



# PROJECT CATEGORIES OVERVIEW

## Introduction

Projects in the Residential Life sphere of campus have long been the staple of Student Council work. A contributing factor to this is that the sizeable portion of student body complaints and election talking points are related to residential policy like study hours and internet shut-off. Over the years, Student Council has expanded its role to include projects aimed at improving the condition of students on campus. The Shadow Program was a landmark project for its success in student and staff collaboration. It exemplified what a committed Student Council could do to help the IMSA community and demonstrated to staff departments that Student Council was a capable organization of planners, writers, and communicators. The Sibling Program has also been constantly evolving to include a dual-focus of serving the incoming sophomore class and keep collecting reliable data on the state of campus. However, Student Council activity concerning life on campus has not been all fun and games. In 2009, the Student Council cabinet had to deal with serious student outcry over the Intervisitation Policy Review Committee. In 2014, a similar experience came about with the Clash of the Halls Review Committee. Both cases required heavy dialogue between a Student Council representative and a staff connection outside of the committee's main activities. The nature of both committees naturally resulted in students criticizing them, but there were prominent adult voices who wanted to go much further than the actions that were actually taken by the aforementioned committees. Since this time, however, Student Council has built a more congenial relationship with administrators and scenarios like this, for the most part, have been avoided or addressed through compromises. At present, there are many opportunities to make changes that are still being left on the table by Student Council. Projects such as the beautification of the campus through an IMSA garden or the creation of skateboard racks to serve the skateboard community at IMSA will serve to help students enjoy their residential experience.



## Notable Projects

### Shadow Program (2009)

Created by the 2009 Student Council Cabinet, the Shadow Program allowed prospective IMSA sophomores to stay with an upperclassman for a night, visit all of their classes, and then return home. The program proposal is still in the Presidential Archives and is reflected upon as a landmark initiative between Student Council, Student Life, the Admissions Department, and Residential Life Staff, in particular because Student Council took a heavy role in matching guests with suitable upperclassmen and promoting the program all around the state of Illinois. The proposal is also significant because it defines life at IMSA in four dimensions: academic, residential, social, and extracurricular, even though IMSA outreach program previously only touted academic and residential aspects. In 2011, the program was reportedly discontinued due to an absence of funding, but it seems possible that program could be revived. Efforts under the 2013 Student Council cabinet to bring back the Shadow Program were cut short because of a change in leadership in the Admissions Department and failure to communicate with the new head, Dr. Hernandez. During some time between 2013 and 2017, the Shadow Program was revived by Student Life, and currently, students may shadow an IMSA

student for a day through permission with student life. Generally, the students who take advantage of this opportunity are siblings of current IMSA students.

### Student to Student Guide (2004)

As far back as 2004, Student Council annually wrote and revised a Student to Student Guide to introduce new sophomores to parts of campus as well as a number of tips and tricks ranging from room supplies to which teachers would be willing to round students' grades upward. By 2008, the guide had become just a packing list for sophomores and efforts under the 2013 Student Council cabinet to revive the other aspects of the guide stalled because Student Life, in memory of the guide content of older days, requested a heavy review process that Student Council members elected not to keep up with.

### Trip Request Form (2008)

In 2008, Student Council Webmaster Andrew Ericson and back-end savant David Chang constructed an online widget for the Student Council website that allowed students to choose locations, leave a description, and list potential companions for an off-campus trip. RCs received the responses and, as Ericson reflects, took up virtually every single request

that was sent. Over time, students became content with the regularly offered trips and the form fell into disuse. Chang built the database using MySQL, a language that the Student Council cabinets from 2010 onward were not familiar with. When ITS started moving all students websites to WordPress in 2012, the form and database could not be preserved because of WordPress' limited functionality. No cabinet since then has actively pursued reviving the form, but if RCs were willing to take up submissions, it seems a feasible project to reinstate, especially considering advances in Google Apps Script that make back-end databases and online forms more sustainable for future Student Council members unfamiliar with coding languages.

### RC of the Month (2008-2009)

Formerly called RC Spotlight, this was a project to recognize exceptional RCs. It was originally taken up by the Residential Life Committee, but because of the growing dysfunction that led to the committee's removal, the project was moved to the Communications Committee. Each month, a poster was made, often reluctantly, by a member of the committee to honor the winning RC. Student criticism posited that the RCs were no longer being chosen for excellence, but by popular vote from wings that would put in a burst of votes as an attempt to get on their RC's good side. A related project

undertaken by the 2012 Student Council cabinet was to create RC videos that introduced all the RCs to students on campus. The project was completed as a series of four parts, featuring all the RCs across the seven halls sorted by wing letter. Another related event was the RC Appreciation day that Student Council hosted, usually following intersession. Traditionally, this event invited RCs for cake and punch in the Academic Pit to watch a slideshow compiled by Student Council of RC pictures.

### Quality of Life Survey (2012-2018)

This is probably the most successful survey that Student Council releases throughout the year. When the 2012 Cabinet released this survey, they received more than 400 responses. This survey is considered to be the most accurate feedback Student Council has ever received and covers a wide variety of topics. It was developed with the help of the IMSA Research Department and Chris Kolar. The 2013 Cabinet spent a large majority of their second semester attempting to convince Dr. Hernandez to release their version of the Quality of Life Survey. Dr. Hernandez continually put off releasing the survey all the way through to the Residential Life Forum conducted during the second semester of the 2013-2014 academic year. In order to ensure a high response rate, two wing pizza parties were offered as a raffled



off prize for two of the wings that had 100% endorsement of the survey. In the 2017-2018 cabinet, Student Council worked with the Office of Institutional Research (OIR) to re-introduce the Quality of Life Survey after having not been administered for 2 years. OIR supplemented the Quality of Life Survey by administering the Challenge Success survey which compares IMSA with a multitude of other schools that also take the survey. The results from both of these surveys will guide StudCo efforts moving forward.

### Halloween Trick or Treating (2008)

Starting in 2008, Student Council organized annual trick or treating events on Halloween to encourage students to visit academic departments. Student Council requested that teachers have treats in their department office and then created a themed map of the school to show students where they could go.

### Restaurants-In (2008-2009)

The school year between 2008 and 2009 was considered a strong one for Residential Student Leaders (RSLs) within their own halls but Student Council struggled to get the Community Developers (CDs) to engage in activities with other halls and wanted to design an event to bring them together. They devised a cross-hall Dodgeball Tournament, but CDs were struggling to get their hallmates to sign

up, especially because one hall would be off the court at any given time. While this event was being planned, popular demand created the idea of Restaurants-In, when a mass order from a local restaurant would be taken and brought to campus for students to enjoy. The first and only instance of the Restaurants-In program was at Student Council's cross-hall Dodgeball Tournament, and was added as an incentive for the CDs to bring their halls to the event. The food was a great success and generated significant revenue for Student Council. In most records from the Presidential Archives, this event is credited with giving rise to the now ubiquitous Class Club food carts. The 2009 Student Council cabinet formalized their communication with external businesses and subsequent Class Clubs followed their methods to reach out to more businesses. Since 2009, the Class Clubs frequently have brought in food from restaurants such as Noodles & Company, Taco Bell, and Panda Express to raise money for prom.

### Sophomore Senior Lock-In (2009)

The 2009 Student Council cabinet hosted an event in October on the night before the PSAT to encourage bonding between sophomores and seniors while juniors studied. Records indicate that the event was well-attended and successful. Student Council recommended that the next year's event be accompanied by an



event to help juniors study or destress before the PSAT. It was not followed through on by the 2010 Student Council cabinet because Student Life preferred a studying event and Student Council preferred a destressing event, leading to an argument over whether or not juniors should be encouraged to study the night before an exam. The 2011 Student Council cabinet insisted that bonding between the sophomore classes was the responsibility of their respective Class Clubs and decided not to hold either event.

### Cell Phone Policy Revisions (2009)

The 2009 Student Council cabinet (under Mamatha Challa) approached Student Life with a proposal to allow cell phone use anywhere in the building. The proposal was carried, but due to unspecified reasons, only to allow cell phone use in the Old Caf. The final proposal notably excludes the area outside the attendance office near the Senior U-Bench. However, over a period of many years, the cell phone policy became more relaxed, allowing students to use cell phones in any part of the building (except in classrooms unless permitted by the teacher).

### Intervisitation Review Committee (2009)

In 2009, an unspecified member of Student Life convened a committee to assess the Academy's Intervisitation policy. The impetus for the committee was reported to have largely

come from parent complaints that Intervisitation was a distraction to students and leading to irresponsible activity. The committee presented three measures in response to the complaints. First of all, the package included a permission form that parents would fill out to allow their student to have intervisitations. The second recommendation was to match sophomore roommate pairs based on Intervisitation preferences. Though records indicate that the committee failed to articulate exactly what this idea was, the idea seems to have been that a sophomore who felt uncomfortable with Intervisitation could only have a roommate who was also uncomfortable with Intervisitation. Finally, the committee wanted to limit all intervisitations to one hour and to cross-reference records to prevent students from having intervisitations in another hall if they had already had one in their own hall. Records indicate that the student representatives, appointed from the Residential Life committee were largely unprofessional, a problem exacerbated by outcry from the student body that called the committee an attack on student freedoms. Student Council President Mamatha Challa quickly removed the student representatives and took measures to keep the details of the committee from escaping to the student body. She circumvented the committee by working closely with Principal McLaren outside its bounds and



in the end, Student Council exposed the infeasibility of the proposals and instead recommended that students check in with the RC office after each hour of their Intervisitiation. Despite this, Student Council faced serious dissatisfaction about this change from the student body. Reflection from 2010 Student Council officers suggest that a significant loss of momentum in projects and participation from the student body during their year originated from this incident.

### IMSA Virtual Tours (2009)

The 2009 Student Council cabinet worked with the department of admissions to film a video tour of a residence hall commons as well as the inside of a student's room. These were posted on the IMSA website for prospective parents. Reflections consider this a successful collaboration between Student Council and the admissions department on the heels of the Shadow program. However, the tours were taken off the website the following year for unknown reasons. Records suggest that because IMSA was planning to make residential renovations, as they have been for many years, the admissions office decided to remove the videos so as not to confuse prospective parents.

### IMSA Cribs (2012, 2018)

The 2012 Student Council cabinet hosted a contest allowing students to submit videos of their rooms. The top three winners in every category were given cash prizes, but records indicate that there was a shortage of submissions outside of the Quad category. During the second semester of the 2017-2018 school year, the contest was revived by the Campus Activities Board. However, participation was low with only 2 quads submitting videos in the competition.

### Service Learning Reform (2013)

Student Council members under the 2013 cabinet worked with Service Learning Coordinator Linsey Crowninshield to increase efficiency in students' filing of service learning hours. Instead of a reflection form on a per-project basis, Student Council recommended that all students fill out a quarterly reflection for all of their service hours to that point. The system would still allow for backtracking of service hours, but students would be encouraged to process and reflect on their service work at consistent times, rather than sporadically, which lead to a build-up of last-minute submissions by seniors and low quality responses to otherwise vague and complex questions. The changes would also bolster the use of an electronic form that RCs could have their students all sit down and complete on the scheduled date. However, the changes were



not implemented or followed through on because the Service Learning department was waiting on a TALENT Power Pitch project being devised by then-junior Arjun Sarode (Class of 2014) to create a service learning framework called MyServe ID. The project fell through and Ms. Crowninshield left IMSA at the end of that school year, and reforms were tabled by the new Service Learning Coordinator in the fall while she began to adjust to her job.

### Study Hours Reform (2011)

The 2011 Student Council cabinet proposed and implemented three changes to Study Hours policy. First of all, the reform package formalized the RC's right to allow students to complete their study hours in an alternate location or with other students. Second, it reduced Study Hours length to just one hour for special events such as Homecoming week or Clash of the Halls. Finally, it also allowed sophomores in good academic standing to discard Study Hours on I-Days after the first quarter. The proposal paved way for the third provision to be included in the following year's sophomore privileges package. This project is notable because it is the first project that records indicate to have been largely carried out by Sophomores-at-Large.

### School Store (2012)

The 2012 Student Council cabinet responded to requests from the student body to increase access to school supplies by proposing a school store to be run by Student Council at midday. The 2013 cabinet put out several hundred dollar packages to purchase supplies but the school store had little to no customers. Efforts to sell the supplies in the halls also failed so Student Council ended the project and turned the supplies over to Student Life for a partial refund from Dr. Hernandez' reserve funding.

### Midday Orchard Trips (2013)

Near the end of the 2013 Student Council cabinet's administration, members worked with the Area Coordinators and Ms. Juarez to shuttle students to Orchard Road to buy food during their midday break. The program had low participation which, while being attributed to a lack of space in students' schedules, may have actually been the cause of little to no need from the student body. If significant need were to be shown, the new academic schedule may allow the project to become feasible.

### Study Room Renovations (2014)

The 2013 Student Council cabinet requested that Student Life cover all the hall and wing study rooms with whiteboard paint as well as purchase new furniture and beanbags for them. Student Life does not yet have the funding for





either of these renovations, but in spring 2014, new whiteboards for all the study room arrived and were installed to replace the hall commons' chalkboards.

### RSL Mediators Program (2013)

This project was devised under the 2013 Student Council cabinet to identify students on campus who were thought of as friendly and helpful members of the community and to then train them to identify and respond to conflicts in the residence halls. Under the 2014 Student Council cabinet, the program changed to become a service led by RSLs to formally mediate conflicts between students and refer them to the necessary staff. The project struggled to finalize its curriculum and did not involve Area Coordinators until the final states of the project. There was also difficulty in finding mediators from every hall, as the Area Coordinators requested that the project be limited to only RSLs. A training session was held, but there are little to no records of the service actually being used. Student criticism of the project argued that it put students on a pedestal rather than assisting students who were amicable enough to resolve tense situations between students and did not provide a format to solve the conflicts that it targeted.

### Sibling Program (2010-2018)

The Sibling Program was designed to help incoming sophomore adjust to IMSA. Until the summer of 2013, sibling pairs were made manually based on forms filled out at placement testing. The revised program under the 2014 Student Council cabinet used an electronic matching program to assign pairs based primarily on extracurricular interests. The rationale behind this was to allow students to meet big siblings that they might actually become close to through extracurricular organizations and programs. Because the little sibling interests form that summer was not made a required document for incoming sophomore parents, the remaining pairings had to be made randomly. Big siblings were required to provide monthly email updates based on their activity with younger siblings and how well they were adjusting. Very few students actually fulfilled this responsibility so Student Council decided to increase sibling engagement for the coming year with a number of reforms. The first was to improve the matching program to take into account social, residential, extracurricular, and academic factors. Second, the changes responded to a series of complaints from sophomores, particularly real younger siblings of older IMSA students, who felt as if other upperclassmen requested them as "trophy sophomores" by banning upperclassmen requests. Third, Student Council planned an event for each



month of the program, from August to November, for siblings to participate in together. Fourth, emails updates from the previous years would be compiled into a Sibling Handbook with discussion topics, activity ideas, and helpful tips. Finally, Student Council convened the Summer Sibling Committee (SSC), a group of upperclassmen with representatives from a number of organizations and interests on campus to help run and improve the sibling program. The SSC is tasked with managing the incoming sophomore class' Facebook page, also partially in response to complaints from the previous years that only Student Council had access to the incoming class on Facebook, running an Ask.Fm account to answer sophomores questions, and helping plan new program features. After many years passed, StudCo made a decision to reinstate upperclassmen requests for little siblings on the condition that little siblings reciprocally request the upperclassmen.

### Residential Life Forum (2014)

The 2014 Student Council cabinet held this forum as the third installment in the Open Forum series. It featured Dr. Hernandez and all three Area Coordinators. The prevailing theme of the forum, likely due to the composition of the panel, was that the Area Coordinators are a largely unused resource and few students know

their role. Discussion also expressed how many students feel disconnected with their RCs. The panel stonewalled a policy or program approach to resolving this program and instead, conversation drifted to event ideas that could bring student closer to other RCs on campus. Two ideas for increased communication and accountability presented were a semesterly or quarterly evaluation survey for RCs similar to that given for teachers and a direct submission to the ACs. The latter project was created as a result of the forum. Both the RC evaluations as well as a concept to award an outgoing staff member for their excellence did not come into fruition after the forum due to poor mobilization. The award was to be named in honor of the now-late former IMSA Principal Dr. Eric McLaren and value the five tenets he cherished in student-oriented staff: connectedness, responsibility, relationship, lifelong learning, and belief. Despite the failure to follow through on a number of project ideas, the panelists were very pleased with the forum. In particular, Dr. Hernandez called it the best of all the forums to that point. Criticism from returning Student Council members ranged from logistical dissatisfaction with the timing and attendance of the event to more strategic complaints that the forum had allowed administrators to push Student Council back into the realm of event-based projects rather than substantial policy and program reforms



that required greater accountability from the academy's staff.

### Area Coordinator Submission Box (2014)

Implemented after the Residential Life forum, this project hosted a simple form on the Student Council website that sent direct messages to the Area Coordinators. Students were encouraged to use the box to ask the ACs about their work as well as provide specific descriptions of underperforming residential life staff anonymously so that the ACs could pursue further information on the situation. Students who leave contact information in the box can also receive replies from the ACs with suggestions on how to resolve conflicts with RCs or hold dialogue with a residential staffer in a non-confrontational manner. During the 2017-2018 Student Council cabinet, use of the AC Submission Box had heavily decreased since 2014, resulting in StudCo to encourage students to use the Universal Submission Box to submit any specific complaints about RC's.

### Navigation Reform (2013-2014)

Navigation is an introductory program that many students have had complaints about. However, these complaints are historically empty and lack substance. For the 2013-2014 school year, Student Life pushed the timing of Navigation back by half an hour to give

students more time in the morning, but students continued to complain that the program started too early, leading to frustration in the department. The 2014 Student Council cabinet took up an opportunity to made recommendations to the program, but only minor changes were suggested. It is currently unknown if those changes will be made. A few years later, the 2017-2018 cabinet suggested changes to the Academic Support module of the Sophomore Navigation which is explained in the Academics Dimension Guide.

### Homecoming Innovation Crew (2015)

Every year up until the creation of the Campus Activities Board (CAB), Student Council has been in charge of hosting the competitive events as well as the dance for Homecoming week. The week has been looked on as an opportunity to increase bonding and campus unity, as the inter-class competition is not nearly as fierce as the inter-hall competition that recent Clashes of the Halls have brought. In particular, Student Council has tried to use the event to bring the new sophomore class into the IMSA community. The dance is significant because it is the only main source of Student Council revenue, a situation meant to prevent conflict over fundraising campaigns later in the year. The dance under the 2014 Student Council cabinet had the lowest attendance under recent records, attributed to



a scheduling conflict with the national SAT testing date. The 2015 Student Council cabinet and CAB have convened an ad-hoc committee called the Homecoming Innovation Crew to improve the ability of Homecoming week to meet those two goals. Particular focus was placed on modifying the Homecoming dance so that it would be more accessible and enjoyable to IMSA students.

### Clash of the Halls Review Committee (2014)

Clash of the Halls is an annual competition hosted by Student Council and Student Life to promote hall spirit, campus unity, and display student talents that are not normally appreciated during the school year. The competition was first devised to populate an empty second semester schedule and lift spirits on campus near the end of a traditionally dreary and stressful winter season. Since the 2012 Student Council cabinet, the competition began to grow in scope. Following the 2010 Clash of the Halls, the traditional movie competition was cut from the events list by a series of staff complaints. Though leading faculty voices protested that the movie contest took too much time away from students, that complaint was not addressed in the decision making process. Instead, the key rationale was to prevent students from making movies with offensive content, as that year had produced

too many such cases. The 2011 Student Council cabinet replaced it with a Hall Decorating event. The following year, Mr. McIntosh and Student Council took unilateral action to reinstate the Movie contest with revision check points to weed out potentially inappropriate content. The 2012 Student Council cabinet warned hall leaders that the future of the movie contest was dependent on good behavior this year and they delivered. This set the stage for the movie contest to be included in the 2013 Clash of the Halls, and the Hall Decorating contest was not removed. During both the 2013 and 2014 Clashes of the Halls, the security department raised significant complaints about students pushing the boundary on fire safety regulations and wasting security officers' time with arguments often up to an hour in length over ways to skirt regulations for decorating efforts. Two other elements of Clash of the Halls grew significantly in those two years: general participation percentages for events and in a graver context, reported incidents of bullying and coercion to participate in Clash of the Halls. Following the 2014 Clash of the Halls, faculty complaints about time being spent on Clash of the Halls rather than academics reemerged, joined by qualms from security over decorations and significant concerns from the Area Coordinators about bullying. This led to the formation of a Clash of the Halls Review Committee led by Dr. DeVol and Amy Woods



with Dr. Nokkentved as a faculty representative, Michelle Hoenn as an area coordinator representative, Lynette To as a senior representative, Vinesh Kannan as a junior representative, and Cristoph Eckrich as a sophomore representative. Through close cooperation with Dr. DeVol, Student Council refuted essentially all faculty suggestions, including proposals to include grades as a factor in competition and give up a class day to move Clash of the Halls to a new extended weekend from Friday to Monday. Despite the almost complete refutation of faculty contributions, a directive to reduce the scope of Clash of the Halls in favor of academics remained, with no data at all supplied to justify the legitimacy of claims that Clash of the Halls negatively impacted students' focus on academics in all classes. Leading student voices on the issue suggested that any gross decrease in academic focus either due to the time of the year or the actions of second semester seniors. Outcry from senior students at IMSA while the committee was in session only served to push these arguments back and cultivate disinclination on the part of adults to work with student representatives. Student Council took an aggressive role in the committee, marked again by a partnership with Dr. DeVol outside the scheduled meetings. While the committee came to accept almost all Student Council positions, a similar outside partnership between

the Area Coordinators and the Principal's office is suspected to be working against those plans in the late stages of the Clash of the Halls Assessment. The committee's decisions were meant to be finalized by Dr. Hernandez and Principal Lawrence, but an explosion of commotion over major changes for the 2014-2015 school year distracted from the process. Student Council officially endorsed replacing the Hall Movie contest with a shorter Hall Commercial event, blocking students with more than 4 attendance points on particular day from participating in night events, reducing the length of the Pep Rally by moving events to other days, removing the Musical Chairs contest, removing events counted for points on the I-Day, and keeping a revised version of the Family Feud event as a weeklong contest. Student Council also formally opposed any significant changes to the timing of Clash of the Halls, releasing Clash of the Halls colors any later than before winter break, or eliminating participation from scoring This review committee generally ran smoothly, but due to a failure to use any reliable statistical data, it devolved into a political free-for-all. Even though Amy Woods circulated a Clash of the Halls survey to the student body, none of the results were every used and were not even analyzed before the committee's first meeting. Taking a play from the 2009 Student Council cabinet's efforts in the Intervisitation



Policy Review Committee, this year's Student Council representative held a significant amount of dialogue with the committee leader outside of meetings. The Principal's office does not seem terribly invested in the issue, but the committee essentially alienated faculty suggestions with criticism from students. Because both the Area Coordinators and the security department, which did not even bother to have a committee representative, unilaterally funneled their complaints through the Principal's Office, also in the form of directives, the political elements of this review committee played out year after year, resulting in changes to eligibility to participate in Clash. Currently, there are stricter requirements to participate in Clash related to attendance and grading than in previous years. However, unlike the policy StudCo endorsed years ago, the GameShow, held on I-Days, does count for points.

### ClashCentral (2014)

Upon reflection on the 2013 Homecoming week, The 2014 Student Council cabinet decided that too little advertising or communication channels had been used to promote the events to the student body. To fix this for Clash of the Halls, a widget was created for the Student Council website to include information about activities, house scoring, and post updates. The widget mirrored the contents

of the 2014 Clash of the Halls agenda, which was nearly three-times as long as any other main event agenda, even including its executive summary of changes from previous years' competitions. Followership of the webpage peaked on the second day of Clash of the Halls at 591 distinct users for more than 1,300 sessions. This represents roughly 94% of the Student Body, the highest level of interaction ever for the Student Council website. Roughly a fifth of these users were retained and measurements suggest that because of the debut of ClashCentral, the regular website audience grew from around 7% to approximately 26% of the student body, with "regular" meaning that a user has accessed the website on at least two different days in a week.

### Student Union Improvement (2013)

After years of futile campaigning to get students to stop punching holes in the Student Union walls through horseplay and mishandling of pool equipment, the 2013 Student Council cabinet requested renovations to the Student Union. Mr. McIntosh had facilities redo the walling, but the following year the Student Union sustained more damage. The two year-old pool table was in poor condition and the foosball table was completely wrecked. The XBOX in the Student Union was also stolen in 2014 and had to be recovered by Student Council



members who found in in the old bathroom connected to the 1504 peer study room. Because students have consistently mistreated the room, Mr. McIntosh was frustrated on how to address the situation and felt that all options were exhausted. The Student Union was then revived in the 2016-2017 school year in a separate space near the west entrance of IMSA. Although the Student Union today does not have a foosball table or a pool table, students continue to use the room for dinner dates, dance practices, ping-pong, or as a space to socialize with others.

### Family Fest (2013-2014)

In an attempt to revitalize an event that was previously organized by the RSLs, Student Council worked with RCs and RSLs to organize this event. Essentially, younger siblings would be invited to come to IMSA and spend a night playing games and relaxing with their older siblings. The event was planned for the week after intersession. Unfortunately due to weather complications many of the siblings were unable to travel to the campus. Advertising for the event was also exceedingly poor. Despite this, it was the first event for which a waiver was put on the Student Council website for parents and siblings to download. Most of the attendants received their waiver in this fashion. One major problem student Council faced was finding RSLs to help living in 1504. This helped to

influence the need of Hall Senators that would allow Student Council to have connections in every hall in order to ensure adequate participation. There were also numerous logistical difficulties for the students that did make it on campus. There was generally poor communication regarding where everyone needed to be during the event. Although this should have been a manageable event, the project struggled due to these lapses and the fact that it was largely shouldered by one person. After the implementation of this event, the project was discontinued.

### Discipline Policy Review Committee (2013-2014, 2017-2018)

Student Life decided during the 2013-2014 academic year, to change the disciplinary policies across campus for the following year. This was done in large part as a response to critiques of the current policies that are sometimes seen by RCs and Students as being dull and poorly thought out. As part of this undertaking, Student Life requested that Student Council have representatives on this committee. These members were required to read, and in some cases memorized the existing rule book. The new discipline model was designed to eliminate the tier system. The involvement of Student Council aimed at developing policies that were designed to help students as well as simplify the student



handbook. Changes were finished and were be included in the following year's handbook. A few years later, Student Life had openings for student representatives in modifying rules in the student handbook. Hall Senators Kaushal Gumpula and Gloria Huang worked with members of student life and faculty to revise the prescription drug policy to be more lenient.

### Residence Hall Closings (2013)

In fall 2013, IMSA was visited by an external security evaluation panel that included state-level officers. Records suggest that the panel's visit was part of a broader state and national initiative to ensure that schools were safe from potential firearms incidents. Whatever their initial purpose, the panel turned up two other security problems on campus. First of all, a number of student violations of the academy Intervisitation policy were taking place during the school day and second, also during the school day, students were unknowingly allowing off-campus visitors to enter the residence halls, many times, in visits linked to cases of theft from students and staff. While reassessing the security panel's report, the Principal's office and faculty departments also identified a third problem: high volumes of tardies and absences for students in classes after the midday break. Previously, administrators had noticed attendance problems with early morning classes, but closer

inspection found that students would return to the residence halls during the day, usually to take naps, and as a result, missed classes later on. With an external mandate to respond to the first two issues and an internal focus on resolving the third, Principal Lawrence and Dr. Hernandez, joined by several other staffers, investigated a number of policy and logistical changes. Their work was limited by the financial liability of being expected by the state, due to an obscure provision of state security surveillance policy, to install monitor screens in all the residence halls to accompany the already-existing cameras by the end of the year. According to the Principal's Office, the most cost-effective solution was to shut off FOB access to the residence halls at certain points during the day: between 9:00 AM and 11:30 AM as well as between 12:30 PM and 3:00 PM. Outcry from the student body in response to the announcement of this change called it an infringement on student freedoms. Unfortunately, there was no good data to measure what percent of the student body regularly returned to the halls during the day before this policy change. Since the implementation of this policy in 2013, student outcry over the hall closings is virtually non-existent mainly due to students having no prior knowledge of residential life without the hall closings during the day.





## Campus Activities Board Integration (2014)

Before the elections for the 2014 Student Council cabinet, President Kevin Zhang and Senior-at-Large Ian Wilkinson announced that Student Council would absorb the Campus Activities Board (CAB) as a wing of Student Council. The announcement provided a reveal of the long-term plan that they had drafted in secret with CAB members earlier in the year. The plan would allow the Student Body to elect a CAB Director and then allow Student Council to populate the board with the most talented event planners and personnel on campus. The move would also open CAB up to an annual stipend from Student Life, supplemented with Student Council funds, and formal logistical resources and support for running their events. Some aspects of the original strategy have since faded. The outlined plan also called for CAB members to attend all cabinet meetings and sought to absorb residential events. The strategic perspective on this partnership was part of a long-term gambit that Student Council alumni as well as advisor Mr. McIntosh saw as crucial to Student Council's survival as a legitimate organization. Faculty and staff have long used a common argument behind closed doors or in negotiations with adult advisors to pass off Student Council's endeavors. The argument goes as such: Student Councils at

other schools is an organization that only plans events and that is no different at IMSA, thus the Academy should never accept their proposals for institutional change as legitimate. Mr. McIntosh insisted that this argument extended deep into the institution and past Student Council Presidents agreed that the shift to have CAB handle event-oriented projects would be necessary to allow the cabinet enough time, resources, and focus to pursue policy and program-based endeavors. The 2014 Student Council cabinet also faced situations, particularly while pushing the Pillars of Innovation and during Open Forums, when staff and faculty departments made concerted efforts to limit the range of Student Council projects to only event-oriented projects.

## IRC Study Hours Policy (2015-2016)

One primary target of student complaints, particularly from sophomores, is required study hours during the first semester. During the 2015-2016 school year, the newly elected Sophomores-at-Large decided to take feedback from their sophomore class about study hours and translate it into a project that would allow sophomores to complete portions of their study hours during free mods in the IRC. However, the project immediately faced large logistical hurdles. For example, the IRC staff weren't paid to monitor study hours. Additionally, there was no communication



avenue between the IRC and the Halls to let RC' s know which students had already completed their study hours. These problems ultimately proved too tough to deal with, and the project was unable to make significant headway.

### Halls to Teachers Program (2016-2018)

An effort pushed by the 2016-2017 StudCo Cabinet, Halls to Teachers was a program that assigned teachers to each hall in the hopes that teachers would be invited to residential programs and be able to experience the non-academic facets of student life at IMSA. The initial idea for the program was created after consulting with a teacher focus group consisting of Dr. White, Dr. Krouse, Dr. Rettberg, Dr. Kiely, and Ms. Spence. After being assigned to their respective halls, teachers took part in events such as “Facul-tea” , a tea party for faculty members, or gave talks about their life experiences. However, problems soon emerged with the program. For example, some teachers were annoyed if they were never invited to participate in their hall' s activities. To combat the lack of events being held for the program, StudCo offered each hall \$150 for any event done through Halls to Teachers, incentivizing halls to create more events for teachers. Another problem that the project faced was that there was no clear communication framework or hierarchy

through which RSL' s could invite teachers. They were unsure whether the RC' s were responsible for communicating with teachers or whether Student Council needed to be responsible for this. To clarify these structural issues, the 2018-2019 Cabinet is currently working with the RSL Liaisons and the CD' s to create a revised communication pathway and criteria for the program moving forward.

### Campus Bikes (2017-2018)

At an unspecified time in IMSA history, IMSA students used to ride bikes to reach destinations such as the restaurants on Orchard Road in a faster amount of time. However, decline in the bikes' usage led to them becoming broken down over time until 2017 with the Campus Bikes project. The 2017-2018 Cabinet decided to revive the bikes project in the effort to expand the walking-trip radius to cover farther destinations than Orchard Road. Students would keep their bikes in the 02 Bike Racks and seek permission to use the bikes from the 02 RC' s. StudCo members worked with AC Tiana Johnson and Head of Student Life, Katie Berger, to create a proposal to present to the RC' s. However, during the RC presentation, Student Council learned of an Aurora law that bans people older than 15 years of age from riding their bikes on the sidewalk which violated the condition that IMSA students would need to ride their bikes on the



road. With the Aurora law contradicting IMSA safety policy, the bike project remains unable to move forward.

first time in the 2018-2019 school year, the impact of the project remains to be seen.

### RC 1 on 1 Reform (2018)

During the second semester of the 2017-2018 school year, Student Council analyzed the many factors that play into the exacerbation of mental health conditions at IMSA and determined that, when students are unable to trust the adults at IMSA, they do not seek the help they need to address their mental health conditions. To supplement this idea, the Challenge Success survey found that 67% of IMSA students have a trusted adult at IMSA. Student Council believed that the RC's were the easiest adults on campus to reach out to, as they live with the students, and thus, are more accessible to students. With this in mind, Student Council decided to reform the RC 1 on 1's done with sophomores to increase the trust between the students and the adults at IMSA. The main change to the program was that 1 on 1's would now be done with every single IMSA student as opposed to only sophomores, as had been done in the past. This allowed juniors and seniors who had switched wings from year to year to get to know their RC in a more personalized manner. Since the project is being implemented for the



## Relevant Administrators

### Katie Berger, Executive Director of Student Affairs

Although initially coming to IMSA to serve as Director of Discipline (currently held by Mike Matozzi), Mrs. Berger now serves as the Executive Director of Student Affairs, being at the highest level of leadership in Student Life after Dr. Dahleh's resignation caused Dr. Hernandez to serve as the Interim Principal. Mrs. Berger works with Student Council to provide feedback on virtually any project with a connection to Residential Life, taking a specialty in projects such as the Bikes Project, which involved granting a new privilege to the student body. Due to Amy Woods being on maternity leave, Mrs. Berger is one of two advisors to Student Council during the 2018-2019 school year.

### Mike Matozzi, Director of Discipline

For the relatively short amount of time that he has been Director of Discipline, Mr. Matozzi has worked with Student Council on a few projects already. Student Council members worked with Mr. Matozzi to revive the Honor Council (found in the Academic Dimension Guide) and worked with Student Council representatives in the Discipline Review Committee to make revisions to the student handbook. Mr. Matozzi is a great resource to better understand the rules in the handbook and is willing to work with Student Council on implementing new IMSA policies.

### Amy Woods, Campus Activities Director

Mrs. Woods' role is designed to help Campus Activities Board (CAB) run as well as serve as advisor to Student Council and help manage chartered clubs. Mrs. Woods also manages the activities calendar which helps clubs determine when to host GA's/events so as not to interfere with other clubs' events. Additionally, Mrs. Woods' helps direct Student Council to other IMSA administrators when their help may be needed for a certain project.

### Assistant Directors of Residence Life (ADs)

The two Assistant Directors generally fill two distinct roles: The Service Learning Coordinator, held by Alex Johnson, and the LEAD Program Coordinator, held by Andrea Stuibler. The Service Learning (SL) Coordinator, by virtue of their academic degree and distinction, is often referred to as the chief architect of residential curriculum. In addition to expanding and recording students' service learning,



the SL Coordinator leads initiatives to formalize residential learning objectives and create new programs. Alex Johnson is also the second of the two Student Council advisors serving in place of Amy Woods. The LEAD Program Coordinator, as the name suggests, works with the two student Co- Coordinators to run the LEAD program smoothly, so that sophomores are able to develop strong leadership skills during their first year at IMSA.

### Area Coordinators (ACs)

There are two Area Coordinators and each one has an office in the residence halls in addition to one common office in Student Life that they share time in. The two ACs and the halls in which they have their offices are Joe Mastrocola (1504) and Tiana Johnson (1501). In addition to hiring them, the ACs are tasked with supervising the Residence Counselors (RCs). The ACs also play a significant role in implementing residential policy and curriculum. In addition to this, the ACs are negotiating players in the Sophomore privileges process meaning that their approval on provisions is just as important as approval Mrs. Berger, who technically has the ability to overrule them, but seldom uses it.

### Residence Counselors (RCs) and Key Roles

The Residence Counselors' (RCs) main responsibility is the development of students emotionally and academically. They coordinate residential chores and upkeep and are required to hold periodic reflections with students. One RC in each hall is designated as the Residential Student Leader (RSL) liaison and must coordinate activities with the RSLs in their building. Another RC is designated the Hall Tutor liaison and tasked with communicating between student tutors and Mrs. Keck to ensure that students are utilizing tutoring resources. Per Mrs. Berger's discretion, RCs are also nominated to committees and ad-hoc projects, the most common appointment being as RC Liaison to the Sodexo Food Committee. RC leadership and communication structure with administrative departments is among the most underdeveloped connections at the academy and as a result, some of the most vocal voices in the RC community label their position as being the most underrepresented on campus.

