past decisions made at IMSA and which methods were used and agreed to share these decision-making methods with each of our departments. More importantly, we committed ourselves to inform staff prior to making specific decisions of the decision-making method we intend to use in the upcoming decision.

## **Stakeholder Engagement**

### *Employee Engagement*

We implemented our fall Gallup Employee Engagement Q12 Survey, "Be Heard," from November 6 to November 25, 2019. After making a concerted effort to increase staff participation, I am pleased to report that we achieved an 89% participation rate with 196 employees participating in the survey. As a point of comparison, last fall, 118 employees participated, amounting to a 54% participation rate. This year's engagement score rose by 40% from 25% to 35% of employees stating that they are engaged. We will have a deeper discussion concerning the survey results, including comments during today's Trustee meeting. All supporting documents are found in today's Board meeting materials.

### *IMSA Kuhl Learning Study*

On November 14 and 15, 2019, Robert Kuhl (Class of '89) and Melissa Agudelo visited IMSA at my request to conduct a holistic review of IMSA to highlight strengths and identify areas in need of more attention. In response to their report, I conducted two debriefing sessions on December 11 and one on December 18 with faculty members designed to answer the following four questions:

1. What resonated with you?
2. What from the study was surprising or discordant?
3. What are two areas we could tackle together as an Academy?
4. What is one individual commitment you can make to improve the Academy?

The report and the results of these debriefing sessions are part of our information and discussion item at today's Trustee meeting.

### *IMSA Luncheon*

Each year, the IMSA Fund sponsors a Holiday luncheon for staff. As is our custom, at the December event, the Employee Awards and Recognition Committee presented awards to staff. Below are the awards, criteria, and winners.

- Bright Beginnings: Employed at IMSA less than 3 years; Significant and positive impact on the IMSA community. Winners: Emily Holda (Resident Counselor) and Vynnessa Winberg (Administrative Assistant in Admissions)
- Community Builder: Always has a kind word for you; Works to establish connections across the Academy; Makes the lives of others brighter at IMSA; No time criteria on term of employment. Winners: Jocelyn Quiles (Sr. Administrative Assistant in Center for Teaching and Learning) and Betty Hart (Program Manager in Steve and Jamie Chen Center for Inquiry and Innovation)
- Unsung Hero: Works behind the scenes to make life go smoothly at IMSA; Work often does not get recognized; Goes above and beyond regular work duties; No criteria on term of employment. Winners: Dottie Krett (Education Collaboration Coordinator) and Amy Keck (Learning Strategies Coordinator)
- Spirit Award: Demonstrates school spirit; Attending school events to support students (Culture shows, athletics, club events, etc.); No criteria on term of employment. Winner: Evan Brummet (Mathematics Faculty)

### *Board of Trustee Reappointments*

I have been working with the Governor's Office on Board reappointments for several years. I received notice that the following Trustee members have been reappointed: Marsha Rosner through Oct 1, 2023, Carey Meyer through Oct 1, 2023, and Luis Nunez through Oct 1, 2025.

### *President's Student and Faculty Advisory Councils*

I continue to meet with Student Council on a monthly basis. I held my last meeting with the Faculty Advisory Council, which was attended by two faculty members, on November 5, 2019. I have cancelled all future meetings with the Faculty Advisory Council given faculty participation and recent developments.

### *Town Hall Meetings*

After each regular Board of Trustees meetings and from time to time, I invite staff to join Cabinet and I for a town hall meeting to update them on board action and provide opportunities to share information and engage in discussion. Approximately 70 staff members attend these voluntary meetings, which are typically held during mid-day. The 2019 meetings occurred on July 30, September 11, September 30 (students only), October 2, and December 4. Our next town hall meeting is scheduled for January 29, 2020.

## **Global Strategies**

As the Board knows, our current work in this area includes executing the project plan that we developed in collaboration with IMSA staff members, the Global Strategies Team. Deliverables for team members for FY20 work are specific plans in the following departments or areas: Admissions, Academic Curriculum, Residence Life Services, Marketing, Human Resources/Staffing, and other Operations services.

With a new emphasis to focus on the recruitment of domestic Non-Illinois students and their impact on teaching, learning, and residence life, the team met on December 4, 2019, to report on progress in each deliverable area. Our next steps for the team will be to participate in a work session on February 3, 2020, to define Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT). The SWOT analysis will result in a balanced plan that identifies opportunities to add value to IMSA while concurrently recognizing, mitigating, and managing the risks involved with the addition of non-Illinois students. The team will incorporate risk management actions into final deliverables.

One critical path item to highlight is Board action to support next steps on the residence hall project. This decision determines the scope of the project; that is, residence hall capacity will drive the number of students IMSA will need to support in 2022 and beyond. At today's Board meeting, we are requesting Board approval for our plan of action for moving forward with the construction of 1508xy designed to increase IMSA's residential capacity to enroll non-Illinois students beginning in 2022. Supporting materials are part of today's meeting documents.

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

Update from Dr. Robert Hernandez and Ms. Alexis Thomas are attached.