

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT

José M. Torres, PhD

March 11, 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

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

Commencement Speaker 2020

I am pleased to report that Dr. Walter E. Massey will serve as IMSA’s commencement speaker on May 30, 2020, at Northern Illinois University. Dr. Massey was Managing Director of Argonne National Laboratory and founding Trustee member of the Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy. He served as the ninth President of Morehouse College, was appointed by President George H. W. Bush in 1991 to serve as the ninth Director of the National Science Foundation, and served as the 14th President of the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

16th International Student Science Fair, Bangkok, Thailand

We sent three of students, all seniors, Saivasudha Chalasani, Andrew Du, and Krishna Thakkar to participate in ISSF 2020 at the Kamnoetvidya Science Academy in Rayong, Thailand this past January. Accompanying them were Dr. Angela Ahrendt Science Faculty, and Dr. Robert Hernandez. Both Saivasudha and Krishna received an award for Best Oral Presentation in Biology.

Recruitment of IMSA's Next Principal and Chief Academic Officer

On February 14, 2020, our Search Committee, composed of my Cabinet (Katie Berger, Bud Bergie, Traci Ellis, Bob Hernandez, Storm Robinson, and Alexis Thomas), Marti Shirley (mathematics Faculty and Alumnae), Erin Micklo (English Faculty), and Comfort Akwaji-Anderson (Dean of Faculty) reviewed the 21 applicants for the Principal and Chief Academic Officer position. All held a master's degree, while 11 held a PhD or EdD. Additionally, among the applicants who shared their demographics, there were five females, 12 males, nine were White, five Black, two Latino, and one Asian. There was no consensus among the committee regarding preferred candidates. We are, thus, continuing our search. As a reminder, the position is open until filled; priority consideration was given to applications received on or before February 3, 2020. I continue to 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>).

Proposed Reorganization of Principal's Office

Since December 2019, I have been meeting with the Principal's Office Administration: Bob Hernandez, Comfort Akwaji-Anderson, and Diane Hinterlong to share my thoughts on a potential restructuring. After several meetings, we agreed to share a proposed restructuring with the Curriculum Assessment Leaders (CALs) and the Operation Coordinators (OCs) prior to sharing the restructuring with the faculty on February 14, 2020. At the faculty meeting there were strong emotions and passion in response to the restructuring plan.

My February 20, 2020, meeting with the CALs was an excellent first step in getting input and making some decisions. I am scheduled to meet with the OCs on Wednesday, March 4, 2020. I still feel a need to move forward with some of the proposed changes, for example, the new position of Dean of Academics and Equity. I indicated to the CALs and, subsequently, to the faculty, that I am open to exploring other alternatives concerning the Assistant Dean roles that I proposed as full-time administrators.

On February 21, 2020, I apologized to the faculty for any feelings of exclusion or anxiety my release of the draft administrative organizational chart caused them. I explained to them how this came about. I intended to share this new arrangement with faculty in person on February 14, but due to personal reasons, I had to join them by phone. Given their response, I wish I had included their voices earlier in the process. I asked the faculty to work collaboratively and reflect on the current CAL/OC roles and my proposed organizational structure as long as the following changes are address:

- Maximize faculty time spent with students
- Reduce/eliminate time faculty spend on administrative tasks
- Address any challenges with our current CAL/OC structure
- Support continued professional development of faculty
- Advance curriculum and assessment aligned to revised Standards of Significant Learning (SSLs) that transitions IMSA to competency and performance-based instruction
- Support the learning needs of all students through differentiation (scaffolding, acceleration, etc.)

IMSA Local 604-IFT-AFT

On March 2, 2020, IMSA received the Illinois Educational Labor Relations Board's (IELRB) Order Certificating the bargaining unit requested by the IFT. The Board of Trustees at its January 15, 2020, meeting voluntarily recognized the bargaining unit.

Student Engagement and Support

In addition to holding a meeting with the President's Student Advisory Council on February 6, 2020, I attended and supported students' cultural activities: Lunar Year held on February 1, 2020, and Harambee held on February 21, 2020. I also supported the Black and Latino Student Retreat on February 1, 2020. I also attended the first day of the 2020 Midwest Regional Event at the Credit Union 1 Arena, UIC, on March 6 and 7, 2020, in support of our Titan Robotics team.

Operational Capacity

IMSA Response to Coronavirus

Cabinet members have been reviewing the guidance from the Kane County Department of Health and CDC in response to the Coronavirus (COVID-19). In addition to providing relevant information regarding trips during our upcoming spring break, our message to the IMSA community includes:

- encouraging everyone to wash their hands often with soap for at least 20 seconds;
- asking people to stay home when sick and
- encouraging them to avoid close contact with people who are sick.

We are also enhancing the cleaning of frequently touched objects and surfaces. Additionally, we established a [website](#) to keep IMSA community members updated regarding the Coronavirus. Finally, working with Rush Copely Medical Center, our health services provider, we are establishing protocols specific to IMSA.

Race to 1,000

While the Admissions Team made efforts toward the goal of 1,000 submitted completed applications for the 2019-2020 application cycle, they achieved only 579 submitted completed applications. This effort began in earnest in early October when Ms. Alexis Thomas joined IMSA. Over the past five years, there were 557 submitted applications in 2019-2020; 545 in 2018-2019; 583 in 2016-2017; and 587 in 2015-2016.

Stakeholder Engagement

Board of Trustee Reappointment

The Governor's Office reappointed H. Steven Simms to the IMSA Board of Trustees through January 2026.

IMSA Board of Trustees and IMSA Fund for Advancement of Education Joint Meeting

On March 9, we held a joint meeting of the IMSA Board of Trustees and the IMSA Fund for Advancement of Education to discuss the mission and objectives of each organization and to explore synergy through our combined efforts.

Presidential Committee on Ethics Education at IMSA

On March 2, 2020, we convened the first meeting of the Presidential Committee on Ethics Education at IMSA. Members include Faculty Peter Dong (physics) and Devon Madon (English), staff include Bud Bergie (COO), Andrea Stuiber (Assistant Director Residence Life), Comfort Akwaji-Anderson, Dean of Faculty, IMSA Alumni include Michelle Rogers '06, Vinesh Kannan '15, Sam Kaufman '13, and Nancy Young Tayui '89, and IMSA parent, Mike Phillips. The charter for the committee is attached.

Illinois Association for Gifted Children (IAGC)

Together with colleagues, I made three presentations at the IAGC Annual Conference on February 6 and 7, 2020. The three presentations included: "Year of Inquiry into Mental Health" with Katie Berger, Amber Pareja and students Ray Chang and Monika Narain; "Teaching in the Classroom with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals" with Bob Hernandez and Faculty member Crystal Randall; and "IMSA Allies: The Power of Near Peer Teaching" with Gwen Seeley-Joosse, and Megan Scherer.

MLK Celebration Assembly

IMSA Celebrated Martin Luther King, Jr. at our annual Assembly. Our program began with a rendition of "Lift Every Voice and Sing" by Mod 21 and included an interactive drumming experience led by S.O.U.L. (Spirit of Universal Love), IMSA student spoken word, and a keynote address by Alumnus Jason Wiley '99.

Illinois Workforce and Education Research Collaborative (IWERC)

Previously, I reported to the Trustees that I accepted an invitation to serve on the IWERC Advisory Board. IWERC approved an agreement with the Discovery Partners Institutes (DPI), who will host our Collaborative. We held several meetings (January 22, February 7, and March 5, 2020) to review the agreement, approve a position announcement for our first Director, and to get to know other Board members.

IMSA Day at the Capitol and Senate Appropriations Hearing

On February 25, 2020, 37 IMSA students held a student-led program under the Dome at the Capitol in Springfield. Our keynote speaker, State Treasurer Michael Frerichs had a family emergency and was ably substituted by his Chief of Staff, Alumnus Allen Mayer '90. Former Board member and Alumnae Carey Mayer '90 also attended the session. Subsequently, students met with their Representatives or Senators throughout the day. Many students were invited to the floor of the House and Senate and were introduced as special guests.

SB 3238, sponsored by Senator Dan McConchie, 26th District, was unanimously passed by the Senate's Higher Education Committee on February 25, 2020. Senator McConchie introduced

this bill to support Illinois students applying to IMSA by requiring IL public schools to submit, for example, application materials needed by students, including transcripts, recommendation letters, etc.

I appreciate Tami Armstrong, Beverly Lee and OPA staff coordination of the event and the support of Alexis Thomas, JaRod Tobler and Jackie Salinas during the day.

I remained in Springfield on February 26, 2020, to meet with several Representatives to explain our need for capital funds for our new residential halls. On February 27, 2020, I was joined in Springfield by Cabinet members Katie Berger, Bud Bergie, Traci Ellis, Bob Hernandez, and Storm Robinson. Our student speakers, all seniors, Joseph Bertrand, Gaylen Dimick, and Natalie Sanchez were outstanding.

Advancing Equity and Excellence

To inform the development of the Equity and Excellence Plan, IMSA implemented two data collection processes, the Equity Context Analysis Process (ECAP) and Theory of Change (TOC).

The ECAP includes the use of multiple data collection tools and analysis processes to facilitate systemic examination of educational equity, developed by the Midwest Plains Equity Assistance Center (MAP). Approximately 60 IMSA faculty, staff, students and associates were trained to administer the ECAP, which included the following:

- Twenty-nine classroom observations and faculty interviews were conducted by three external reviewers along with IMSA’s Curriculum and Assessment Leaders.
- A school building walk-through was conducted by the 35 individuals including members of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT), 5 other IMSA staff whose departments were not represented on SLT, 1 parent and 10 students.
- Climate surveys were administered to all parents (131 responded), administrators (8 responded) and faculty/staff (69 responded).

In addition, the Theory of Change Model was applied to develop Equity and Excellence Plan. A theory of change is a predictive assumption about the relationship between desired changes and the actions that may produce those changes. The most distinctive characteristic of Theory of Change in contrast to other methods is that the Theory of Change focuses first on outcomes, rather than interventions. All IMSA faculty/staff were sent a Theory of Change survey (119 responded) in which for each outcome, as defined by the Equity and Excellence Policy, participants were asked to state the following:

- Assumptions - conditions or resources that already exist
- Pre-conditions - barriers or necessary conditions to achieve outcome
- Strategies - measurable interventions implemented to achieve outcome

Theory of Change Modified Focus Groups are being conducted with each department to prioritize strategies to be included in the Equity and Excellence Plan.

Our next steps in advancing equity and excellence at IMSA are:

March 2020	Data Analysis by MAP Center and external Data Scientist
April 2020	Meaning-Making Session I facilitated by MAP Center
May 2020	Meaning-Making Session II facilitated by MAP Center
May/June 2020	Equity and Excellence Plan drafted and submitted to IMSA Cabinet for Review and Approval
Summer 2020	Equity and Excellence Plan Scorecard Development
Fall 2020	Equity and Excellence Plan Implementation

Implement Our Global Strategies

Ms. Alexis Thomas and I visited Monterrey and Guadalajara, Mexico from January 26 to 29, 2020, to explore potential partnership opportunities with two major schools. Prepatec: Tecnologico de Monterrey, the largest private school prep in Mexico with over 25 campuses across Mexico. We also met with several public school administrators under the auspices of the Universidad the Guadalajara, which has approximately 140,000 high school students. During both visits, we explored opportunities for greater impact. Ms. Thomas is working with the two institutions to specify and finalize commitments. These may include, an International Robotics Exhibition, Teacher Training, Student Exchanges, and participation in IMSA’s Micro-certification.

In addition, Ms. Thomas is working on a potential partnership opportunity with a school in Milan. IMSA hosted visitors from Milan on January 10, 2020, where they were able to learn about our practices and have in depth conversations with some of our faculty and staff. In the spirit of a partnership and intentional global strategy, representatives from IMSA will visit Milan later this year, pending the status of the Coronavirus, to explore further opportunities with the school and other entities in Milan that are aligned with our vision and long term goals.

At today’s Trustee meeting, Bud Bergie is presenting an update on increasing IMSA’s residential capacity. Please also see Ms. Thomas’ attached report for more information on our progress on Global Strategies.

Leadership Update from Select Cabinet Members

Updates from Dr. Robert Hernandez, Ms. Alexis Thomas, Mr. Lawrence “Bud” Bergie, and Katie Berger, are attached.