

IMSA PAC MEETING MINUTES
October 21, 2006
(<http://parents.imsa.edu>)

Co-President Kim Schmitt called the meeting to order at 10:05AM. Roll Call was taken and there was a quorum. It was moved by Vangie Hovermale and seconded by Noble Redmon to approve the September minutes as presented. The September minutes were approved as written.

President's Report

Kim Schmitt stated that we need parent volunteers to answer questions on Preview Day (f/k/a VIP Day) from parents and prospective students on Saturday, November 11th. The PAC meeting will be held in the morning, with the Preview Day held in the afternoon. We would prefer a variety and cross-section of parents from different parts of the state and having students in different school years. Parents can share their insights and experiences.

Kim also stated that volunteers are needed for Admissions/Informational meetings to be held in various locations throughout Illinois. These meetings introduce prospective students to IMSA and parents are always glad to have input by current families.

She also reported that Dr. Stephanie Pace Marshall asks parents to compile anecdotes and thoughts on raising and living with gifted children. If interested in submitting information, please contact Kim.

Vice-President's Report

DD McInerney pointed out that a list of all current parents and email contacts were sent to the regional reps so that they could easily contact local parents and distribute information, organize get-togethers, etc.

Treasurer's Report

Gary Dittmer presented an update on the budget and stated that the balance is \$11,695.36. He also distributed a proposed budget for 2006-07 which was set for a vote later in the meeting.

At the end of the PAC meeting, Gary answered questioned on the proposed budget. Vangie Hovermale them moved to approve the budget and Noble Redmon seconded the motion. The budget was unanimously approved.

Metro Coordinator Report

Pat Davenport was unavailable.

Downstate Coordinator Report

Noble Redmon reported that parents in southern Illinois are planning coffee get-togethers in mid-November. He encouraged parents in other regions to do the same.

Student Council

John Li, Student Council President, stated that last night's Friday Fest went very well and he thanked the parents for the food contributions. He also commented on the following Student Council projects:

- 1) College Day Program – Student Council is working with the Alumni Association and the PAC to provide means so that current students can communicate with alumni who are currently attending or recently graduated colleges of interest.
- 2) Club Calendar – all club activities will be centralized on a single calendar with two versions -- a physical whiteboard and on the website.
- 3) Sophomore Elections – Sophomore interest in Student Council is running high. For example, 14 candidates are running for the two at-large positions.
- 4) Trick or Treating – On October 31st, some of the faculty and administration will join in the Halloween fun and have candy in their offices for students who show up in costumes.
- 5) RC Trip Calendar – Student Council will ensure that all weekend trips by the RC are set forth in calendars in the hallways.

Academic Committee

Linda Biwer reported that at this morning's meeting, two biology teachers (Don Dosch and Sue Styer) distributed a list of revamped courses and discussed how those mapped into the current biology electives. They also talked about prospective seminars in biology for seniors next year which would present the seniors with state of the art formation.

CAC (College and Academic Counseling)

Julia Husen, head of the CAC Department, reported on multiple topics:

- (1) The University of Illinois applications were mailed out last week. Of 205 seniors, 143 applied to U of I which is a decrease from the average of approximately 178 applicants in prior years. In a departure from its past procedure, the U of I will issue its decisions to all applicants on December 15th.
- (2) Sixty-eight students have registered for SAT reasoning or SAT subject tests on November 4th. Breakfasts will be provided to the students before the test.
- (3) CAC is in the midst of nominating students for scholarships, and information is being distributed to students and parents via PrepHQ. For example, four students were just nominated for Emory University. She recommended that parents should nudge students to apply for applicable scholarships as they are announced.
- (4) CAC is organizing a variety of college interviews via alerts to PrepHQ. Students must then sign up for the interviews on first-come first-serve basis at the CAC office.
- (5) On November 2nd, IMSA will host a Financial Aid Presentation Night at 7:30 p.m. A financial aid officer from Lake Forest College will present timely and informational tips to parents and students. IMSA will videotape the presentation and post it on the website.
- (6) The PSAT test was taken on October 18th and 225 students took the test (218 juniors and 7 seniors). Unfortunately, the test was on a school day (and I Day) this year because College Board sent the tests out too late. Classes started at 11 am after the test.
- (7) 68 students registered for the November 14th SAT tests on 11/4, about 50% juniors and 50% seniors.
- (8) Sophomores will be divided into four groups and will meet as a group with their CAC on October 25. Agenda is to start having sophomores think about choosing a major in college. IMSA will provide informative statistics, such as that only 5% of college students actually graduate with the major they originally selected. Their homework assignment will be to explore three careers and the homework will be due November 15th. Most of the IMSA students would currently say either engineer or doctor.
- (9) New and improved website on Monday – much more streamlined. Primarily geared toward sophomore and junior parents. About 70% of juniors registered with PrepHQ and goal is to have all of them registered. Ultimately, all college information will be distributed through PrepHQ.
- (10) Finally, Julia again encouraged all parents to become familiar with PrepHQ if they have not already. It is a very helpful site in the college search process and is updated almost daily.

Communications

Co-President Barb Kulbida was not available but Kim noted that submissions for the next PAC newsletter are due October 23rd. The Newsletter is a great communication device that can be used for region reminders, important dates, etc.

Multicultural

No report

Student Life

Marsha Carter put out a plea for more Parent Partners since not all dorms and wings have a Parent Partner. The goal is for Partner to contact other parents in wings to coordinate dinners or other functions for the students in that wing. The coordination can be done from home and you need not be a local parent.

Flu shot information will be distributed this upcoming week by IMSA. Kane County Board of Health has suggested strongly that students be inoculated over Thanksgiving weekend. Bob Hernandez pointed out that students can not be inoculated at IMSA.

If parents have questions about IMSA's internet rules and policies, they should contact Steve Terrell (member of ITS) at spt@imsa.edu.

Allison Boldridge thanked Gloria Rabin for organizing Asian American Friday Fest. Over 40 parents contributed food and helped with the setup and cleanup. She believes that every student on campus attended and the parents had enough food to feed everyone.

Technology

Bruce Biwer reported that there was a Technology Committee meeting that morning. The initial focus was on Powerschool, which is the new program that will allow parents to access grades, assignments, attendance, teacher comments, etc. online. It is not mandatory for all teachers to provide the grading information but it will be mandatory next semester. There are still some problems so that parents sometimes have to log in twice, the passwords will not save, and/or the automatic notification for the absentee/tardies do not yet work in all instances. If you experience problems, alert Bruce (ls@anl.gov) or Jim Gerry (jgerry@imsa.edu). If you see problems with specific grades or classes, try contacting the teachers directly.

One parent had a question about why some students still do not have internet access and the availability of the students who work at ITS (f/k/a CNS). Bruce replied that part of the delay is that each computer and laptop has to be individually scanned for viruses. He also stated that where students still experience problems after the ITS student has worked on their computer, they should contact ITS directly and not the same student.

Bob Hernandez pointed out that there are 25 students working for ITS so there should be sufficient staff to handle the problems. However, IMSA's virus protection system will kick students off the internet if there is a potential virus problem and some students don't keep their virus protection up to date. Further, some students take their computers home, change the settings and then can't access the IMSA internet when they return.

IMSA now provides a desk in the Administration Building which is manned during the day to deal with laptop problems onsite. There will soon be an evening resource in the 04 hall for laptop problems.

Discipline

Don Driscoll reported that a survey was conducted at the end of the 2005-06 school year to assess the new discipline policy which went into effect last year. Based upon the results of that survey, the level of communication has definitely risen and most parents believe that the discipline procedures are applied in a consistent and fair manner. However, there is still a significant minority that believe the sanctions are sometimes too harsh for the violations and that the administration should be allowed to take into account mitigating factors such as the high stress of the IMSA academic environment and the reduced level of adult guidance and supervision in a boarding environment. These factors may currently be taken into account at the appeal level but are not part of the initial discipline process. It will therefore be considered whether the policy should be amended so that the discipline officer can take these specific mitigating factors (and perhaps others) into account in assigning sanctions.

Advancement Office

Carolyn Johnson encouraged parents to contribute to the IMSA fund. This year's goal is to increase parent participation to 75%, which would be a significant increase from prior years. This is necessary to demonstrate to outside funders and private corporations that parents are willing to support the IMSA Fund. She noted that 100% of the PAC budget comes from the IMSA Fund. Parents can immediately donate funds or can pledge a specific amount with regular payments over a course of time.

The participation level increased from 10% last month to 13.7% this month, with \$12,601 raised to date. This is better than last year at this time but still have a long way to go. She will consider a parent phoneathon in early 2007 depending on the level of contribution at that time.

The IMSA 20 Event was a wonderful event to celebrate the 20th anniversary. There were significant donations by parents and alumni in conjunction with the event. Ticket sales accounted for \$10,000, with donations totaling another \$8,000. Further, a silent auction run by parent volunteers with donated goods earned another \$7,000. Bob Hernandez pointed out that Kim Schmitt donated a stunning quilt to the event.

Old Business

None

New Business

None other than the issues set forth above.

Administration Report

Bob Hernandez reported on the following issues:

- (1) He explained that the number of absences over the weekends in PowerSchool were artificially high because the RCs were entering the initial information (present or absent) but then failing to go back and mark many of them as excused absences. They are now doing so and the number of absences should be declining.
- (2) Yesterday was the end of the quarter and the deadline for teachers to submit grades is October 30th. Some of the teachers have already been posting quarter grades in PowerSchool. In sending out grades this quarter, IMSA will only send out the grades but not the teacher comments since PowerSchool does not currently provide that capability aside from the first line of the comments. However, the parents can access the full comments via the PowerSchool site. IMSA will be working with PowerSchool to modify the program so that comments will also be mailed out in the future. He noted that out of the 650 students, there are 20 families who do not have internet access and those families will receive hard copies of the full comments as well as the grades.
- (3) Bob states that PowerSchool is very helpful to the IMSA administration. For example, he can instantly obtain metrics and detailed information regarding which students are missing class, whose grades are slipping, who needs assistance or intervention, etc.
- (4) He noted that Thanksgiving Break will commence on Tuesday (not Wednesday) this year. Classes end at 4:15 on Tuesday and most regional buses will depart at 5 pm, although the Collinsville bus will leave in the early afternoon. The buildings close at 8 pm so parents need to pick up their children no later than that time so the staff can depart for their own Thanksgiving holiday.

Announcements

The next PAC meeting will be November 11, 2006. Junior parents will be responsible for refreshments.

Leslie LeResche moved that the meeting be adjourned. Vangie Hovermale seconded. The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by: Don Driscoll, substitute PAC Secretary