



## Personal Reflections

5/4/2017

Dear IMSA,

You should have seen them! On May 1, our seniors wore spirit wear for the college or university that they have decided to attend as part of “College Day” which capped off an eventful year for IMSA including the marking of our 30-year anniversary. The Class of 2017 is headed to institutions near and far from Northwestern University, the Illinois Institute of Technology and University of Chicago to MIT, Yale, Vanderbilt, and Harvard. Our students are counting down the days before they leave IMSA, their home for the past three years. Like a proud parent, I envision their lives full of possibilities and purpose!

Our formal 30th Anniversary Celebration was held March 30, 2017 and included a program that highlighted IMSA’s 30 years of thinking different and acting bold. We connected the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration theme of “think different, act bold” through a panel of global leaders in science, technology, human rights and entrepreneurship moderated by Crain’s Chicago Business reporter John Pletz to demonstrate how IMSA’s teachings can positively impact the world. Our panelists included Alumni Steve Chen, Jessica Droste Yagan, and Claudia Flores as well as Dr. Nigel Lockyer, Director of Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory.

Steve Chen, (’96) and YouTube co-founder, credits his time at IMSA as most instrumental in his career. “At IMSA, I had the freedom to explore my interest in computers and found many others around me who wanted to do the same thing. It gave me the courage to go out to Silicon Valley to lead PayPal and E-Bay and to eventually start YouTube. With the current company that I am working on now, three of us are from IMSA.”

Jessica Droste Yagan (’95) and chief executive officer of Impact Engine, came from a small town in Southern Illinois. She credits IMSA for teaching her how to attack and solve problems. “I have spent my career looking at a million different business cases, taking them apart and understanding what problem they are trying solve. I give IMSA credit for planting those seeds.”

IMSA played a central role in cultivating an interest in social justice and human rights for Claudia M. Flores, J.D. (’93) Assistant Clinical Professor of Law and Director of the International Human Rights Clinic at The University of Chicago Law School. “There is a sense of energy and possibility in the culture here. For all of us, IMSA was the pinnacle of what a learning environment could be like. And all the other institutions we attended after IMSA were sort of a derivative of that.”

The public debut of new science labs and IN2: The Steve and Jamie Chen Center for Innovation and Inquiry, Steve’s presence on campus and in Chicagoland, and our 30th anniversary activities garnered regional and national media attention for IMSA. Here are some links to [print](#) and TV mentions ([CBS](#), [WGN](#)).



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See ["The promise and power of IMSA: Impact Report 2017"](#) which commemorates our legacy of significant contributions to educational innovation and excellence in Illinois and beyond including recognition as the #2 public high school in the US and over 60,000 hours of STEM professional development delivered to Illinois educators over the past five years. The findings also demonstrate the accomplishments and contributions of our Alumni from a breadth of fields representing the rich tradition, culture and value of IMSA. IMSA's accelerated coursework and engagement in real-world problem solving collaboration fosters Alumni who are central players in the global ecosystem of education, innovation, social justice. Special thanks to our Alumni for participating in our survey in such high numbers!

I'm pleased to also provide you a [report](#) by NIU on our student outcomes and economic impacts.

As we close out this, our 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary year, I am so thankful for how our alumni have impacted our world. I am even more hopeful for our future. The outstanding class of 2017 is ready to serve our world and make it better. Our soon-to-be alumni, the class of 2017, will surely go on to "earn degrees in laws and letters.... There are likely to be those few who create new intellectual worlds, cure a dreaded human ailment, or in some other way significantly influence life on our planet." as predicted by Leon Lederman.

We look forward to continuing our mission as the world's leading teaching and learning laboratory for the prosperity and security of present and future generations. We now turn our efforts from one milestone to another; IMSA is hosting the 2018 International Student Science Fair for the first time in the United States next summer.

For the next thirty years, our philosophy, proposed by Leon Lederman and approved by the Board of Trustees, will continue to be "to treat our charges as if each one is capable of this extraordinary achievement."

Thank you for your support!

Sincerely,

José M. Torres, PhD