

# THE TORO GAZETTE

*January 2023*

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**FOCUS ON:  
GLOBALLY AWARE**

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**Uruguayan  
American  
School**



# FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK



Matthew C. Beata, Director

## IT'S A BIG WORLD AFTER ALL

For most people of my generation, the world seemed like a smaller place when we were growing up. We attended the local school, hung out in our backyards or nearby parks, and played with the kids on our block. As adolescents, the scope of the world was limited to how far we could ride our bicycles. I would venture to say that the vast majority of the world is still born, grows up, and works in one relatively small community.

Today's world can be bigger though. With the ease of international travel, the internet, and global social and work networks, our "life radius" expands dramatically. While our children may physically be in our houses or backyards, through the wonders of the internet, they are often hundreds, thousands, or even half a world away speaking or playing with their friends. Nowadays, nearly everyone comes in contact with people from other countries, either in person or virtually, often daily. It is no longer unusual to meet someone who lives in one country and works in another. And all of us are aware of and affected by events from all over the world.

In this hyper-connected, fluid world where people, information and goods move around the globe constantly, today's students need additional skills and abilities. In a globally connected world, chances are you will end up befriending or working with people



Vito - Gemstones Project -

Acrylics

from other countries. Those that are familiar and comfortable with these interactions, those with a global outlook and international mindset, and those that can adapt to and embrace change will thrive. Not only is the ability to understand, respect, and work with other cultures highly valued by employers, but it also fosters rewarding personal relationships.

The most obvious way to promote global awareness in a school is through rich, diverse curricula that ensure students study different countries and cultures and view issues from different perspectives. Yet, global awareness is more than just curriculum content or international festivals that celebrate the culture, food, history, and geography of countries. Deeper learning occurs when students develop the ability to interact respectfully with and understand the differing perspectives that come from sharing a classroom or a lunchroom with students and teachers from around the world on a daily basis.

To effectively teach global awareness, it should be infused into the school's culture, which is what happens at UAS when you have students and teachers from over 30 countries interacting daily. In this dynamic environment, students naturally

become aware that ideas, customs, or perspectives from others can be valuable. Perhaps it is a cafeteria conversation about food and manners sparked because students from five different countries brought five different cuisines for lunch. Possibly, it's studying World War II with students from Japan, the United States, China, Germany, and the United Kingdom, all together in the same class. Whether formal or informal, these interactions allow students to understand the experiences and perspectives of others. With this understanding, students can then learn to appreciate and empathize with those that are different from them.

This issue of *The Toro Gazette* continues our exploration of the competencies and dispositions of the UAS Learner Profile: critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, global awareness, and emotional intelligence. In the pages that follow, we focus on ways in which UAS inspires global awareness, curiosity, and appreciation for different viewpoints. Those who consistently demonstrate these dispositions with confidence and empathy will have a distinct advantage in the world beyond our beautiful campus and the borders of Uruguay.




Leonor - Geometric Patterns  
Project - Tempera



Agustina - Geometric  
Patterns Project - Tempera



# THE UAS LIBRARY AT THE CORE OF A GLOBAL EDUCATION

## ROCÍO RAVERA AND LORENA AGÜER - LIBRARIANS

The UAS Library is a vital resource center for our community. Students, teachers and parents all utilize its vast book collection and welcoming spaces for events, studying, reading, working on group projects and so much more. The UAS Library is dedicated to cultivating the habit of lifelong reading and learning in all students. But did you know the Library also plays a key role in helping our students grow their global awareness?

The Library enriches the education of all UAS students from Nursery to Grade 12. With over 26,000 printed books and 30 magazine titles flown in from abroad weekly, the library is a powerful source of knowledge in the school. But beyond its sheer mass of material, there are specific programs designed by the librarians that enhance learning and foster global citizenship. Through four principal areas – a vast and diverse book collection, enriching library events and activities, personalized librarian support, and library skills classes – the Library is actively involved in each student's education.



## VAST AND DIVERSE BOOK COLLECTION

As UAS librarians, one of our goals is to continuously work to develop a rich and diverse collection of books and magazines. Our students study their core subjects in a culturally stimulating community from which they learn in numerous ways about the world. The Library collection extends that learning experience by exposing our students and teachers to thoughts and ideas from writers of diverse backgrounds. The UAS Library resources include an extensive print collection in English and Spanish with both nonfiction and fiction books about many topics related to a wide variety of cultures. This collection complements and supports all curricular areas and provides materials for various reading interests and maturity levels. In addition to the printed books, students can freely access the growing e-book selection for further titles through a personal account in our online catalog.

## ENRICHING LIBRARY EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

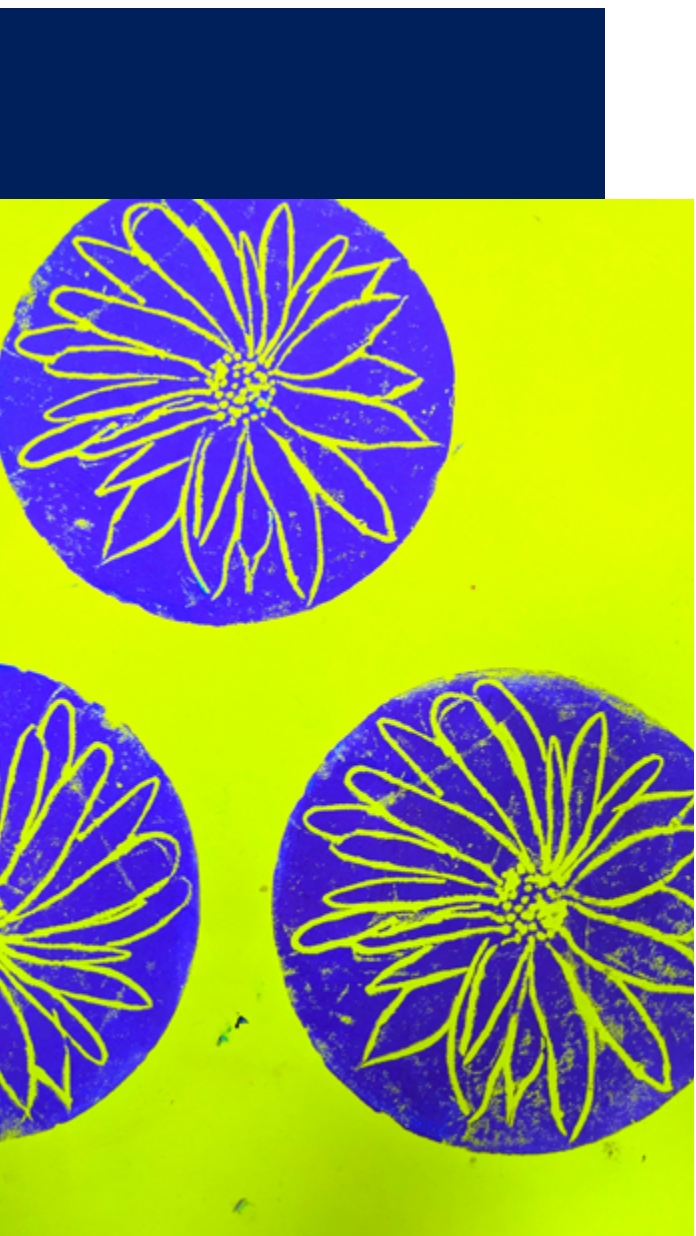
We continually organize exciting activities and events at the Library that engage students in reading and promote global awareness too. Our most popular library event is the annual Book Week held each year in the first semester. We use this celebration to “travel” with our students around the world through literature. We highlight Arabian Nights, Greek mythology, folktales from around the world, Camelot & King Arthur, Ancient Egypt, Aztec culture, Indian tales, and Chinese legends among other stories.

Throughout the year we celebrate books, reading, and connecting students with different cultures, through many fun events such as:

- Book Fairs
- Author Visits
- Poetry Slams
- Elementary Book Character Parade

Kira - Ceramic MS Art 22





Inés - Monoprint MS Art 2022

### PERSONALIZED LIBRARIAN SUPPORT

The UAS Library with its two full time librarians is an important support for learning and global awareness at the school. Not only do we provide a welcoming learning environment and promote literacy and love for reading, but we also help students one-on-one to find resources. We encourage students to consider books and periodicals from varied sources to give their work a wide perspective and a global vision for the topic they are researching.

### LIBRARY SKILLS CLASSES

All UAS students visit the Library regularly and check out books. Secondary students can often be found using the Library as a research hub for project work, to read quietly, and for independent study. Elementary students come to the library twice weekly with their class for library research skills class where they learn how a library works and how to locate the resources they want. They learn to select, evaluate, and use information appropriately and effectively from print and digital sources. These younger learners also come to the Library for the very popular story time when we read aloud story books, seeking to nurture a love for literature and the art of storytelling.

The UAS Library works on many levels to encourage a love of reading and learning and is a great partner in our journey to develop global learners and thinkers.



# GLOBAL AWARENESS IN OUR ELEMENTARY PE PROGRAM

## NICHOLE FIGAROLA - PE TEACHER

Every four years almost every country around the world goes crazy for one of the most exhilarating, and, in my opinion, most passionate sporting tournaments of all time. Football draws many spectators from different nations, diverse cultures, and languages, to unite us all with this global competition, the Soccer World Cup.

Our world is more interconnected today than ever before. Through global events like the World Cup, what happens in countries from afar becomes intertwined with our scope of vision, which is one of the guiding principles behind global awareness. Broadening our international horizon is not typically associated with PE class, but with thoughtful planning, we incorporated this aim in the program this term to promote curiosity, open-mindedness, and global citizenship.



## THE DESIGN OF THE CLASSES

During the last three weeks of the current semester, we designed the Elementary PE classes to leverage the students' interest in the Soccer World Cup and examine the countries taking part to learn about their cultures. Our students experienced planned games, scavenger hunts, and trivia challenges based on collaboration, cooperation, and problem-solving to encourage curiosity and to learn about the other countries taking part in the tournament.

Through the games, they not only learned facts like country location and languages spoken but also thought about similarities to Uruguay and differences. The students thought about the countries as more than teams and this global and cultural awareness helped them take an important step toward developing empathy and open-mindedness overall.

The classes in this unit were based on teamwork tasks that involved topics of history and geography.

The practice of fair play and sportsmanship was a paramount aspect of our social engagement and working atmosphere.

Our first-class introduced "Groups and Flags" in which students located, identified, and matched the country flags of the first stage of the World Cup to their assigned group. Since many students at the time were not completely familiar with the groups or the flags, it was a dynamic introduction to the event and the unit. The students who had in-depth knowledge of the tournament played leadership roles, by organizing their teammates to place the flags correctly and teaching them which flag represented each country.

In the game of "Continents Play" we talked about the geographical aspects of each continent and their countries. Some examples of topics discussed were why Antarctica does not have a World Cup team, and why countries of Central America needed to be grouped with North America, even

though these countries share similar cultural and regional factors with South American countries. An interesting observation by the students was the similarity between certain regions of Africa, specifically the characteristically similar flags of Morocco and Tunisia, as well as those of Ghana and Cameroon. We discussed compass directions and locations for them to understand the proximity between the questioned countries and the slight relationship.

"World Cup Historical Run" was a memory game based on trivia facts about six specific countries, one from each continent, taking part in the World Cup. The students had to run to different stations and read the fact cards, then present their findings to the rest of the class. Some were shocked to find out that Australia has Mandarin as an important language, and that Japan has won only one World Cup and their female national team won it.

We enjoyed playing "Country Knowledge Trivia" to complete



challenges and answer trivia questions about history, geography, and simple fun facts about the countries and the World Cup. Students were impressed to learn that half of the entire world's population watched the Russia 2018 World Cup and that the first soccer player who scored in five FIFA World Cups is the female Brazilian player Marta Viera da Silva, and not Cristiano Ronaldo from Portugal.



### HOW DID WE KNOW IF IT WAS WORKING?

Over the course of the unit, there were explicit indicators that helped me to evaluate if the activities truly influenced our students. Some students asked about the Women's World Cup, and why it is not promoted with the same prestige as the Men's. Others took notice of how teams from developing countries advanced in the stages, whereas little by little the renowned Football Titans were becoming eliminated. These student questions showed us that our students were looking now at this major sporting event, not just from the sports angle of cheering on their favorite team, but also from the perspective of how interesting it is to bring these varied countries together through a common sport, and how the event can contribute to a greater understanding of the world.

I could sense that our students were highly enthused with this PE unit by the way they ran into the gym each day and immediately asked what the new game or activity was going to be about; they were engaged. This motivated me to continue planning innovative ways of teaching these concepts. In the future, I hope to organize more enriching units on important topics that support not only the physical education curriculum but also the development of a deeper engagement and meaningful collaboration, all while having fun and learning sports.





# STUDENT VOICE: JORGE SANTOS SAZO 9TH GRADE



*TTG: Hello Jorge, for this issue of The Toro Gazette we're looking at one of our learner profiles, Globally Aware, and we'd love to learn more about the UAS club that looks at global and regional topics, Model United Nations (MUN). I understand you've been actively involved in the MUN club in the high school at UAS. Can you tell us exactly what is this club about and what members do?*

**JSS:** Well, to begin with, the Model United Nations club consists of a debate-like club in which you simulate scenarios that

people who work every day at the United Nations have to face.

Not only do you have to be prepared to put on the table proposals, ideas, or opinions at the conference, but you also have to have intense preparation before the meeting. To summarize, you have to do a lot of research and get background information about the subjects you are going to debate about.

But apart from that, there are also a lot of friends involved since of course you can become friends with those individuals you have similar interests with.



*TTG: That's interesting to imagine the club is similar to how the UN works. And I understand that recently you and the other MUN members from UAS traveled to the International School Nido de Aguilas in Santiago, Chile for a MUN conference where you competed. How exciting! Can you tell us a little about how the conferences work? What country did you represent and how did you prepare for your debates? And what specifically did you debate?*

**JSS:** It is important to clarify that the conferences may change according to the experience of the school hosting the conference. In our case, at Nido de Águilas, the conference lasted 3 days (Thursday to Saturday).

The first day of the conference included a tour of Santiago, then a 2 hour and a half initial meeting with your respective committee with your assigned country. In my case, I was on the Security Council and I represented the French Republic.

We had to debate with other countries (both allies and enemies) about the following subjects: The Tigray War, and Narcotics Influence in South America. Although at some moments it may have gotten tense, in the end, we could find a solution to the problems we debated about.

*TTG: What a great way to learn about how countries work together and the history behind many historical conflicts and issues. At UAS there are over 20 choices of after-school activities to pick from. And each activity helps kids develop a skill or skills through doing the activity. What kinds of skills would you say MUN helps you to develop or improve? And what do you most enjoy about being involved in MUN?*





Trinidad - MS Art 2022

**JSS:** One key skill that the MUN club teaches you is **empathy** since you must learn to empathize with other delegations that may not have the same ideas that you have.

Another critical skill that MUN shows us is the value of **teamwork**, as you must learn to work as a team with your allies to make your ideas heard and accepted.

Finally, **critical thinking** is another skill that you learn, as you have to seriously think when debating to ensure that you always chose the best choice. To add, some other skills that you learn are **public speaking, diplomacy, compromise, and key research skills.**

*TTG: Jorge, it's impressive all that you have been able to gain from being involved in the MUN club. Thank you so much for sharing your experience and knowledge so eloquently about being in MUN. It's been interesting for us to learn more about what kids in MUN at UAS do and I wish you lots of success and fun in your future debates and conferences!*

**JSS:** My pleasure. Thank you very much for considering me for this interview. I enjoyed sharing my experience, as well as with my other teammates, at MUN!



# ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT: VICKY BONILLA UAS '17

## UNCOVERING THE DIVERSE IDENTITIES OF URUGUAY

Victoria is originally from Ciudad de la Costa, Uruguay, but lived in New York for eleven years before returning home at the age of fifteen. Since graduating from UAS in 2017, she has lived in Sydney (Australia), Oahu (Hawaii), Nadi (Fiji), and Rockaway (New York). She graduated from the University of Sydney with a Bachelor of Arts and a double degree in anthropology and psychology and most recently completed a Bachelor of Advanced Studies (Honors) in anthropology.

Victoria is an anthropologist focusing on Indigenous identity in Las Pampas region, a photographer capturing surf culture and everyday human experience around the globe, a skater, and a coffee snob, who prefers her “mate compañero” over a long black coffee.



### *What enticed you to pursue a career in the field of anthropology?*

**VICTORIA:** I remember the day I decided to study anthropology. I believe it was my junior year at UAS, I was in class, and instead of paying attention, I was looking into majors. I was extremely confused about what I wanted to pursue and questioning whether I would even go to university— something about it just had not seemed right for me... until that day. I remember stumbling upon a website that said along the lines of, “Why you should study anthropology.” It started it out with you should not study anthropology if you want to make money and then it said, however, **you should study anthropology if you want to be a better person**, if you want to learn to be a less judgemental person. At that time in my life, being the best person I could be and developing as a human overall was my main goal. And so, this field just seemed to fit.

### *Tell us about your research regarding Uruguay’s ethnicities. What are some common misconceptions of the Uruguayan identity?*

**VICTORIA:** For the past two years, I have been doing research on the invisible ethnoracial identities found within Uruguay which encompass Afro-descendant and Indigenous identities. In the past year, I focussed my research on my own familial Indigenous identity and my process of understanding and reclaiming such an identity that had been silenced in my

family due to racism and the assimilation that occurred in our country. **My research, more than anything, is meant to open the conversation about myriad identities in Uruguay.** It is a common experience for many that, due to our engrained understanding of Uruguay as “el país sin indios” or “descendientes de los barcos,” these identities become silenced and invisibilized. It is definitely the primary misconception within our society, that First Nations Peoples in Uruguay do not exist. However, alongside other researchers, and most importantly the Indigenous communities in Uruguay, this misconception is being debunked, and we are creating a much more open and accepting space for Uruguayans of varying backgrounds.

### *Did UAS help you prepare to pursue your career in anthropology?*

**VICTORIA:** In my eleventh-grade TOK class, our teacher Mr. Koss had us watch a TED talk by Nigerian author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie called “The Danger of a Single Story.” If I am honest, TOK was one of those classes that I was most distracted in, and probably did not do the best I could have. Nevertheless, this moment was ingrained in my brain. The TED talk spoke in such a digestible way about the risk we as humans endure when we have a single perception of a person or a people. This can lead us to biased assumptions and predetermined conclusions that are oftentimes insufficient to understanding the entirety and reality of a person or people.



This specific moment in class I believe sums up much of **what I learned at UAS which was not to judge people by a single story you may have of them.** I was surrounded by a diverse group of students and staff from all walks of life at a very young age, a multicultural environment that many do not ever experience in a lifetime. Being in such a space allowed me to develop into a person that is comfortable with difference whilst also opening my eyes to my own biases and the single stories I had after having lived in a very monochromatic society for a good part of my childhood. I believe it was this community that allowed me to step into this discipline of understanding human differences and similarities, culture generally, in such a comfortable and confident way.

*How can a deeper understanding of ethnic identities positively affect our society?*

**VICTORIA:** We are in a world where people are still persecuted due to differences, rooted in ignorance that for many are not the fault of their own. Larger institutions are in great need of change and enlightenment. I believe as an individual the best thing we can do for ourselves and for others is to listen to each others' stories and understand others' realities. At the end of the day, that is what understanding ethnic identities is about—**it's about hearing the realities different peoples have faced and still face, how that impacts their experience in the world today, and validating that reality.** It is no mystery that many throughout history have been persecuted due to their ethnoracial backgrounds whilst others were less impacted by their appearance or where they came from. **By understanding each other's privileges and disadvantages, both presently and in the past, we may**

**use this knowledge to help guide us into a future in solidarity with each other** and with more safe spaces to have difficult conversations that overall help us develop into better human beings.

*On a lighter note, please share some of your favorite memories from your time at UAS.*

**VICTORIA:** I would definitely say that an unforgettable memory for me was soccer SAAC 2016 where our team got to play the final in Chile on the field overlooking the Andes mountains. Although I was unable to play the final due to an injury earlier that tournament, I remember just being so proud that we had gotten this far and so lucky to experience a world so far from my own playing a game that I loved so much. I'll never forget the girls painting my number and initials on their faces to surprise me after hearing I wouldn't be able to play the rest of the tournament, and, of course, I cried!



# INTERVIEW: WHEELER KEARNS ARCHITECT, FABIOLA YEP



*TTG: Hello Fabiola, what a pleasure to meet you and the whole team of architects from Wheeler Kearns here on campus this week. We are excited about the UAS Campus Redesign and so glad to have your school design expertise to guide us. As you're here getting to know the UAS community, we'd also enjoy getting to know your work and you a little. Were you always interested in design and architecture? Thinking back to your school days, when did you first realize you'd like to work in this area? Who or what inspired you?*

**FY:** I believe it was around 9th grade that we all started talking between ourselves about what careers we were considering pursuing. I remember thinking that pursuing a career in engineering made sense to me, given that I liked math and had a lot of extended family members that were engineers.



However, I was always torn because I secretly wanted to do something creative. Unfortunately, my school did not do a great job of introducing us to many options outside engineering or business school. So even though I would tell everyone I was going to be an engineer, I secretly wanted to keep exploring the idea of becoming a designer of some sort.

At some point during that school year, a very close friend of mine very assertively told me that I should become an architect instead of an engineer. Her words were, “you are creative, and you are good at math. You should be an architect.” She had an uncle that was an architect and went on explaining what he did, which sounded to me like the perfect marriage between right and left brain skills. Since then, I’ve always known I wanted to become an architect.

*TTG: How inspiring to think that ideas that are great for us can come from those around us. UAS, as you are discovering during your visit, is a rich, global community of students, parents and staff coming from over 30 countries across the world to teach and learn here in Uruguay. And I think you understand that from a personal perspective as well. Before beginning your firm in Chicago your roots were in Peru, is that correct? How has that heritage impacted your architecture work and your life in the US?*

**FY:** Yes, I was born in Lima, Peru, and lived there until I was 18.

The most significant benefit of having a multicultural upbringing is that it quickly teaches you to question all your preconceived assumptions and opens your mind to understanding different cultural realities, status quo, and expectations. I find this process humbling and empathetic, which are great qualities to have, especially when pursuing a career in architecture.

Humility and empathy make you immerse yourself as the user and work towards finding the best solution for the specific task at hand. This stops you from attempting to use cookie-cutter solutions (repeating the same solution over and over) or ending up with projects that could look great in photographs but do not enhance or facilitate the user experience.







*TTG: Having an open mind is a perspective I think many of us understand here at UAS. So interesting how our global awareness encourages us to see a wider range of possibilities and be empathetic. Of all the school projects you've designed, can you describe one design where you brought your global vision to the table and created something especially unique as a result?*

**FY:** When working on the Elgin Match and Science Academy (EMSA) Master Plan design, we had to reach for solutions outside the local norm to create a design that responded to the unique learning model, campus, and site characteristics, as well as environmental concerns.

EMSA's learning model is founded on the ethos of Outward-Bound Learning, encouraging students' curiosity, agency, and motivation. EMSA's campus is in the Fox River Forested Fen, a 53-acre site designated as an Illinois Nature Preserve. The inherited campus was the former home of the Fox River Country Day School, which contains a network of prairie-style buildings.

Though the idea of doing away with the small prairie-style buildings and locating a large new building somewhere on site that would house all the students under one roof was appealing to many, in this master plan, we proposed to maintain the existing

prairie-style school buildings network by converting them into new spaces that reinforce their Expeditionary Learning (EL) model.

With this proposed design, it would be common to see a row of students in their rain boots hiking down the hill while going from building to building to explore the site and learn as they go. The decision to convert all these existing structures into new spaces for the school is the most sustainable and least disturbing to its unique site. We are now in the 3rd phase of this master plan, and I still love being on campus and witnessing all the students activate all the outdoor spaces as they make their way from building to building.

*TTG: What a unique project, and I can see why you're proud of the result! And in a community such as ours, what do you see as especially important conceptually for a campus redesign?*

**FY:** After spending a whole week immersed in the UAS community, we were inspired by the creativity of the students and the level of engagement we witnessed in them. Throughout the week, we met with students who led the drama club, who wanted to use cutting-edge tools, who were super stimulated by the design activity we did with them, and who wanted to do these big creative, inspiring things.



Our goal is to bring that into the realm of possibility. UAS has an enormous opportunity to give the students the creative tools and spaces that inspire them to pursue their curiosity by creating. These are opportunities I never had growing up, and they are imperative for students to find their own niche and pursue their passions.

Our main goal is to leverage the tools and opportunities that already exist in UAS and bring them more directly for students to self-discover.

*TTG: It's wonderful how the Wheeler Kearns team spent the week really getting to know UAS students and the community. It's clear that has had a wonderful effect on the project. And this week while you are visiting UAS, what will most help you in order to later create the redesign concepts for our campus?*

**FY:** Engaging with all the different stakeholders was our priority #1. Our goal was to be like sponges, absorbing all of

the information that we received, and we were lucky that your community was open, forthcoming, and generous with their time and information. We had to stop ourselves from coming up with premature ideas, given that we wanted to hear from all the users in the space.

We now have a much better understanding of the shared vision, priorities, and concerns. This is a great first step, and we are eager to start putting pen to paper on these floating ideas we have been creating all week!



*TTG: Thank you Fabiola for sharing your experiences and insights with us. We too learned so much from your visit, about our community, our school and our creativity. We can't wait to see what Wheeler Kearns is designing!*



# Uruguayan American School

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