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Q & A with Dean Russomanno

Happy Anniversary, Dr. Russomanno! You've been at the School for a little over a year now. We've prepared a few questions about your time in Indy and as Dean. Let's check in and see how things are going for you:



What do you see as the School's biggest opportunities for growth?

Fortunately, we have strong opportunities for growth in virtually all areas of our key mission in teaching, research, and service. I'm particularly excited about the growth prospects of our new undergraduate programs in motorsports engineering and energy engineering. At the graduate level, the size of our programs is not commensurate with the dramatic increase in the research and scholarship activity of our faculty, so we need growth there. Competitive stipends for graduate students will be critical for growth to attract the most gifted and dedicated students.

When you first came to campus and before your family joined you in your new home, you lived in an on-campus apartment. How did that go for you?

Well, there wasn't housing like that when I was a student! I've reminded my son that my phone was one block down at the Seven Eleven when I was a student. In all seriousness, the accommodations were very nice. Our students deserve more on-campus housing at IUPUI.

What is your favorite part of being Dean?

I particularly enjoy meeting and getting to know people from all walks of life: from astronauts and politicians, to race car drivers, executive leadership of major corporations and small-business owners. I enjoy learning about the aspirations, challenges, and opportunities of our new friends and exploring ways in which our School might help advance their goals.

Do you have a favorite spot on campus? Whether to eat or just escape for a few minutes?

The Campus Center has incredible energy. A walk around campus, as time permits, is a good mental escape. Occasionally, such a walk provides an opportunity to run into students, faculty, or staff and have a few moments to catch up.

How is the School of Engineering and Technology different than other schools?

This school offers a wider array of programs as compared to most colleges or schools of engineering and technology across the nation and many of our programs capitalize on our location or other inherent strengths. For example, how many engineering and technology schools have programs in music technology, motorsports engineering, or energy engineering? Our program portfolio provides students more choices and it also facilitates opportunities for multi-disciplinary experiences. Our student support services and new freshmen advising center are especially strong. Although we are a big school with some 2,800 students, it still has a close-knit feel and students remain our top priority in all that we do.

Industry partners and research opportunities are important to our School. What

message do you want to send to our current and prospective partners?

We are looking for productive partnerships, true win-win arrangements. Our faculty and students are very talented and have much to offer current and prospective partners. We are investing in our research infrastructure and in our people to foster systemic relationships; partnerships that will live beyond a single project. Willing to tune our research areas and student recruitment efforts, the partnership needs to be responsive to the needs of our stakeholders and students alike.

When did you fall in love with engineering?

My interest was seeded while glued to the television watching the Apollo launches as a kid. I was also fascinated by the World Trade Center twin towers in New York City, an area I often visited as a kid. I knew at that time I wanted to be a part of advancing the technology that could create such grand things like the twin towers or send humans into space.

What do you like about Indianapolis?

Indianapolis is clearly an emerging high-tech city and vital to the growth and prosperity of not only Hoosiers, but all in the United States. I'm very impressed by the local pride in the city and the degree to which its citizens are involved in various revitalization projects. I love IUPUI's location, close enough to all that downtown has to offer, but yet has its own sense of place.

What is your favorite restaurant in Indianapolis?

I was raised on meat and potatoes, so it does not get much better than St. Elmo Steak House.

Thanks, Dean. Have a great academic year!