IMSA Alumni at a Glance

IMSA has graduated 4,560 students in the Classes of 1989-2012, from every House and Senate district in Illinois. The oldest alumni are just turning 40.

99% of alumni attend college, and many receive Fulbright, Hearst, Marshall, Rhodes, Siebel, Truman and other prestigious scholarships.

60% of undergraduate degrees earned are in science, technology, engineering or mathematics (STEM), compared to the national average of 33%. Of the alumni who have shared their career information with IMSA, nearly 60% work in a STEM occupation or field.

Alumni support IMSA and “give back” to advance IMSA’s mission, goals and work. Last year, more than 200 alumni from every graduating class collectively gave nearly 2,000 hours of service. They have also collectively contributed more than $1.5M to the IMSA Fund since the charter class graduated in 1989.

Snapshots of IMSA Alumni (Hometowns as IMSA students)

Steve Crutchfield ’93 (Chicago) is CEO of NYSE Amex Options, one of the nine listed options exchanges in the U.S. Steve also sits on the Boards of Directors of NYSE Amex Options LLC and the Options Clearing Corporation.

Dr. Scott Gaudi ’91 (Staunton) led an international team in discovery of a new solar system and recently received the Presidential Early Career Award for Scientists and Engineers (PECASE), the highest honor given by the U.S. Government for science and engineering professionals in their early research careers.

Dr. Julie Comerford ’98 (Charleston) is an astronomer who was featured in U.S. News and World Report and on Discover Channel for her research work into supermassive black holes. She is currently a W.J. McDonald Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of Texas, Austin.

Dr. Ronjon Paul ’89 (Naperville) is a leader in the field of reconstructive cervical and lumbar spinal surgery and the medical director for The Spine Center of DuPage Medical Group. He has taught neurosurgeons and spinal surgeons worldwide and is an award-winning researcher.

Dr. Mia K. Markey ’94 (Dallas City), has dedicated her life to teaching and research excellence in treating and managing diseases such as cancer. She is an associate professor of biomedical engineering and directs the Biomedical Informatics Lab at The University of Texas at Austin.

Dwan Prude ’97 (East St. Louis) works for the Boeing Company as a procurement financial analyst for the F-18 Platform. He has traveled the world as a motivational speaker and is an extremely active member of the East St. Louis, IL community, serving in numerous leadership positions there.

Michael Brody ’97 (Highland Park) is Reporting Chief at the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) - National Preparedness Assessment Division.

Jessica Droste Yagan ’95 (Dow) is the Director of Sustainable Supply for McDonald’s Corporation, where she focuses on the ethical, environmental and economic impact in the corporation’s U.S. supply chain. Her outstanding work garnered her the McDonald’s President’s Award.

Trisha Jung ’91 (Joliet) was recognized by Automotive News as one of the 100 leading women in the North American auto industry. Trisha led the development and implementation of Nissan’s strategy to launch the Nissan LEAF.

Dr. Irfan Qureshi ’94 (Schaumburg) is an Assistant Professor in the Departments of Neurology and Medicine and an Investigator in the Institute for Brain Disorders and Neural Regeneration at Albert Einstein College of Medicine. He is developing epigenomic and stem cell technologies to diagnose and treat neurological disorders.

Cristal Garcia ’07 (Melrose Park) received her degree in International Relations and has traveled abroad extensively. She is currently working on various education projects with Innovative Consultants International.
IMSA alumni are also living IMSA's mission to “advance the human condition” as entrepreneurs, information technology experts and leaders in talent development.

Sam Yagan ’95 (Bourbonnais), a nationally recognized serial entrepreneur, is the CEO of Match, Inc., responsible for overseeing 37 brands in 25 countries throughout the world. He also leads Excelerate Labs, a Chicago-based intensive summer accelerator for startup companies driven by proven entrepreneurs and investors.

Clara Shih ’00 (Arlington Heights) is founder and CEO of Hearsay Labs, which provides software for companies to securely manage and measure their presence across social media. She is the author of The Facebook Era and was named one of the Most Influential Women in Technology 2010 by Fast Company magazine.

Ramez Naam ’90 (Flora) is the author of More Than Human: Embracing the Promise of Biological Enhancement, which the LA Times called a “terrific survey of current work and future possibilities in gene therapy, neurotechnology, and other fields.” Ramez spent 13 years at Microsoft, where he led development on early versions of Microsoft Outlook, Microsoft Internet Explorer, and most recently the Bing.com search engine.

Yu Pan ’95 (Chicago) has spent his career building new products and businesses, ranging from payments and robots to video and SEO. Pan is the co-founder of Kiwi Crate, creator of kids crafts and activities. He was also one the first engineers at YouTube, and a founding team member of PayPal.

Dr. Jay Budzik ’95 (Winthrop Harbor) is the CTO at Perfect Market, Inc., a company that “helps grow engagement, traffic, and revenue for online publishers such as The New York Times, The Los Angeles Times, The Chicago Tribune and the Chicago Sun-Times.” As co-founder and CTO of MediaRiver (formerly Intellext), which was acquired by Perfect Market, he co-invented MediaRiver’s fundamental technology.

Russel Simmons ’95 (Barrington) was the co-founder and chief technology officer of Yelp, the online community enabling people to write and share reviews of local businesses with others. Prior to Yelp, Simmons was one of the six founding members of PayPal.

Steve Chen ’96 (Prospect Heights) co-founder and director of AVOS Systems, Inc., was rose to global fame as the co-founder and CTO of YouTube, named 2006 Invention of the Year by Time magazine and was purchased by Google for $1.65 billion. Chen was also one of the first engineers at PayPal. Steve is often featured in national and global business, technology and popular media reports. His many awards include the Producers Guild of America Vanguard Award, which recognizes outstanding achievement in new media technology.

Julia Stamberger ’92 (East Peoria) is the cofounder and CEO of Chicago-based GoPicnic, Inc. which supplies all-natural, ready-to-eat boxed meals to major airlines, and recently led the company’s expansion to the retail market.

Ben Chelf ’96 (Streamwood) is the co-founder of The Story Locker, a startup that brings a Silicon Valley approach to the Hollywood storytelling business. Previously, he co-founded Coverity, Inc., which improves the quality of the world’s software through state of the art code analysis.

Dr. Frank Wood ’92 (Lowpoint) was the founder and CEO of ToFish!, Inc., a multi-million dollar image search technology company, which he sold to AOL. Wood currently conducts research at the intersection of neuroscience, computer science, statistics, and cognitive psychology.

Nathan Gettings ’95 (Eldred) is the cofounder and CTO of Palantir Technologies. He also co-founded Robotex, Inc., which develops “innovative robot technology solutions for the United States Armed Forces in order to improve our offensive capabilities and save soldiers’ lives.”

Rob McCool ’91 and Mike McCool ’91 (Westchester) served on the team at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign that created Mosaic, the Internet Browser used to start Netscape.