



Personal Reflections

5/7/2015

Dear IMSA Community,

Buzz Aldrin, the second person to walk on the moon once said, “my favorite thing to do on this planet is to scuba dive.” While I’ve never walked on the moon, I share this astronaut’s love of scuba diving. I took advantage of our spring break and went to Roatan, Honduras for a diving trip (10 dives!) and return to IMSA refreshed and reenergized to complete our academic year. Today, I wanted to provide you several updates since my last personal reflection in February.

We welcomed the 2015 Admission Review Committee in March for the selection of IMSA’s Class of 2018, and I appreciate the time that our volunteers—from around Illinois—gave in support of this important process. Faculty and staff also took time out of their normal schedules to read more than 600 applications. The Admissions Office staff is now reading each one of the applications, including comments from the Review Committee in preparation for the Selection Committee during the week of April 20, 2015.

I launched two Presidential Committees this spring. “Standards of Significant Learning,” whose charge is to review and update our SSLs, will be chaired by Dr. Janice Krouse. The second committee is “Social Entrepreneurship” whose charge is to review, recommend and identify needs related to STEM innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship. In the next couple of weeks, I will identify a committee chair and select members, which will include faculty, staff, alumni, IMSA Fund Board members and external experts.

As many of you know, IMSA’s total budget is approximately \$22 million. Eighty percent of our budget comes from the State through their annual appropriations (10% comes from program fees and 10% from donors to the IMSA Fund). This is one of the reasons that I have invested so much of my time meeting with legislators at their district offices and in Springfield to get to know them and introduce or reintroduce myself to them in my new role as President of IMSA.

On 3/26/15 I testified before the Illinois House Appropriations- Higher Education Committee and on 4/16/15 before the Senate Appropriations- Higher Education Committee. While our new Governor and the State are facing a \$12 billion dollar deficit, I continue to advocate for the modest increase our Board of Trustees approved in September, "a 2.3% increase to sustain recent compensation competitiveness improvements (especially for faculty) and advance our new Diversity Plan." The Governor has proposed a 7.9%, or \$1.6 million reduction to our original, approved FY15 budget. The budget appropriations process is lengthy and unpredictable; we may not know our final budget until the end of this fiscal year, end of June.



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I believe that we have advocated responsibly for our budget. For your background and information, I've also provided you links to some of the handouts that we gave to our legislators.

- [IMSA by the Numbers](#)
- [IMSA Fusion Numbers and Trends](#)

Finally and most important to our IMSA community, I want to update you on our principal search. After an extensive recruitment effort, an internal committee reviewed 31 candidates' credentials; screened seven applicants by phone; and interviewed five candidates by phone, in person or Skype. Their efforts led us to invite three finalists to campus on 4/10/15 for a full day of team interviews, tours, and class observations. Each candidate participated in eight interviews. This was a long and exhausting day designed to evaluate skills, knowledge, experience, and energy of each of our finalists. The day ended with a community forum that began at 4:00 p.m. in the auditorium. The search process is coming to a close; we will provide updates about final selection very soon. We appreciate everyone's thoughtful input, interest and participation in this process. I especially appreciate Mary Spreitzer's leadership and willingness to try out my new ideas about principal selection.

There's so much more that I could write, but updating you on our selection review, Presidential Committees, budget process, and principal selection is all the time that I have now. For additional information and updates on IMSA, please see the following Reports from the President that I provide at each meeting of the IMSA Board of Trustees: [Report of the President March 18, 2015](#) and [Report of the President January 21, 2015](#)

Respectfully,

Dr. José M. Torres