POMFRET SCHOOL STRATEGIC PLAN

PROGRESS REPORT | YEAR ONE SCHOOL YEAR 2022–2023



Dear Members of the Pomfret Community,

Last year, Pomfret unveiled an ambitious strategic plan called *Change Makers and Problem Solvers*. That plan and the concurrent fundraising effort, *Amplify: The Campaign for Pomfret School*, has propelled the School forward. This annual update, the first of five, highlights the significant successes that have already occurred across the School and identifies additional areas of emphasis for the future.

The impact of this work is already being felt in the record numbers of families applying for admission, the successful recruitment of top-tier teaching faculty, the groundbreaking of our new center for science, technology, engineering, and design, the additional academic opportunities our students are enjoying, and the increased recognition, among our peers and in the market, of these important accomplishments.

In addition, the Amplify campaign has already crossed the $64 million mark, ahead of schedule, on its way to $80 million. More than four thousand alumni and friends of the School have contributed to this remarkable effort, which provides the necessary financial support to achieve the goals of the strategic plan.

To be sure, much remains to be done, and the strategic plan will continue to guide us. A school always remains a work in progress; the job is never done. But, with the continued commitment of the members of the Pomfret community, we're confident the School will continue to achieve its ambitious goals.

Sincerely,



TIM RICHARDS
Head of School



JUSTIN KLEIN '65
Chair, Board of Trustees

P

IN JANUARY 2022, POMFRET RELEASED a new mission, vision, and strategic plan — closing one important chapter in the life of the School, and opening another. As a decade-long period of growth and experimentation gives way to a new era of alignment and integration, we are pleased to present this Year One progress report.

THESE ARE THE HIGHLIGHTS.



INITIATIVE ONE

INTEGRATED EDUCATIONAL MODEL

Bringing a visionary program into even sharper focus.

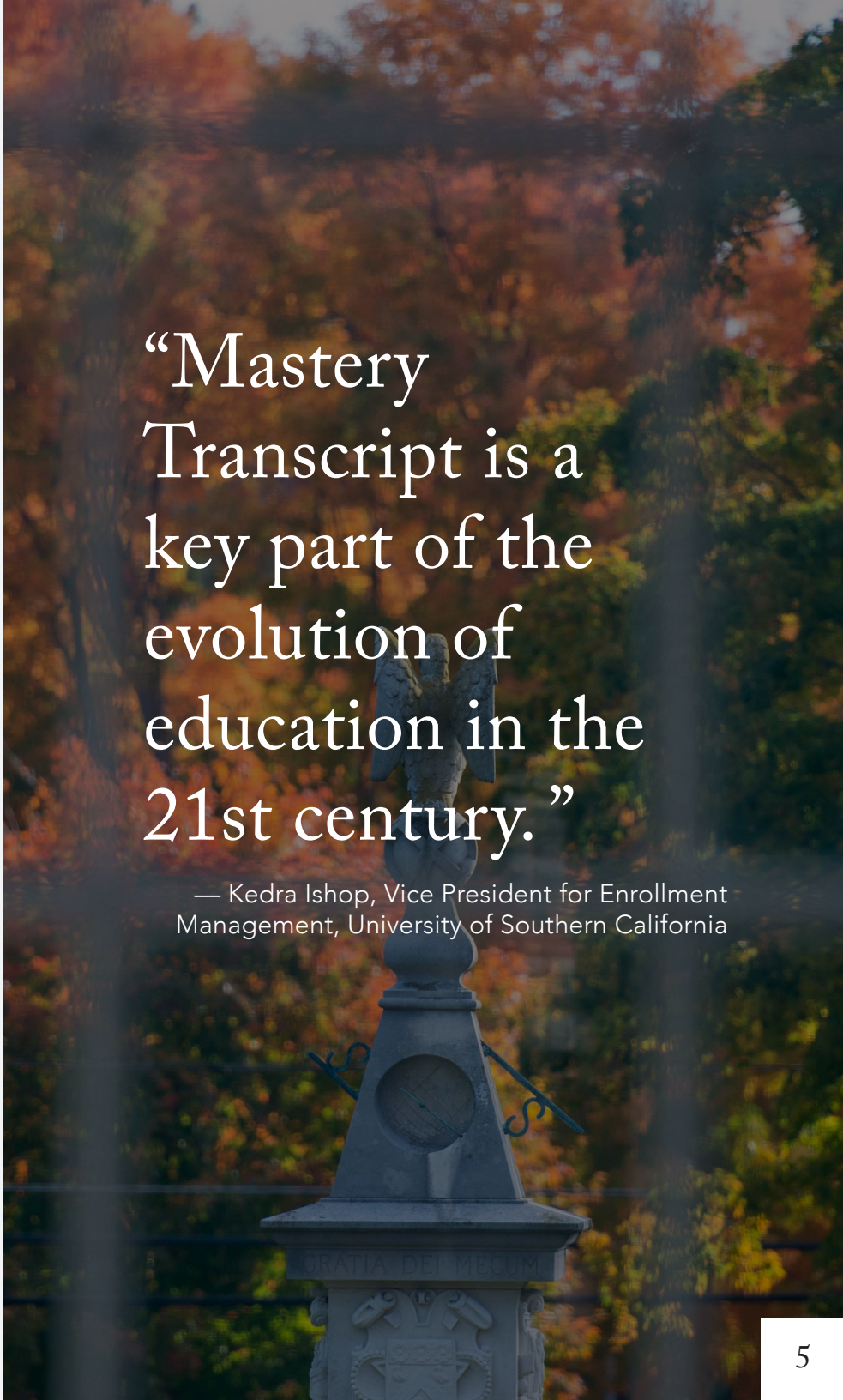
- Increase programmatic alignment
- Connect classroom learning with real world experiences
- Amplify student voice and choice
- Launch a competency-based approach to assessment, reporting, and transcript design (complement traditional transcript)

Several years ago, Pomfret joined the Mastery Transcript Consortium (MTC), a network of forward-thinking schools committed to reimagining how students prepare for college, career, and life. In August, we began designing the **MTC Learning Record**. This online *supplement* to a traditional high school transcript helps students differentiate themselves in the college admissions process by highlighting core and advanced **competencies** evidenced by a portfolio of student-curated work and achievement. Students who would like to begin taking advantage of this differentiator can opt in beginning in September 2023. As the Director of Admissions at Middlebury College Sam Prouty recently told our parents, "The MTC Learning Record is purely additive. It can only help your child stand out from the crowd."

To help support the rollout of this new learning record, the Academic Office launched a new **learning management system** (LMS) in September. Called Canvas, the platform allows teaching faculty to measure student progress in a particular course against a set of well-defined standards. In September, many teaching faculty began crafting standards for their courses. Unlike a traditional 100 point grade scale, **standards-based assessments** are based on a scale of 0 to 4 — with 1 indicating initial progress, 2 indicating developing progress, 3 indicating proficiency, and 4 indicating extension beyond the standard. These standards-based scores are then transferred back into traditional letter grades for report cards. Next school year, starting with freshman- and sophomore-level courses, we will begin using this system of assessment to evaluate student progress and growth.

ADDITIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

- For several years now, Pomfret has been measuring student engagement using an instrument called the Wellington Engagement Index. This year, we joined the **Wellington Index Boarding School Benchmarking Group** to pool data with other schools in order to better understand the trends shaping our industry at the macro level.
- For the 2022-2023 academic year, Pomfret expanded our popular **Experiential Learning Program**, which now includes travel to places like Costa Rica, Spain, France, Alabama, Vermont, and Maine, to name just a few. "These courses are created by Pomfret faculty for Pomfret students," says Doug Litowitz, the inaugural coordinator of this fast-growing signature program. Students who successfully complete a learning trip earn course credit.
- Roughly twenty students per term engaged in an **independent study**, affirming our students' strong desire to explore topics that interest and excite them on their own terms. Independent study is a full-credit, term-long opportunity open to all juniors and seniors. This year, IS students explored topics in STEM, art, history, social science, English writing, economics, and finance. P



INITIATIVE TWO

COMMUNITY AND BELONGING

Creating a place where everyone truly belongs.

- Build a diverse campus community
- Give all students equitable access to opportunities and resources
- Reduce barriers that limit participation in the pomfret experience
- Improve accessibility of our physical plant, technology, and infrastructure

In October, Head of School Tim Richards announced Pomfret's first **all-gender housing option**. "The decision to create an all-gender housing option is in direct response to a demonstrated need within our community," he said. "It is our responsibility to support students who have indicated a strong desire to reside in a space that aligns with their gender identity." At the time of this report's publication, the advisory committee co-chairs, Associate Head of School Don Gibbs and Director of Counseling Fannie Deary, are preparing their final recommendations, in anticipation of a September 2023 opening.

For the first time, the inability to pay will no longer be a barrier to participating in the Experiential Travel Program at Pomfret School. In January 2023, Pomfret announced a new **Experiential Travel Fund** to support students with a demonstrated financial need. Starting this summer, students who register for a travel-based program will have the option to apply for financial assistance. This benefit will be available to all students, not just students who receive financial aid. Every student (with the exception of post graduates) who registers for a Pomfret-sponsored, travel-based program will have the option to apply for need-based financial assistance once during their time at Pomfret.

This year, Pomfret also decided to expand our Counseling Office, adding **a new certified counselor position**. Over the last five years, independent schools everywhere have reported a dramatic increase in the number of students asking for services in the following areas: anxiety and depression, suicide, ADHD, eating disorders and allergies, and substance abuse. By adding a third counselor, Pomfret will be making a significant investment in the health and wellbeing of our students, putting us in a strong position to meet the needs of current and future Griffins.

ADDITIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

- This year, the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion expanded the number of **affinity groups** at Pomfret. The current roster includes La Familia for Latin and Hispanic students, the Black Student Union (BSU) for Black students, Hillel for Jewish students, the Gender Sexuality Alliance for LGBTQ+ students and their allies, and the Asian Students Assocation for Asian students. Each affinity group is coordinated by two student leaders and is sponsored by a faculty mentor. In addition, the School created **a special series of orientation events** for BIPOC and international students designed around their specific needs and interests. Lastly, this year marked the return of VOICE. The group focused on energizing the multicultural center and how it can be utilized by all students.

- In September, Pomfret kicked off a new **Sexuality Education Program** designed to educate and empower students to make informed decisions regarding healthy and mature relationships. Drawing on experienced sources related to teen sexuality — including One Love, Scarleteen, and Planned Parenthood — the four-part series addresses questions about healthy relationships, sexual health and consent, and human anatomy. "Our students are surrounded by sexuality, online and in television shows and movies, whether they're looking for it or not," says Art Department Head Lindsay Lehmann, who co-leads the program with Science Teacher Amy VanHoesen. "We hope this program will give them the confidence and understanding to communicate their wants and needs, and feel safe."

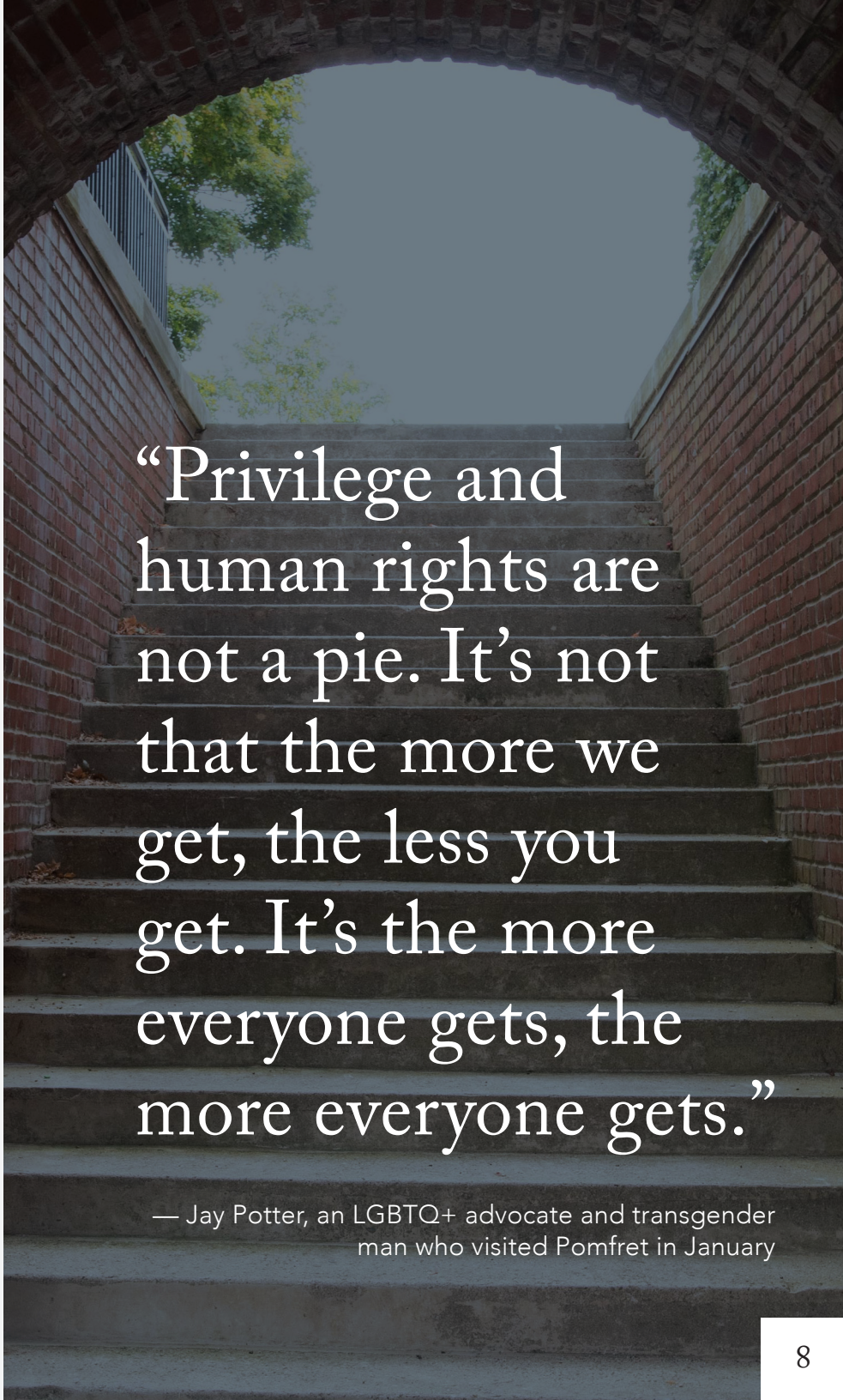
- This year the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion partnered with **consulting firm NP Strategies** to analyze inclusivity and multiculturalism data gathered by the School. The firm is expected to make several key recommendations based on the analysis.

- In September 2022, the School held the first of four **Courageous Community Conversations 4 Change**, referred to as the 4Cs. This open forum, available to students and faculty, is intended to create a space for people with opposing viewpoints to engage with each other, openly and honestly. To date, the School has held four of five planned sessions for the year, covering a range of controversial topics including social media and technology, how do they impact school culture? What will be the impact of all-gender housing on campus? How do our intersectional identities affect our mental health? Dress codes, are they equitable and do they affect student learning?

- As part of our ongoing commitment to **accessibility**, the School installed a new campus elevator as a key part of the Hard Auditorium renovation. Though not yet constructed, the new science center design also makes accessibility a priority.

» In alignment with our **workforce diversity initiative**, Dean of Faculty Martha Horst actively increased the number of qualified diverse hires. Horst expanded her areas of recruitment by optimizing search options, obtaining referrals by previous faculty, parents, and alumni, using online job boards, and enhancing mentoring opportunities to ensure support and guidance is available for newly hired teachers of color. These initiatives include methods to keep newly hired faculty supported, engaged, and retained while living and working at Pomfret. "Having a diverse faculty, one which reflects our student body, is a priority," she says. "Representation matters."

» In response to a disciplinary situation that led to the withdrawal of three seniors, Dean of Students Charlotte McMahon created the advisory group **Cultural and Policy Examination** (CAPE) to evaluate the culture of stress and the potential connection to drug use on campus. Additionally, in the context of our emerging emphasis on restorative practices, the task force is evaluating the current one-strike policy for drugs and alcohol. The committee may recommend a change to the way we currently handle the use and possession of drugs on campus. P





INITIATIVE THREE

STEWARDSHIP AND SUSTAINABILITY

Ensuring Pomfret stands the test of time.

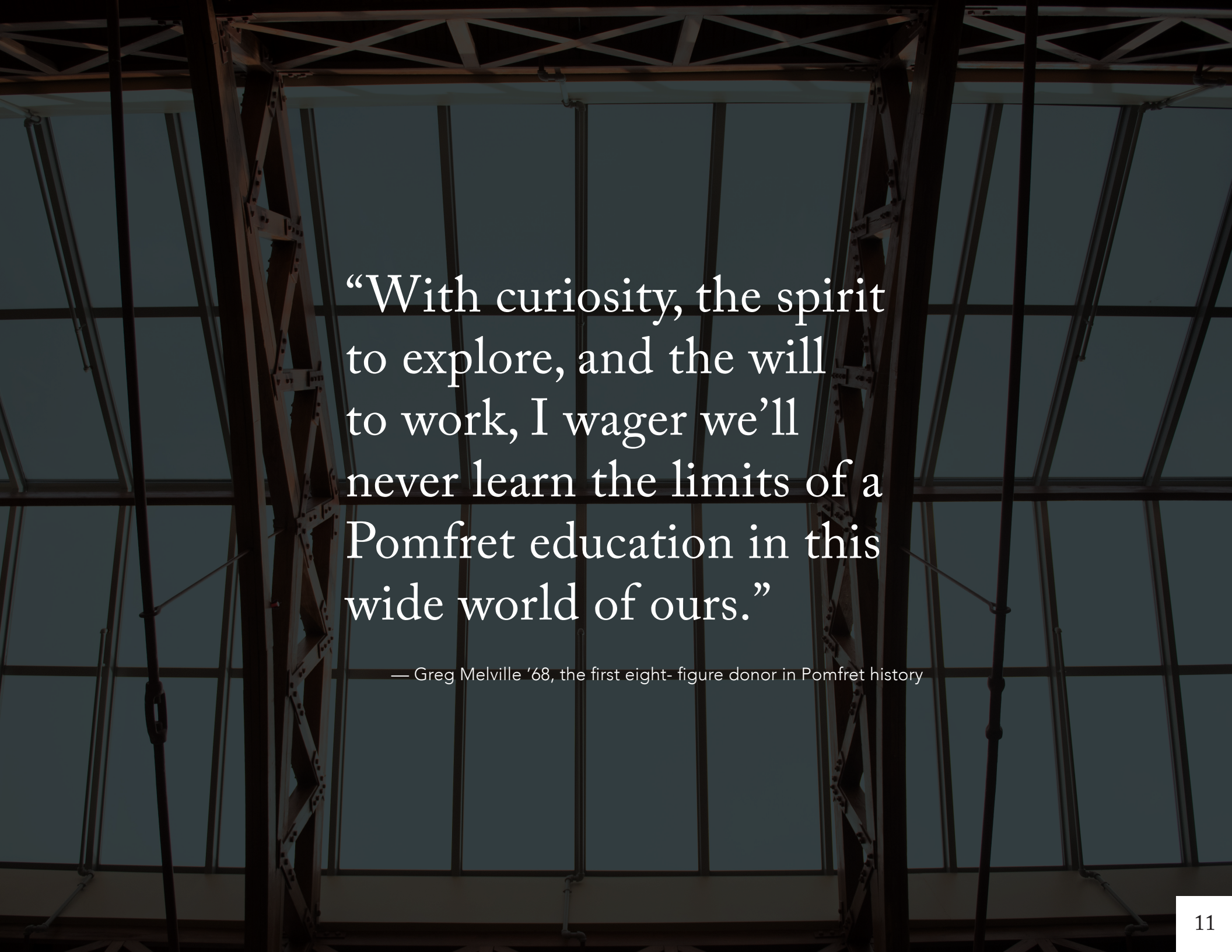
- Capitalize on emerging best practices in admissions and retention
- Launch the school's comprehensive campaign
- Model excellence in fiscal management
- Reduce the environmental impact of campus operations

In March 2023, Pomfret broke ground on a new $22 million **center for science, technology, engineering, and design**. The three-story facility will double the square footage of Monell, from 10,000 to 22,600 square feet. "This is a very special design," says James Rothman '67, who won the 2013 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine. "I've been in many science centers, as you can imagine, and I don't think I have ever seen one with such a unique, open, and inviting layout."

The new science center was made possible by another watershed moment in the life of the School: the formal announcement of our new **comprehensive campaign**, *Amplify: The Campaign for Pomfret School*. Amplify is the most ambitious fundraising effort in Pomfret history. To date, thousands of donors have contributed more than $64 million in gifts, commitments, and pledges — including $18 million of the $22 million for the science center. In addition to the science center, the campaign also aims to boost faculty compensation and professional development, increase financial aid, invest in new ideas, and support the health and wellness of our students, all while continuing to fortify our annual giving program.

ADDITIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

- Campus sustainability also took another big step forward this year. In August, the School signed a deal with Independence Solar to install a 15- to 20-panel **solar array** on the site of the former softball field. The project is expected to produce 550 kW-DC of electricity, which will cover roughly 75% percent of Pomfret's main power needs. The project is estimated to remove 15,000 tons of CO_2 annually. This year, the School also replaced lighting in the Bricks and Lewis Gymnasium with efficient LED technology.
- This year, Dean of Enrollment Management Susan Mantilla-Goin convened a Retention Committee, to **reduce attrition**. "To be clear," Mantilla-Goin says, "We do not have an attrition problem, but as a matter of best practice, it is important to identify early families who may be wavering and communicate with them often." For the first time this year, the Office of Admission also began tracking and publicly reporting **the number of non-binary students** who attend Pomfret.
- Pomfret engaged the services of Creosote Affects, a full-service marketing agency based near Washington, DC, to execute **a new branding study**. The goal is to identify more clearly what the market values about the school in order to develop a message strategy that will elevate the Pomfret brand in the eyes of our most important stakeholders.
- In an effort to be financially sustainable and considerate of future generations of Pomfret students, the Board of Trustees **reduced its endowment spending** draw from 4.5% to 4.25% of a three year moving market average. This means that the School will initially spend less from its endowment so that the endowment grows quicker than it otherwise would for the long term benefit of the operating budget. P



“With curiosity, the spirit to explore, and the will to work, I wager we’ll never learn the limits of a Pomfret education in this wide world of ours.”

— Greg Melville ’68, the first eight- figure donor in Pomfret history

PROGRESS MATRIX

The following includes actions taken in service of the strategic plan in Year One (SY 2022–2023). Actions in **Blue** are New. Actions in **Yellow** are In Progress. Actions in **Green** are Complete. Actions in **Red** are On Hold.

INITIATIVE ONE | INTEGRATED EDUCATIONAL MODEL

Action	Goal	Progress
Provide student access to off-campus opportunities that are extracurricular in nature and aligned with academic programming.	Programmatic Alignment	**In Progress**
Continue to refine and expand the role of the Experiential Travel Coordinator.	Programmatic Alignment	**Complete**
Develop a framework for athletic recruitment and coaches expectations as it relates to admissions.	Programmatic Alignment	**In Progress**
Expand curricular offerings that connect students to service learning and travel-based experiential learning opportunities.	Curricular Development	**In Progress**
Invite alumni to engage with students as guest lecturers, subject area experts, and QUEST speakers.	Curricular Development	**In Progress**
Set aside $15K budget for small-scale experiential travel during Project: Pomfret.	Curricular Development	**Complete**

Action	Goal	Progress
Continue to develop a relationship with Independent School Experiential Education Network by sending representatives to their winter and summer institutes.	Curricular Development	**In Progress**
Introduce Sunday Night Speaker series to connect outside experts in areas both connected to and distinct from the academic curriculum.	Curricular Development	**Complete**
Launch an inclusive, research-informed, all-school Sexuality Education Program.	Curricular Development	**Complete**
Continue to expand and highlight the Certificate program.	Student Agency	**In Progress**
Continue to expand and highlight the Independent Study program.	Student Agency	**In Progress**
Use data from Wellington Engagement Index to examine and improve academic and co-curricular programs.	Student Agency	**In Progress**
Offer spring-term seniors the opportunity to lead small-group classes for credit.	Student Agency	**On Hold**

Action	Goal	Progress
Make MTC Learning Record available to all students as a companion to the traditional transcript, in anticipation of SY 2023-24.	Mastery Transcript	**Complete**
Draft a set of foundational and advanced mastery credits that reflect the scope and substance of the Pomfret experience.	Mastery Transcript	**In Progress**
Adopt Canvas as our new LMS with a view to supporting standards-based grading and mastery learning.	Mastery Transcript	**Complete**
Redesign the School profile to provide colleges with a clearer understanding of how to interpret the Mastery Learning Record.	Mastery Transcript	**In Progress**
Attend MTC Symposium and visit other mastery-oriented schools to build faculty understanding of mastery-based teaching and learning.	Mastery Transcript	**In Progress**
Require faculty (and trustees) to read Grading for Equity.	Mastery Transcript	**Complete**

INITIATIVE TWO | COMMUNITY AND BELONGING

Action	Goal	Progress
Create orientation events that welcome under-represented students to campus in advance.	Diversity and Representation	**In Progress**
Develop purposes, goals, and missions for affinity spaces.	Diversity and Representation	**Complete**
Start a local chapter of NAACP Youth Charter.	Diversity and Representation	**Complete**
Craft anti-bias rubrics for hiring.	Diversity and Representation	**In Progress**
Build a more diverse workforce.	Diversity and Representation	**In Progress**
Increase the number of female coaches leading female teams.	Diversity and Representation	**In Progress**
For the academic year 2022-2023, hire additional BIPOC faculty.	Diversity and Representation	**Complete**
Support BIPOC faculty to increase retention.	Diversity and Representation	**In Progress**

Action	Goal	Progress
Set an aggressive timetable (SY 23-24) for the launch of an all-gender housing option.	Equity and Inclusion	**Complete**
Open an all-gender housing option.	Equity and Inclusion	**In Progress**
Conduct an Assessment of Inclusivity and Multiculturalism survey.	Equity and Inclusion	**Complete**
Launch Courageous Community Conversations 4 Change.	Equity and Inclusion	**Complete**
Audit admissions data for acceptance and matriculation rates.	Equity and Inclusion	**New**
Craft a gender inclusion statement and policy.	Equity and Inclusion	**In Progress**
Invest in creating form identities and traditions.	Equity and Inclusion	**New**
Develop education strands devoted to gender and sexuality.	Equity and Inclusion	**Complete**
Invest in Pomfret-Millbrook Day to build school spirit.	Equity and Inclusion	**In Progress**
Install a new elevator connecting Hard Auditorium and the School Building.	Facilities and Resources	**Complete**
Create an institutional reserve fund to take advantage of emerging opportunities and respond to unanticipated challenges.	Financial Support	**Complete**

INITIATIVE THREE | STEWARDSHIP AND SUSTAINABILITY

Action	Goal	Progress
Expanded outreach to educational consultants and agents.	Enrollment Management	**Complete**
Research national trends on gender reporting as part of the admissions application process.	Enrollment Management	**Complete**
Build framework for development of Student Retention Committee.	Enrollment Management	**In Progress**
Develop exit interview for student attrition.	Enrollment Management	**New**
Develop and launch an elevated branding campaign, including new core messaging and matching print and digital collateral.	Enrollment Management	**In Progress**
Prepare draft cases, define cost estimates, and refine fundraising priorities through dialogue discussions.	Philanthropic Achievement	**Complete**
Complete campaign quiet phase solicitations with a goal to achieve 70% or more commitments prior to public launch.	Philanthropic Achievement	**Complete**
Host a series of public campaign launch events.	Philanthropic Achievement	**In Progress**

Action	Goal	Progress
Design and execute a communications strategy for the public launch year of the campaign, including case for support, mini-doc film, and microsite.	Philanthropic Achievement	**Complete**
Develop and shape strategic activities that are valued by Pomfret School alumni and parents to sustain lifelong relationships between Pomfret and its community.	Philanthropic Achievement	**In Progress**
Restructure Advancement Office.	Philanthropic Achievement	**Complete**
Reduce endowment spending formula by 25 basis points from 4.5% of a 12-quarter moving average.	Financial Responsibility	**Complete**
Reduce driving on campus and eliminate idling.	Environmental Impact	**In Progress**
Create an educational recycling campaign to increase "correct" recycling.	Environmental Impact	**New**
Replace all Bricks, OSU, and Field House incandescent lights with LED lights.	Environmental Impact	**Complete**

STRATEGIC PLAN TASK FORCE

INTEGRATED EDUCATIONAL MODEL



Tim Richards
Head of School



Gwyneth Connell
Director of the
Grauer Family Institute

COMMUNITY AND BELONGING



Coretta McCarter
Dean of Diversity, Equity,
and Inclusion



Don Gibbs
Associate Head of School



Martha Horst
Dean of Faculty

STEWARDSHIP AND SUSTAINABILITY



Ed Griffin
Chief Financial Officer



Susan Mantilla-Goin
Dean of Enrollment Management



Will Mitchell
Director of Advancement

POMFRET

398 Pomfret Street
PO Box 128
Pomfret, CT 06258-0128



This report is an open and honest accounting of our progress to date. It is intended to inform the School community, which we define as students, parents, employees, alumni, and trustees, about the collective achievements associated with the Year One implementation of our strategic plan, including the challenges and delays we have faced. It does not purport to contain or describe everything we have done to advance the School and its priorities, nor should it be understood that way.