

Annual Report
of the work in
IMSA's Archives

“Preserving the present so the future
will know its past.”*

30 June 2017

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Preface:

The IMSA Archives, housed in the Leto M. Furnas Information Resource Center, serves to collect and preserve materials relating to the history and ethos of the Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy and the activities of its students, faculty and staff. Our collection includes materials about IMSA's establishment, led by Dr. Leon Lederman and Governor James Thompson; the Academy's development since 1986; its ideas and programs; partnership programs for educators and schools state- and nationwide; and the lives of its students, alumni, and staff.

Documents and images from the Archives can also be found in the "Archives & Special Collections" section on IMSA's Digital Commons.** In addition, some documents and images not otherwise available in IMSA's Archives can be found here.

[Disclaimer: In no way does the Archives attempt to fulfill IMSA's obligations under the State of Illinois' record-keeping requirements for state agencies. Those records that IMSA is required to keep are housed in separate repositories.]

Introduction:

The archive of an institution plays a key role as the keeper of the institutional memory. That role can only be fulfilled if materials are gathered, preserved and made accessible. IMSA's Archives and Library staffs have institutional longevity and have known many alumni as students, as well as teachers and staff, including many no longer at the institution, which has significantly aided our work. Like last year the archivists have continued developing collections and making them available on Digital Commons [DC], work that continues to be made possible by the expertise and creativity of Jean Bigger and her work on DC. In addition our work continues to strengthen and bring up to date the organization of collections in general, to build new collections, and to make the Archives more accessible to administration, faculty, staff, students, alumni/ae, and the general public. To that end the volunteer staff have delineated four domains (labeled as Goals in last years report) that together constitute our work.

*The quote on the title page was inspired by the collections campaign slogan of the Danish National Museum, seen in Copenhagen April, 2015. [Trans. by Nokkentved]

** "Archives and Special Collections," *Digital Commons @ IMSA*, http://digitalcommons.imsa.edu/special_collections/

Domains:

1. Maintenance of the current collections:

We began the year with a new set of shelves. There are few windows in our building, but we had discovered that enough U.V. rays came through the clerestory windows above the Archives to bleach the materials we had on an old set of shelves without a top. Fortunately we were able to order new shelves of the same kind that we use elsewhere in the Archives. After the maintenance staff had assembled them for us, and not only does it look splendid but we no longer have to be concerned about the sun bleaching the books of IMSA authors among the other items that we store there.

Given, that over the years, the work of the Archives has largely been done by library staff when time could be made in otherwise busy schedules, using what was then standard practice, our collections were organized by record group, e.g. Group 1 IMSA General or Group 6 President, and within each group, documents were filed as separate entities and entered as such in the finding aid. In the early years when our collection was small, that procedure worked well, and in some categories maintaining that organization continues to be effective. For other records, however, such an organizational schema has become untenable. We are now on our fourth president and as the collection has increased in size and more contributions are submitted, a better system of organization has become necessary. Like so many other archives with the same challenges, we therefore decided that to maintain our current collections appropriately we had to update our system for storing and indexing at least some record groups.

We began with “Group 6. President”. After looking at more current archive practices, IMSA’s archive finding aid, and drawing on the collective experiences of the two volunteer archivists we derived a more workable schema for filing and indexing the documents, images and other materials in this records group. First we broke the group into sub-groups, one for each president, so we now have Group 6A: President: [name], 6B: President: [name] and so on. This way the collection of presidential papers can expand as necessary. Within each president’s collection, documents are now organized by topic into the following categories:

0. Introduction to the collection. A short narrative will briefly describe the organization and content of the named collection. Let me note here that everything is filed in chronological order with the oldest first.

1. Biography and Photographs. All materials including print and manuscript materials about the president in question will be filed in this category. With an occasional exception only photographs of the president her/himself will be included here. Photographs that include others will typically be filed elsewhere. Images from an event, for instance, would be filed under that event.

2. Correspondence. The correspondence has been further subdivided into three sub-categories:

- a. External. Correspondence with parties outside the institution to and from the president will be included here.
 - b. Internal. Typically memos or emails to and from individual members of the faculty or staff are included here.
 - c. Near-print. Included here are all mass mailings to internal or external groups.
3. Manuscript Materials. This includes speeches, notes etc. that are not in print or near-print and written by the president.
 4. Print Materials. This includes articles and other printed documents written by the president, except books or dissertations that are stored elsewhere.
 5. Board of Trustees and State Government Materials. This includes a variety of documents. [However, as far as we know, anything that falls under the record keeping rules for state agencies is elsewhere or also elsewhere.]
 6. Budget and Personnel Materials. Again this includes a variety of documents but nothing that belongs in the H.R. or Business Office files. [See also the caveat above regarding required record keeping.]
 7. Conferences and Retreats. Some presidents have organized retreats and participated in conferences. This material may include schedules of events, remarks made by the president and others, as well as materials, generally selected by the president, for participants to read.
 8. Miscellaneous Material. Documents that do not seem to fit the above categories are included here.

The materials we have from IMSA's founding president, Stephanie P. Marshall has served as the trial collection. The papers had seen little reorganization from the way they came to the Archives from the office filing cabinets, and it was only possible to find things using the guide, so we first derived the 8 categories described above. The collection was then sorted and has now been arranged with help from the library staff. With the new organizational schema it is much easier to find and to file material. In addition we found documents which had been part of a working office but which did not belong in this record group, and which have now been moved to more appropriate collections.

The success of this work is already apparent. The documents from Groups 6B, 6C, and 6D have now also been reorganized, and processing material from the current president as it comes in has been greatly expedited. In addition the need for some special collections has become apparent and several have been established. For example, we have found enough documents in Marshall's collection and in other places to warrant the special collection "Getting IMSA Started" and "Orientation at the Start of School" both in Group 1. IMSA General. There is enough material in each to fill an archive box.

Another important accomplishment in the care and maintenance of our collections concerns IMSA student and institutional publications. All of the student publications

have now been reorganized so that runs of each publication are discrete. In addition, those of special interest to the IMSA community including alumni/ae have been bound and placed on bookshelves making them readily available. Several have already been used in special displays to good effect. This was done using a small fund that was established for the use of the Archives, thanks to the efforts of President Jose Torres. We have started organizing institutional publications in the same manner and some have also been bound. This is, however, still work in progress.

All in all we have accomplished what we set out to do in maintaining our current collection. The new schema for organizing several key collections was established and the test collection has been successfully re-organized, as have the three other collections in the "President" record group. In addition, the need for three new special collections has been identified and populated though all three still require proper organization. The newly bound student publications look splendid standing on the new shelves along with those already bound. We look forward to finishing the re-organization of the institutional publications and binding those of special interest.

2. Collections Development and Accessibility:

During the course of the year we have made a number of acquisitions. Of especial interest is the quilt made by students during the school year 2012-2013. It is large (probably 8 by 10 feet), made of mostly IMSA tee-shirts from clubs, hall events, and sports teams, and has been properly cleaned and stored. It has even served us well in the thirty-year anniversary exhibit. We also acquired a number of tee-shirts from a retired faculty member. With the help of library staff we are getting print outs on acid free paper of on-line documents including some student publications, the president's monthly report to the IMSA community, and other electronic documents, all of which are being added to our collection.

The project to transfer our extensive collection of photographs, and particularly slides, to digital storage is moving apace. Since we only have a slide sorting board and a handheld slide viewer this rich collection is no longer accessible, and transferring the images to a digital format is important work. As they are scanned some slides are being added to the various galleries we have in DC, but at this point most are being stored on a server to make them accessible as needed.

Our work with Jean Bigger to build up the "Archives and Special Collections" on DC is ongoing. Part of this work includes, for example, collecting and making available IMSA dissertations, a project that we will continue during the coming year. Since this has been successful so far we are discussing adding masters' theses to this collection next year. Faculty publications and teaching materials are being added as they come in, as are "Teacher Resources," and "Significant Student Work." With the exception of one year, all the catalogues with abstracts for IMSA's presentation days are now available, as is the interactive time-line "Our History" (<http://digitalcommons.imsa.edu/history/>) that we worked on last year. The user data we receive from DC indicates that there is significant interest in our site and that that interest is growing. As the screen shot below shows,

of IMSA's thirty-year anniversary and staffed an open house in the Archives for that occasion. In addition we continue to maintain open hours, talking with walk-ins and to field requests for information from students, faculty and staff. Unfortunately our record keeping regarding visitors and requests are not accurate enough, but we have begun a log to track those services and we should have some clearer information for the next annual report. Of course, the work done for DC also provides a service to the institution and to its faculty, staff, students, alumni/ae as well as to educators in Illinois and across the globe.

Last year's report included several goals concerning providing educational opportunities to members of the IMSA community. Unfortunately we were overly optimistic about what could be accomplished. Of the two planned "Occasional Archive Talks" only one was given, though it was well received. The second proposed talk was preempted by the thirty-year anniversary exhibit and events as well as by some medical issues for one of the volunteers. Lastly let me note that supervised research experiences for students did not materialize for a variety of reasons.

4. Operations:

Operations continue to depend on two volunteer archivists, student volunteers and help from the library staff. Here it should be noted that without the expertise and work of Jean Bigger we would not have been able to make so much of our material available on DC as we have. Furthermore, she is of signal help also on practical matters like mounting an exhibit, or supervising student volunteers. We continue to operate without a budget, though the Library includes supplies for the Archives in its purchase orders and the IMSA Fund administers a small fund established with the help of Dr. Jose Torres, IMSA's President. This fund is used for special purchases like the binding of student publications that we had done this year.

Below is a table of the hours contributed to the Archives since 1 July 2016 by two volunteers as well as several student workers. (The hours contributed by the Library staff are not included herein.)

Person(s)	Hours	Change from last year
Two volunteers	ca. 369 to 7 June*	+14
Students assigned to the Library	ca. 40	0

*At this writing it is anticipated that by 30 June 2017 the two volunteers will have contributed approximately 30 additional hours.

Conclusion and Goals:

On the whole the year went well for the Archives. We have found a workable way of storing those record groups that are organized around the files of individuals. The presidents' materials have now been reorganized. We hope to continue this work with Connie Hatcher's files, which may turn out to be even more complex than the Marshall collection, and then there are the files from the principal's office. As we work through these collections we will also be keeping a sharp eye out for materials that belong elsewhere, like H.R., for instance. In the process of doing this work we have also found documents that really belong in other record groups as well as enough material to warrant establishing several special collections. The reorganization of student publications and the binding of significant ones has been well worth it. The institutional publications, currently in several locations and record groups, undoubtedly deserve similar attention. Clearly IMSA's Digital Commons, including the "Archives and Special Collections" section has drawn an expanding audience around the world. We hope that continues, and we certainly expect to continue working with Jean Bigger to broaden the Archives' presence on DC. We will continue to identify collections and images for digitization, and where appropriate add collections designed to preserve IMSA's history and ethos as well as to inform and engage our stakeholders.

It would be good to expand our knowledge of on-site users and to engage the community more frequently. The educational services that proved too much for last year have not been forgotten. We will again plan to have two "Occasional Archives Talks" next year, to continue mounting exhibits in celebration of IMSA's history, and to support significant events as possible. To encourage student interest in using the archives for research we are hoping to include a presentation about the Archives as part of the sophomores' introduction to the library at the beginning of the year. In preparing for this report we realized that we do not know enough about the on-site services we provide. To do so we have developed a log to keep better track of on-site visitors and requests for information.

Given the resources we have, we plan to maintain the current level of activity. The regular hours have proven helpful and will be maintained. Student workers have been productive and we have plenty for them to do. The library staff has been very supportive, for which we are grateful and which we anticipate will continue.

Respectfully submitted:

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