

Fifteenth Message from the President
December 15th, 2021

Colleagues,

We're one week away from a well-deserved winter break. I hope you have something joyful planned with loved ones, or perhaps something relaxing where you only have to care for yourself. I have some good news! The annual IMSA holiday ornament is arriving soon and we look forward to distributing those to our own IMSA family. And, don't forget, we have something special planned at Orchard Valley Golf Course and Banquet Hall on December 22 to celebrate the season and each other. I wish to thank the Office of Public Affairs for organizing the event, and I can't wait to see the different department holiday cards on display and hear our amateur musician group performing some festive songs.

The Cabinet and Senior Leadership Team have been reviewing feedback from recent surveys regarding colleague engagement and hybrid working. We value your feedback and read all of the comments. Personally, I was excited to see a greater percentage of colleagues who are fully engaged, while also recognizing plenty of room for growth so you feel you are supported and equipped to thrive at IMSA. Our next steps are to devise some responsive measures that aim to get better in our practices, and we'll be in a position to communicate our updated strategies early in 2022. In addition to colleague engagement efforts, [here are updates to strategies](#) we are taking this year with our Academy priorities of Well-being, Equity and Excellence, and Impact.

Final exams are on the horizon, and I can't help but notice the weight on our students' shoulders as they wish to close out the semester on a high note. It's made me wonder about what we are trying to accomplish with final exams, and how their purpose resonates with our mission statement. Are we trying to "ignite" with a synthesizing project or display of ingenuity, or "nurture" with second or third chances? Perhaps something that is both inquiry-oriented and aims to show improvement is in line, as mentioned in this article, [The Praise of the Unfinished](#). Early in my teaching career, I issued a multiple-choice cumulative final exam, only to feel defeated when students had subpar scores that were later graded on a curve as a form of compassion. I took it personally because I was expecting students to remember everything; when in fact, I should have been giving them something they would feel proud about at the end of the term, whether it was something original, or a chance to show me they developed a skill they previously struggled with earlier in the term. Or, maybe they didn't have to show me anything so they could give their best effort to something else in another class. If you have activities that ignite or nurture during finals week, please share them with me

as a catalyst of inspiration and perhaps something you can promote in digital commons. I also ask you to reflect on this question with your teams: *How do final exams fulfill our mission?*

As we head into the winter break, I want to offer a fun activity for you. Enter a Winter Break Photo Contest by submitting pictures that reflect your joy with family and friends. All you have to do is submit a picture(s) with you (and others), along with a caption under any of the following themes: fun lights, family fun, a home cooked meal and pet mischief. Submit your pictures on [this Google form](#) or through the GooseChase app ([download here](#)). Once you have the App, you may play as a guest or create a login. Use game code BLX9V5 to join in. Create a "player" and complete your "missions." We will accept submissions through January 9. There will be prizes, of course, and my great reward will be to learn more about what brings you happiness.



Wishing you a restful break, and for those who celebrate, a wonderful holiday season. Happy New Year!

Titans Together,

Evan

Dr. Evan M. Glazer

President