



Personal Reflections

2/17/2015

Dear IMSA Community,

I was reminded recently that as one gets older, time seems to go faster. Another thing that happens is forgetfulness! Well, welcome to my aging world—where I pause from our fast-paced work to provide an update on some of my activities and reflections as your president, two months into 2015.

We recently launched IN2 Steve and Jamie Chen Center for Innovation and Inquiry; hosted meetings of the Illinois P-20 Council and the Board of Directors of the Illinois Association for Gifted Children (IAGC); and I represented IMSA at three public speaking events. Here's a closer look.

IN2 represents IMSA's exciting work in the entrepreneurial and innovative K-12 arena and beyond. Consistent with our mission to "ignite and nurture creative, ethical, scientific minds that advance the human condition," I'm asking our faculty and staff to consider how IMSA can use the new Center—designed to ignite collaboration and entrepreneurship—to give rise to social entrepreneurship—the "process by which citizens build or transform institutions to advance solutions to social problems, such as poverty, illness, illiteracy, environmental destruction, human rights abuses and corruption, in order to make life better for many" (Bornstein & Davis, p.1).*

The Illinois P-20 Council was established by the Illinois legislature, and the Governor appoints its members; I am a P-20 Council member representing IMSA. The Council's mission "is to deliberate and make recommendations to the Governor, Illinois General Assembly, and state agencies for developing a seamless and sustainable statewide system of quality education... to maximize students' educational attainment, opportunities for success in the workforce, and contributions to their local communities." On January 20, 2015, IMSA hosted the P-20 Council meeting for 50 attendees who enjoyed a campus tour and heard four of our students describe how IMSA had changed their lives.

I was the invited keynote speaker at the Aurora Hispanic Heritage Advisory Board's Community Breakfast, the Naperville Rotary Club, and was a panel presenter for a summit focused on closing the excellence gap for high-achieving low-income students that was sponsored by the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation for leaders of selective public high schools.

During our Community Learning Day held February 13, 2015, we reflected on what institutional outcomes we should pursue so that in 5-7 years IMSA is recognized as *the* global leader in STEM innovation. I plan to use this input to generate 4-5 goals that I will present to the Board of Trustees as my focus over the next 18 months. And an update about our Board of Trustees—appointed to succeed Dr. Mary Kalantzis as one of Higher Education's two



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representatives is Dr. Alfred Tatum, Dean of the College of Education at UIC. We deeply appreciate Dr. Kalantzis' service and offer a warm welcome to Dr. Tatum.

Lastly, you might have read Governor Rauner's proposed FY16 budget, which includes a reduction of 7.9% in IMSA's EAF budget (from \$18,445,700 appropriated in FY15 to \$16,983,300 proposed for FY16). Uncertainty will continue until the General Assembly passes a budget (usually late May) and the Governor decides what to do with it (June and possibly beyond). Understandably this is an anxious time and we are working closely with our elected officials, members of their staffs and key advisors to achieve the best possible outcomes for IMSA.

Meanwhile we remain focused on our important work and as Dr. Carl Sagan stated, "The Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy...is a gift from the people of Illinois to the human future."

I am enthusiastic and excited about our future!

José M. Torres, Ph.D.

*(Bornstein, David and Susan Davis. *Social Entrepreneurship: What Everyone Needs to Know*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2010. pg. 1)