

IMSA PAC MEETING MINUTES

November 15, 2003

President Cathy Barnes called the meeting to order at approximately 10 a.m. The meeting was held at the University of Illinois. Roll call was taken and only 12 PAC members were present so there was no quorum and informal meeting was held instead.

IMSA Administration Comments

Principal Eric McLaren reported on the following issues:

1) Grade reports – Eric asked teachers to address the following in each student’s report: an accurate description of what happened in course; statement on student’s actual performance and progress; comments on improvement. Eric is reading the grade reports to confirm that teachers are following this format. He would like feedback from parents on whether teachers did this. He liked the fact that some courses provide parents with the ability to link to the teacher’s web page and see how their students are doing. This is not currently required of all teachers. Eric hopes that the new computer system will allow all teachers to do this and that all teachers can then use one form for grade reports.

2) Intersession – IMSA is currently in the process of assigning the classes. Students will have in hand their choices by Thanksgiving. First preference will go to seniors, particularly those who didn’t get their first choice last year, and then filter down. Eric noted that not every sophomore will get first choice

3) Sports Awards -- Monday nights will be Sports Award nights.

4) Calendar – The big issue regarding the draft 2004-2005 calendar is when extended spring weekend will be. He is trying to schedule it right before AP exams. However, that is up in the air because the AP exams have not yet been scheduled. The calendar will not be final until January but the draft version is posted in two spots on the IMSA website.

5) Yearbook -- There is a new advisor for the yearbook. She is concerned about copyright issues involving the “senior quotes” that appear in the book. Because of this, rumors are spreading about getting rid of “senior quotes”. However, the advisor’s point (with which Eric agrees) is that students need to make attributions or get permission when they use quotes from songs, poems, movies, etc., or other materials protected as intellectual property. IMSA is one of the few schools that still allow poems, movies lines, etc. Eric is concerned that students have not been provided with good direction in the past about this issue and wants to ensure it will be done this time. Students need to respect protected copyrights.

6) Class Cancellation – PAC members asked Eric whether IMSA keeps track of when teachers cancel class. Eric responded that he typically knows when a class is cancelled but not always. If classes are rescheduled outside of regular school hours, that’s permissible as long as accommodation is made for student schedules and sufficient notice is provided to students, so as not to conflict with sports and other major activities. Eric did state that he does not expect classes to be rescheduled during the mid-day break. Two parents raised the issue of class rescheduled for Sunday evening – Eric didn’t have an immediate answer and there was no real discussion of this issue.

There was also discussion as to whether teachers can ask students to make up class on an “I” day. Teachers can but need to be concerned about those students who can’t make it up do to other required activities.

Eric also noted that IMSA typically does have substitutes available for filling in for teachers who are out due to illness, personal reasons, etc. In Scientific Inquiry and math, other teachers try to cover but it is often difficult to do so because of the specialty of the subject matter of most courses.

Bob Hernandez reported on the following topics:

1) Thanksgiving break will commence on Wednesday at 12:45 p.m. The halls will close at 5 p.m. Parents need to make sure that students are picked up before then.

2) New Residence Life education programs – there will be 4 sessions over a two week period, with the topics based on student interests. Students only need to attend one session.

3) Recognition Day will be held on March 19 to honor sophomores’ former teachers. The forms to nominate

the former teachers must be returned in January.

4) LEAD Team is conducting an AIDS awareness program on Wednesday, November 19th. The program is open to the student body and community.

5) Student Union closed – This was due to the new air hockey table being broken as well as the fact that someone has marred the newly finished pool tables. Plus two Playstation games were taken. Bob sought recommendations on how to prevent such vandalism. One suggestion was more formal training on how students can report on others without repercussions, as well as how students can approach those students to tell them that they are engaging in inappropriate conduct or are in the wrong place at the wrong time. Bob indicated he may look at doing some training more formally. Other suggestions included surveillance cameras in student union.

6) Evening meals – IMSA is working hard to improve the meals. Students should talk to cafeteria supervisors if they have problems. There is also a suggestion box. There is an IMSA Arbor committee, in which students, administration and parents are represented. The committee meets monthly on how to improve food. One PAC parent suggested a bulletin board to keep students informed on what committee trying to do to improve food. Eric added that the money IMSA receives from the state (most of IMSA's operating funds) is line-item designated: personnel, contractual services, supplies, equipment, etc. Other than personnel, contractual services (which covers utilities, food services health care contract, and preventative maintenance) is the biggest line item. There is enormous budget pressure on this line item. If IMSA spent more on food services alone, that would take away from what could be done with remaining funds in that line item.

7) Cars on campus: There is an email circulating about this issue, and most responding parents have said no. One consortium school in Arkansas does allow cars on campus and it has been a “nightmare” to manage. Cathy Barnes added that the PAC Executive Committee has taken the position to support the IMSA administration in whatever it decides on this issue. One parent asked a question regarding the availability of drivers education courses at IMSA. There is driver ed info available in the principal's office. However the main issues are it is offered five times per year in the evening; parents pay directly; and the instruction includes both classes and behind the wheel training.

Communications

Susan Marshall asked that parents provide her with any information they may wish to have placed in the newsletter.

Fund Raising

Cathy Barnes provided an update on IMSA fundraising efforts, which includes a mass mailing in the near future. She emphasized that even a \$5 contribution is important since that will increase the participation rate which influences corporate donors.

New Business

Doug Pratt (IMSA class of 1997) is president of the IMSA Alumni Association and spoke to the PAC. Doug attended Michigan State and currently works for the Michigan Education Association. The Alumni Assn. has 3,000+ alumni and is the most active alumni association among the consortium schools.

The Alumni Association has three goals:

- n help alumni stay connected and organizes reunions
- n assist IMSA in its mission with both admissions and fundraising efforts. The fundraising goal this year is to achieve close to 100% of alumni participation.
- n seeks to aid the current generation of IMSA students. The Association works with current students in the college selection process, Inquiry and mentoring opportunities, and participates in the Intersession classes.

Doug then went on to discuss “Lumen,” which is an annual event at IMSA and is based on the Clintons’

“Renaissance Weekends.” Outside scholars and politically-elected figures are invited to participate. Lumen will be held this year on January 17th and the topic is patriotism, altruism and the personal ethic. Invitees include Representative Hastert and ACLU attorneys. Everyone in the IMSA community is invited, including parents. The Alumni Association would like to have as many students participate as possible.

Doug stated that the Association sponsors an annual Alumni Day, usually in June or July, and holds class reunions that day. He sought suggestions on how to better connect the Association with the PAC. Cathy Barnes suggested that the Association sponsor a Friday Fest, become more visible at VIP days, and have a table at Presentation Day.

Finally, Doug mentioned that the Association is developing a system to connect existing students with alumni who attended certain colleges or are in certain professions. While there is a link on IMSA’s website that provides some of this information, it has not been updated recently. He also stated that the Alumni Association is considering developing a list of “host families” in college locations so that students have an IMSA connection when visiting or attending that college.

President’s Report

Cathy Barnes stated that the next meeting will be on December 13th at IMSA. There will be an executive council meeting at 9 a.m., with a general meeting to follow at 10 a.m. The Senior Banquet Committee will meet after the general meeting. The Academics and Curriculum Committee will also meet at 9 a.m. to discuss IMSA’s math curriculum.

Vice President’s Report

Lorna Ruddy reported that all of the downstate Information Days are covered with parent volunteers. However, parents who are interested in participating in VIP Day on November 23rd should attend the Parent’s Café at 1:30 to 4 p.m. The next VIP Day is January 31st and Lorna is seeking more parent volunteers.

Announcements

The meeting was adjourned at 12:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,
Don Driscoll
PAC Secretary (based on notes provided by Mitch Roth)