



Personal Reflections

3/24/2016

Dear IMSA Community,

I appreciate your feedback on my Personal Reflections. It's a great way to make a difference and your feedback is like a gift. I've heard from some of you these updates are valuable and I want to acknowledge those of you for having shared your thoughts.

As a result of your responses, simply thanking you or saying I'll pass your feedback along isn't enough. Let's do more. Let's keep your input coming. I'm interested in your questions, topics and the themes that you'd like me to address – now or in future Personal Reflections. I'm invested in connecting with you, so to encourage more feedback about my Personal Reflections.

Today, I wanted to share the remarks that I made at the Ground Breaking event on February 23, 2016 when we “broke new ground” on IN2: the Steve and Jamie Chen Center for Innovation and Inquiry and our Science labs. My remarks follow:

“It's an exciting time at IMSA as we look toward our 30th year. What better way to lay the groundwork for our 30th anniversary than by breaking new ground on two projects that pave the way for IMSA's future?

Today I have a few general remarks before introducing our next speakers. In the first place, I'd like to recognize our elected representatives: Senator Linda Holmes and State Representative Linda Chapa LaVia. We greatly appreciate all they do to champion IMSA and our role in driving Illinois' diverse workforce and economic future.

State Representative Fortner, State Representative Wheeler, and Yorkville Mayor Golinski are here. Also, attending are the staff from House Representative Foster: Maria Manzo and Tanner Edwards, and from House Representative Hultgren: Beth Goncher and Susan Russell.

We are also heartened to have a large number of the funding leadership donors for our science lab and IN2 projects on hand this afternoon to show their support. We will recognize them later in the program.

In September our Board of Trustees adopted our Impact and Priority Outcomes, which states that by 2022, IMSA will be a recognized global leader and catalyst in equity and excellence in STEM teaching and learning, innovation and entrepreneurship. We achieve this by developing STEM leaders, thinkers and “doers,” by creating tools and curricula for other schools to use, and by building strong networks that demonstrate IMSA's leadership role and contributor as a key node in Illinois' innovation ecosystem.



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As you know, IMSA's mission is to "ignite and nurture creative, ethical, scientific minds that advance the human condition." This mission drives our Impact and Outcomes Statement with a strong focus on strengthening our identity as a learning laboratory – and our current theme on social entrepreneurship.

In December 2014 I established the Presidential Committee on Social Entrepreneurship, led by Alumna Jessica Droste Yagan ('95), which led to the establishment of the Advancing the Human Condition Oversight Team that has been meeting regularly over the past few months. This Oversight Team is considering how IMSA might use the nine global grand challenges proposed by Peter Diamandis, such as solving the challenges around food, water, energy challenges and the opportunities of space travel, for example as themes throughout our residential academy, in student life, and in our Outreach activities.

As I begin to wrap up, let me ask you a question, Does it seem strange to you that we begin two capital projects in the midst of the current state budget issues?

IMSA is currently without an FY16 budget. Yet, we must plan for the future we want, we must plan for the future that Illinois needs, and we must plan for the future that our amazing students and faculty deserve.

As a gem of Illinois, our facilities need to create an environment that helps our educators prepare our students for a future that we can scarcely imagine. In fact, our students will design and create this future! They will also be well prepared for the jobs of tomorrow and to realize their full potential as innovators and entrepreneurs.

IMSA has been open for nearly 30 years and we have confidence in our elected officials and in ourselves that we will be open for another 30 and beyond graduating outstanding alumni.

IMSA alums not only make a difference around the country, such as Mike McCool '91 and Robert Chang '89 who are with us today, but right here in Illinois as well. Jessica Droste Yagan '95 and her husband Sam Yagan '95 both are members of Crains Chicago Business' "50 in Tech" (amongst other distinctions). And four alumni who are part of what I'm calling the "Cleversafe Mafia" (I'm sure that you've heard of the PayPal Mafia – also infiltrated by IMSA alumni, namely Russel Simmons '95). Our alumni in Cleversafe contributed to Cleversafe's patent portfolio as a data storage innovator, creating value that approaches the State's total investment in IMSA over our entire history.

I could go on and on – about our alum, our current students, our fabulous staff and outstanding faculty – but, I won't. Today is about breaking new ground. Today is about creating learning environments that will allow our students to "significantly influence life on our planet."



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As Dr. Leon Lederman proclaimed, *If we do what we know and feel is right, it is bound to happen that among our graduates there will be numbered scientists, engineers, and those who go on to earn degrees in law 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. Our philosophy will be to treat our charges as if each one is capable of this extraordinary achievement. Only one such product will make the effort and expense of this school for its entire duration worthwhile.* This, my friends, is what we mean when we are 'enrolling in our possibility.'

I invite you to enroll now. Thank you.”

I realize by adding my remarks from the Groundbreaking ceremony that this Personal Reflection is longer than usual, but after all – this was a special occasion! I encourage you to watch the **video of the ceremony** to see how our alum Steve Chen kicked-off our Groundbreaking event from Palo Alto, with a domino effect that found its way to our Rube Goldberg machine here on IMSA's center stage. Also, this week's media coverage included a **Beacon News article** and a **feature story in Chicago Inno**, one of Chicago's major technology and innovation publications.

This is an exciting time for IMSA. Again, I invite you to “enroll in our possibility.”

With Respect,

José M. Torres, Ph.D.