



Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy®

igniting and nurturing creative, ethical, scientific minds that advance the human condition

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT

José M. Torres, Ph.D.

September 19, 2018

LEADERSHIP MATTERS

This report provides the Board of Trustees with information regarding Academy activities and the progress that we are making toward achieving our IMSA Impact and Outcomes Statement and Priority Outcomes. I organize the Report of the President, where appropriate, around the IMSA Impact and Outcomes document:

Three pillars:

1. STEM Teaching and Learning
2. Operational Capacity
3. Stakeholder Engagement

One Strategy—Strengthen Employee Engagement

and IMSA's **four priorities for Academic Year 2018-2019:**

- ❖ Guide the integration of UN 17 Sustainable Development Goals
- ❖ Advance equity and excellence
- ❖ Develop our international strategy
- ❖ Work on phase 1 of the innovation campus

I provide information, updates and general observations with IMSA stakeholders, including IMSA employees, students, and parents via my [Personal Reflections](#) throughout the year.

STEM Teaching and Learning

Graduation

The Class of 2018 graduated June 2nd. We are very proud to send 192 of these graduating seniors to 85 different institutions next fall. 73 will attend an Illinois college/university including University of Illinois, IIT, University of Chicago, Loyola and Northwestern. 118 are headed farther from home to Stanford, Vanderbilt, MIT, Case Western Reserve, Purdue, Grinnell and Brown University just to name a few. For a second year in a row, one of our IMSA graduates will study abroad at Oxford.

Convocation

We began our school year with our Convocation on August 20. We welcomed the class of 2021. Kiyomi Hamilton '00 was our guest speaker. She is the General Operations Manager at McMaster-Carr. Luke Musgrave '15 returned to IMSA to provide our musical selection. Luke is a senior at North Central College where he is majoring in Actuarial Science and Mathematics. Thank you to Board of Trustee Member Sherrick for attending Convocation this year. The program, video and scripts can be found on Digital Commons. <https://digitalcommons.imsa.edu/convocation/4/>

Mental Health Initiative Week

Each year, the Student Council works very hard to put together Mental Health Initiative Week to promote awareness of Mental Health Issues affecting IMSA. This year the week focused on tracking mental health challenges specific to the IMSA community. The week of events was kicked-off with a Midday assembly on Monday, September 10 in order to speak about mental health in front of the student body, staff, and faculty. The week was filled with events such as inviting therapy dogs to IMSA, a presentation about perfectionism, a campfire with the theme of “burning” stressors and many other events.

Year of Inquiry

The purpose of the Year of Inquiry is to engage members of the IMSA community in an in-depth investigation of a current challenge that significantly influences IMSA’s work and mission. For Academic Year 2018-2019, the focus of IMSA’s Year of Inquiry is student mental health and well-being. We chose this focus based on findings from the *Stanford Survey of Adolescent School Experiences* (a.k.a. the **Challenge Success Survey**) which IMSA students took on February 20, 2018 as part of a collaborative effort between IMSA and the Challenge Success project in the Graduate School of Education at Stanford University. We kicked off our Year of Inquiry on September 12, during Mental Health Initiative Week.

Operational Capacity

Cabinet Retreat

On July 25th I held a retreat with my Cabinet at Northern Illinois University conference center in Naperville. The objectives for the retreat were to set Academy priorities for the Academic Year 2018-2019; discuss how to develop and lead the Senior Leadership Team so that they are more fully aligned to Academy goals and priorities; and explore the IMSA institutional culture(s) and create a path of cultural change and alignment with our short and long-term goals.

After some discussion and listening to Dr. Kelly Page’s presentation on Social Leadership at IMSA, we reached consensus that there are multiple organizational cultures and subcultures at IMSA, sometimes in tension with each other. For example, some at IMSA resist change and think fondly of the “good old days” while others are focused on innovation and the future. We decided to use the Franklin Covey 4 Disciplines of Execution to further to foster a culture of execution and getting things done.

Senior Leadership Development

Members from the Senior Leadership Team, composed of IMSA staff with leadership responsibilities and faculty leaders, attended separate one-day training sessions on the 4 Disciplines of Execution in early August to learn the 4 disciplines: Focus on the Wildly Important, Act on Lead Measures, Keep a Compelling Scoreboard, and Create a Cadence of Accountability. One half of the Senior Leadership Team is considering how to improve employee engagement while the other half is focused on making plans to support our Equity and Excellence Policy.

Stakeholder Engagement

White House STEM Summit

On June 25 and 26, 2018 I joined approximately 150 STEM leaders from across the Nation representing all 50 states and commonwealths at the White House STEM Summit to provide input to the White House on their development of the upcoming Federal 5-Year STEM Education Strategic Plan. (A summary of the proceedings can be found in the Appendix.) In addition to selecting me to represent Illinois, Governor Rauner also selected Julie Mueller from the Universal Technical Institute-Lisle, and Sean McCarthy from the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity. I am pleased and excited to report that two key components of the Federal Plan will include:

1. Focusing on innovation and entrepreneurship and
2. Improving access of STEM programs for all (underrepresented and underserved) Americans.

Chicago Tech Leadership Initiative

Earlier this year, I joined the Chicago Technology Leadership Initiative Talent and Education Working Group, which is an initiative of the Civic Committee of the Commercial Club and leaders from across the Chicago technology ecosystem to make Chicago a top-tier, global technology leader. The Working Groups developed objectives, clarified metrics, and proposed a set of plans/initiatives that will be used moving forward to accomplish this mission.

Governor's Cabinet on Children and Youth

I continue to participate on the Governor's Cabinet. We meet approximately once a quarter to review progress on the Governor's initiatives. Last spring the Cabinet voted to create a Youth Commission. This commission will serve as an advisory group to the Children's Cabinet, allowing young people who are currently or have been in the past, involved with an Illinois government agency to give input on its initiatives and policy related to youth. Mihika Rajvanski '19 will represent IMSA. Mikki is the Legislative Chair of the Student Committee for the Advancement of IMSA. The first meeting of the Youth Commission was held in Springfield on September 15.

P-20 Council

I am also a member of Illinois' P-20 Council, which "was established by the legislature in 2009 to foster collaboration among state agencies, education institutions, local schools, community groups, employers, taxpayers, and families, and to collectively identify needed reforms to develop a seamless and sustainable statewide system of quality education and support." The P-20 Council meets quarterly.

Aurora Education Commission

Aurora Mayor Richard Irvin invited me to be a member of a new City of Aurora Education Commission. The Commission was approved by the Aurora City Council in December 2017 with the purpose of serving as a forum where education providers that serve the city of Aurora discuss the development of innovative partnerships that will yield compelling education and workforce outcomes for the city. We are meeting on a monthly basis to move forward on the Commission's objectives.

President's Student Advisory Council

This year I created a Student Advisory Council and invited students from throughout the Academy to be part of the council. The purpose of this Council is to inform students of Academy initiatives and

solicit their input on these initiatives and to respond to questions that students have from “Administration.” At our first meeting, I collected a list of topics to be discussed at future meetings. The students and I are excited about the opportunity to discuss our thoughts and concerns with each other. I plan on meeting with them approximately once a month.

Strengthen Employee Engagement

Community Learning Day—June 2018

At our June Community Day, we shared with faculty and the staff the timeline for admitting international students and possibly 9th grade students, if the IMSA Bill was signed into law. We also conducted the Gallup Employee Engagement Survey. While the results were not as high as we had targeted (43%), there was a significant improvement from our first administration of the Gallup Survey of 23% engaged employees in October 2016 to 36% engaged employees in June 2018. As noted earlier in this report, we are continuing to work on improving employee engagement using the 4 Disciplines of Execution. Mr. Lawrence “Bud” Bergie is leading this team.

Community Day—August 2018

The August Community Day agenda was a perfect way to kick-off the academic year. I appreciate Ms. Katherine Berger and the Student Affairs staff for taking the lead on planning and facilitating Community Day. We celebrated the successful conclusion of the International Student Science Fair, saw a preview of the new IMSA website and learned about the various roles of the Student Life team.

We also set aside time for faculty and staff to discuss and express their concerns and recommendations concerning allowing students in 9th grade to enter IMSA, what our international strategy should include, and input on the Innovation Campus, phase 1. There was a lot of good dialogue and recommendations. The feedback received from the day is included in the Appendix.

Integrating UN 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

This past June we hosted the 18th International Student Science Fair (ISSF). The workshops and activities focused on three of the 17 SDGs—Zero Hunger, Clean and Affordable Energy and Clean Water and Sanitation. One hundred and fifty students and educators from over 30 schools representing nearly 20 countries participated in the 5 day event. A number of long-standing IMSA employees commented to me that this was “IMSA at its best.” The student presentations can be found on Digital Commons https://digitalcommons.imsa.edu/issf2018_docs/.

Advance Equity and Excellence

Building on the Board’s adoption of the Equity and Excellence policy, staff is beginning to develop an implementation plan. We have signed the attached Memorandum of Agreement with the Midwest and Plains Equity Center out of the University of Indiana to help us develop the plan. The collaboration between IMSA and the Equity Center is scheduled to begin shortly. As I stated above, we also have an internal team of our senior leaders working on equity and excellence using the 4 Disciplines of Execution. Dr. Norman “Storm” Robinson III is leading this team.

Develop our International Strategy

Governor Rauner signed the IMSA bill SB 2939 into law on Friday, August 17, permitting enrollment of students who have completed the 8th grade as well as non-Illinois students who will pay tuition, room and board and fees. We can now move forward in developing an international strategy that encompasses recruiting of international students.

I have asked Mary Collins to take the lead in developing the strategy. There are three components to the strategy—establishing IMSA’s international presence, leveraging the demand for the work being done by Professional Field Services, and beginning the recruitment of international students. She is working with members of my Cabinet to explore opportunities and to develop our strategic response and will soon expand her working group to others in the Academy to include faculty and other staff.

Innovation Campus, Phase 1

Mr. Lawrence “Bud” Bergie will lead a discussion at the Board of Trustees meeting today, September 19, 2018 regarding different scenarios and IMSA’s financial feasibility. We thank Board of Trustee members Roche, Clarke, Mayer, and Sherrick for helping us consider options as we developed the materials for today’s Board meeting.

Leadership Update from Cabinet Members

Updates from my Cabinet are attached