

## REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT

José M. Torres, PhD

January 20, 2021

### 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

### Priorities for Academic Year 2020-2021

1. Equity and Excellence Plan: Year One of Action
2. Beyond surviving...Resolved to thrive (IMSA employees working remotely must do more than merely survive the year; we want to thrive!)

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

**SPECIAL NOTICE: Due to the coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic and Governor Pritzker's Executive Orders, IMSA staff and students left the IMSA Campus on March 13, 2020, and continue to work, teach, and learn remotely. Only when required for a business purpose are IMSA staff working from our campus in Aurora.**

### STEM Teaching and Learning

*IMSA Commencement Speaker is Professor Marsha Rosner.*

I am pleased to announce that Professor Rosner accepted my invitation to speak at IMSA's Commencement scheduled for Saturday, June 5, 2021 beginning at 1:30 p.m. As of the writing of this report, we are planning to have a face-to-face graduation at the Northern Illinois University Convocation Center in DeKalb. Our plans may need to change based on health and safety considerations. Our Commencement Speaker, Dr. Marsha R. Rosner, was appointed to IMSA's Board of Trustees in 1993 by Governor Jim Edgar and has been reappointed to the Board as a representative of the scientific community in Illinois. Dr. Rosner is a Charles B. Huggins Professor in the Ben May Department for Cancer Research at The University of Chicago and is an internationally recognized authority in the field of signal transduction. She authored or co-authored over 100 scientific publications, has served as a reviewer for numerous journals and has been a member of scientific review panels for the American Cancer Society, the

Veteran's Administration and the National Institutes of Health. She is a Senior Fellow at the Institute for Genomics and Systems Biology, and a Fellow of the Institute of Medicine of Chicago.

#### *Music Students Performed virtually*

On Friday, December 11, 2020, our Instrumental Music streamed [Quarantunes 3: Musica da Camera, A Sleigh Ride Around the World](#). Since IMSA's student body celebrates multiple and diverse holiday traditions from around the world, the students and Ms. Mary Beth McCarthy decided to present a Chamber Music event that would be representative of music from around the world. On December 18, 2020, our IMSA choir also performed [On Broadway! 2020](#). We recognize and celebrate our choir students' performance. Lara Brink is IMSA's Choir Director.

#### *IMSA Local 604-IFT-AFT*

We held two bargaining sessions on October 27, 2020 and January 7, 2021. We believe all matters outside of the financial proposal are on the table. We have scheduled our next four sessions for February 4 and 18 and March 11 and 25, 2021.

#### [Martin Luther King, Jr Celebration](#)

On Tuesday, January 19, 2021, we held our virtual MLK Celebration with renowned civil rights leader and activist, Angela Davis. The virtual celebration included special guests, video tribute, Poetry contest, and much more.

#### *Intersession -January 12-14, 2021*

Thanks to Dean of Student Support and Equity, Paul Gaszak, and the many IMSA alumni, parents, and staff, including faculty, IMSA planned and participated in a virtual intersession where students had the fantastic opportunity to engage in learning hobbies, skills, life skills, to include content. In short, during intersession, students have the opportunity to explore their interests outside of IMSA's curriculum. See the 2021 catalog [here](#).

### **Operational Capacity**

#### *Titan Pact: Repopulation Plan 2021—Plan for Campus Opening*

At the November 18, 2020, Board of Trustee meeting, we provided to the Board and subsequently to our IMSA community, the Titan Pact: Repopulation Plan 2021. Administration recommended delaying the reopening of the IMSA campus for student face-to-face instruction beyond January 2021.

At the November meeting, President Torres stated that it would behoove IMSA to review the positivity rates, cases, etc., in January 2021, a month after the holidays as there is often a surge in positivity rates several weeks after a major event. He stated that since it would take at a minimum 30-days to prepare the campus for students, the earliest we would be back on campus would be March 2021 provided we made the decision to enact the Repopulation Plan in late January or early February 2021.

Today, we discuss with the Board of Trustees a timetable of the tasks that must take place prior to and following a decision to open the IMSA campus. Because of this timetable, President Torres recommends that the Board authorize him to make the decision to open the campus if and when it is safe to do so.

The criteria for opening the campus continues to be and has *expanded* to:

1. The entire state is on Phase 4 of Restore IL
2. Existence (*and availability*) of treatment and or vaccine
3. *Wide availability of rapid testing for IMSA students and staff, including faculty*

#### *Capital Development Projects*

Heating and cooling replacement project: This project was released for development in October of 2018. The current project bid opening was held on September 4, 2020. This bid was the third attempt at awarding this project. Previous bids were thrown out due to qualifications and paperwork issues in each bid attempt. The September bid had four bidders and the assumed low bidder was within the base budget of \$3,425,000.00. The third low bidder was the only qualified bidder and has passed through their Business Enterprise Program (BEP) review and is currently completing final contract awards. Project construction will begin as soon as awarded and will run throughout the summer.

Roof Water infiltration project: This project was released for development in February of 2014. The project was placed on hold and re-released in October of 2018. The current project bid opening was held on October 2, 2020. This bid was the third attempt at awarding this project. Previous bids were thrown out due to being over budget in round one and disqualified for improper paperwork in round two. The October bid had five bidders and the assumed low bidder was within the base budget of \$6,000,000.00. They are currently in the BEP review process. We hope to move into the contracts phase in January. This project will work in conjunction with the HVAC project and work will need to overlap in areas. The construction process will begin when weather is favorable and will continue through the summer and into the fall.

#### *Acting Chief Operations Officer*

On November 30, 2020, I shared with the IMSA Staff that I eliminated the Chief Operations Officer (COO) position effective November 30. I continue to take the measures necessary to transition to a new IMSA President and face our financial challenges. I began to oversee Safety and Security Operations, Facilities and Capital Planning, Business and Financial Operations, Information Technology Services, and Instructional Technology and Media Center Departments, and I am leading team meetings as well as holding one-on-one meetings with the operations leadership team. I was pleased to announce that Ms. Kimberly Corrao agreed to serve as IMSA's Ethics Officer in the interim.

## **Stakeholder Engagement**

### *Board of Trustee Appointment*

I am pleased to announce that Governor Pritzker appointed Roberto Curci, PhD, Vice Provost and Dean and Professor of Finance at Dominican University to IMSA's Board of Trustees. Dr. Curci joins the Board for his first meeting today, January 20, 2021. Bienvenido, Roberto!

### *Illinois Board of Higher Education Strategic Planning Advisory Committee*

At the request of Ms. Ginger Ostro, Executive Director, Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE), I agreed to serve on the IBHE Strategic Planning Advisory Committee. The Advisory Committee is charged with developing and providing to the Illinois Board of Higher Education a draft plan to fulfill the Strategic Direction. Specifically, the Advisory Committee will identify the highest impact Strategies, aligned with the Core Principles, to achieve each Priority.

The Advisory Committee will meet five times between mid-December and March, 2021. We've already held two of our meetings. The IBHE Board is expected to approve the Strategic Plan in March.

### *P-20 Council*

The P-20 Council is also on a fast track to address educational renewal in Illinois after the devastating impact that the coronavirus is having on education statewide. Working under the direction of Deputy Governor Jesse Ruiz, the P-20 Council is thinking and acting strategically to provide guidance through the Illinois State Board of Education and other educational agencies in the use of the \$3.1B federal stimulus dollars that will flow directly to districts and higher education institutions. With a bias toward rapid action, the P-20 Council is creating incentives and guidance that maximize outcomes through the development of a resource guide that can serve to influence how funding is spent with the ultimate goal to inform a transformative plan to "build back better."

### *Weekly Call-in to the Governor's Office*

Each week, I call in to the Governor's Office for a meeting with Educational Leadership Management, including IL State Superintendent of Education, IBHE Executive Director, and Deputy Governor Jesse Ruiz. At our most recent meeting, Deputy Governor informed us that educators, including staff who work at IMSA, will be part of Phase 1B of the vaccine distribution. Additionally, IMSA is working closely with the Kane County Department of Health to serve as a testing and vaccine distribution center.

## **Leadership Update from Select Cabinet Members**

Update from Dr. Comfort Akwaji-Anderson and Ms. Alexis Thomas are attached. Newsletters from Student Affairs and Operations are also attached.