

Personal Reflections

8/21/2019

Welcome to the 2019-2020 Academic Year!

As I begin my sixth year at IMSA, I continue to be grateful for the opportunity to serve Illinois, indeed the world, in my role as President. I am so privileged to serve a community who takes our mission of “igniting and nurturing creative, ethical, scientific minds to advance the human condition” so seriously. A community that not only believes deeply in our mission, but also takes action reflecting these beliefs. We recorded my “welcome” video in our newly renovated auditorium supported by the generous contributions of our community.

We also continue to act on our beliefs of being a learning laboratory through our focus on the United Nations (UN) 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Last year, we received recognition for outstanding impact from The United Nations Association of the United States of America (UNA-USA) for our work on the UN 17 SDGs, including 4,812 service hours and personal activities to address these needs. Our entire IMSA community continues to embed the UN 17 SDGs, where appropriate, into our curriculum, student life programs, and through the Center for Teaching and Learning and the Steve and Jamie Chen Center for Innovation and Inquiry. To learn more about our beliefs, commitment and experimentation with the UN 17 SDGs, see this [presentation](#) we made to our Board of Trustees at our May 15, 2019 meeting.

IMSA’s Impact and Outcomes statement, which states that “By 2022, IMSA is a recognized global leader and catalyst in equity and excellence in STEM teaching and learning, innovation and entrepreneurship” continues to guide our action plans at the Academy. The [June 2019 IMSA Operational Excellence Dashboard](#) shows that we exceeded six of our 12 indicators. They are marked with gold stars on the Dashboard and include number of contributions to any body of knowledge, number of new IMSA tools or curricula created, number of additional schools impacted, amount of IMSA reserves, number of alumni engaged, and number of additional partner organizations. In the spirit of continuous improvement, we are examining where we fell short and creating remediation plans to make mid-course corrections.

This year, I have asked IMSA staff, including faculty, to work together, all-hands on deck, as I like to say, on three indicators where we have established “reach” targets, including:

- Number of contributions from IMSA community members to any body of knowledge;
- Number of alumni engaged; and
- Percent of engaged employees

Additionally, two priorities from last year that support our IMSA Impact and Outcomes statement will continue to be priorities for Academic Year 2019-2020 : **Global Strategies** (formerly International Strategy), includes the work around the innovation campus, phase 1. A second continuing priority for this year will be **Equity and Excellence**. For additional information on the scope, the work teams, milestones, etc. for each of these



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priorities, see the project charter for each priority: [Global Strategies](#) and [Equity and Excellence](#).

There are **no new priorities** this year. This year is all about executing our plans and getting things done. I am excited for this year and for all of the work leading to 2022! Are you?

While I'm not a huge fan of external rankings, I am pleased to report that IMSA was ranked as the #1 Public School in Illinois for the second year in a row and #2 in the United States by [Niche.com](#). Thank you to our students, parents, faculty and staff for their commitment and hard work.

I want to end with my favorite quote, "[Enrolling in our Possibilities](#)" by Dr. Leon Lederman.

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 is 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.

I invite you to "enroll in our possibilities" this year.

Respectfully,

Jose M. Torres, PhD

President