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### Oxford Scholars Essay: Building Futures

In the wake of the 2017 Tubbs Fire, which significantly damaged the Cardinal Newman campus, there has been a substantial expansion of the school's grounds. As seniors, the Class of 2024 has bore witness to all of the school's recent growth. When we entered the campus for the first time, after spending half a year behind a computer screen, we were greeted by portable classrooms and constant, noisy construction. Throughout our time at Cardinal Newman, we have watched the campus and community grow and blossom alongside our class; whether it was the new classrooms built during our sophomore year, the construction of the SLC this past year, or the upcoming completion of the new chapel. As we prepare to graduate high school and take the next step in our journeys, it is valuable to envision what the future might hold for the following generations of Cardinal Newman graduates, and how these new buildings will play a part in their high school experience.

With the addition of modern buildings on the Cardinal Newman campus, there is also the opportunity for new programs and a unique usage of these spaces. Although Newman is widely acknowledged for its successful athletic programs and facilities, the art, music, theater, and dance programs haven't historically received the same recognition. In the past, this might have been attributed to the school's lack of an auditorium or substantial stage on which the arts could be displayed. However, with the recent addition of the SLC, there is more space to celebrate Newman's artists, musicians, actors, and dancers. In addition, the stage and large open space of

the SLC could also be used to house a drama or theater program, which Cardinal Newman currently lacks.

Along with accommodating Newman's art programs, the SLC can also be used to support student's academic endeavors. With the addition of a new library and extra classrooms, students could book these spaces in advance for study sessions, similar to what college campuses offer. These spaces could be available, either during advisory or after school, and they would provide students with a quiet, focused environment to collaborate with their peers. Similarly, the large open space on the first floor of the SLC could be used by teachers to lead class-wide discussions, such as Socratic Seminars or presentations. By occasionally changing the environment students learn in, Cardinal Newman can promote creativity and collaboration between students.

Although the new chapel will not be completed in time for our graduating class to enjoy, it will still provide a valuable space for future students, alumni, and the Cardinal Newman community to make use of. For current students and faculty, the chapel will serve as a distinct place of worship for liturgy and special occasions. However, it can also be used to accommodate ongoing Newman programs, such as the St. Vincent de Paul club. Instead of meeting in a typical classroom, perhaps they could hold meetings in the chapel. Along with this, to incorporate alumni and Newman community members, the chapel could host a liturgy every one to two months during non-school hours, and invite all members of the Newman community to participate. This way the chapel would be enjoyed by everyone connected to Cardinal Newman, not just the current faculty and student body.

All in all, by focusing on the expansion of Cardinal Newman's programs alongside the expansion of the campus, the school can create a diverse and blooming community of students, faculty, alumni, and family members. Alongside constructing new buildings, Newman should

focus on encouraging collaboration and active participation of all its community members. By intentionally using these newly constructed spaces as a system to connect and strengthen the Newman community, the school can forge new traditions and fresh ideas that otherwise wouldn't have been possible.