POMFRET SCHOOL STRATEGIC PLAN



PROGRESS REPORT

SCHOOL YEAR 2023–2024

YEAR TWO

Dear Members of the Pomfret Community,

Two years ago, Pomfret unveiled a strategic plan called *Change Makers and Problem Solvers*. That plan and the concurrent fundraising effort, *Amplify: The Campaign for Pomfret School*, have propelled the School forward in meaningful ways over the past twelve months. This annual update, the second of five, highlights some of our progress.

During the 2023–2024 school year, our new science center VISTA has remained on time and on budget. We are delighted that the building will be ready when school opens in September 2024 for the first day of classes. In addition, the *Amplify* campaign has raised $73 million of its $80 million goal.

This year, we also added two new goals to our strategic plan — a recognition that both the School and the world have changed since we drafted the original document back in 2021. One new goal seeks to raise the competitiveness of our athletic program. The second new goal focuses on leveraging artificial intelligence to improve teaching and learning outcomes.

This year, we also updated one of our academic goals. When the plan was first written, it referred to the "launch of a mastery transcript" as the primary objective. We have since modified this language to focus on "competency-based learning." This shift reflects an increasing recognition that weaving a competency-based model of education into everything we do is the real objective, one that we believe is central to our students being able to live into our mission and our vision.

Pomfret is and always has been an exciting work in progress. With the continued commitment of the members of the Pomfret community, we are confident the School will continue to thrive far into the future.

Sincerely,



J. TIMOTHY 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 Two progress report.

THESE ARE THE HIGHLIGHTS.



INITIATIVE ONE

Integrated Educational Model

Bringing a visionary program into even sharper focus.

- Increasing programmatic alignment.
- Connecting classroom learning with real world experiences.
- Amplifying student voice and choice.
- Launching a competency-based approach to assessment, reporting, and transcript design.
- Developing and sustaining a competitive athletic program.
- Using artificial intelligence to improve teaching and learning.

Primary Highlight

Three years ago, Pomfret joined the Mastery Transcript Consortium (MTC), a network of forward-thinking schools committed to reinventing how students prepare for college, career, and life. This year, we successfully implemented **outcome-based grading and assessments** for classes in the ninth and tenth grade. Over the next two years, we anticipate extending this to the eleventh and twelfth grade, signaling the achievement of an important milestone in the implementation of competency-based learning (CBL) at Pomfret. To support this transition, The Grauer Family Institute awarded **summer curriculum grants** to a select number of Pomfret faculty to develop concrete learning outcomes for their classes, a critical component of CBL.

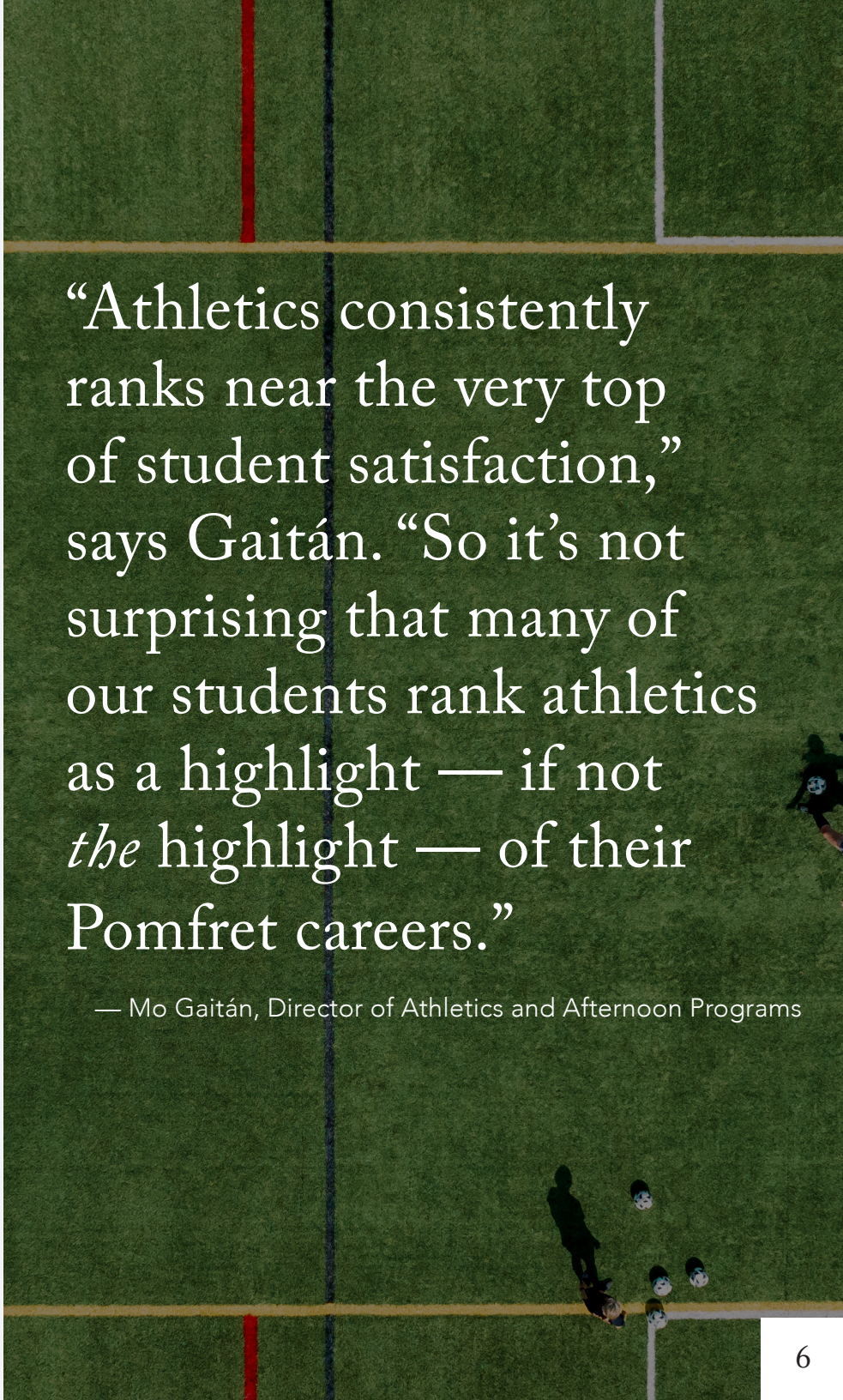
Athletics is a cornerstone of the Pomfret Experience. This year, the Athletic Department added two new sports to its **burgeoning roster of athletic programs**. In the winter, we launched swimming in partnership with the local YMCA. This spring we introduced our newest sport, ultimate, one of the fastest growing sports in North America. This growth is emblematic of a larger awareness that **developing and sustaining a competitive athletic program** is critical to enrollment and a key component of the School's culture and identity.

More Highlights

- Led by Charlotte McMahon, the Dean of Students Office developed the **Pomfret Leadership Academy**. Under the new format, students apply for leadership opportunities using a new streamlined application. Training begins in the spring term and continues throughout the summer months. Credits are assigned based on the time commitment needed to lead the role effectively, and students can hold up to six leadership credits per year. "This leadership academy is in alignment with some of our peer schools, offers balance, and allows a diverse range of students to apply for leadership positions at Pomfret," says McMahon.
- The Academic Office expanded the **Certificate Program** to give credit for experiences rooted in student life, athletic, and co-curricular experiences, affirming our students' strong desire to explore topics that interest and excite them.
- This winter, Athletic Director Mo Gaitán announced the girls ice hockey team would join the newest conference in the New England Preparatory School Athletic Council (NEPSAC). The league, called the **Vaillancourt Conference**, is named in honor of Pomfret alumna Sarah Vaillancourt '04, a two-time Olympic Gold medalist and the pride of Canada. She also hired Dave Peltz to lead the program. Dave is a Level 4 coach (USA Hockey) with twenty-five years coaching experience behind the bench at both the Junior and Tier 1 AAA youth hockey levels.
- Pomfret added an **artificial intelligence usage** policy to its student handbook, the Griffin Guide. In addition, Science Department Head Josh began training Pomfret faculty to effectively use generative AI in their classes. Josh also presented at Loomis Chaffee School and co-led (with Pomfret Library Director Beth Jacquet) an intensive week-long AI institute for independent school educators this summer.

Additional Actions

- Admissions increased its emphasis on yielding high impact athletes.
- The independent study program was expanded to include a broader array of interests.
- Athletic teams engaged in one service learning project each season.
- Collaborative Learning Center staff trained in the MARIO method.
- Twenty-one student leaders were named to a revitalized Student Activity Committee.
- An expert coach held a recruiting seminar with varsity coaches.
- The Humanities Department piloted REAL Discussion methodology in its classrooms. P



"Athletics consistently ranks near the very top of student satisfaction," says Gaitán. "So it's not surprising that many of our students rank athletics as a highlight — if not *the* highlight — of their Pomfret careers."

— Mo Gaitán, Director of Athletics and Afternoon Programs

INITIATIVE TWO

Community and Belonging

Creating a place where everyone truly belongs.

- Building a diverse campus community.
- Giving all students equitable access to opportunities and resources.
- Reducing barriers that limit participation in the Pomfret Experience.
- Improving Accessibility of our physical plant, technology, and infrastructure.

Primary Highlight

In September, Head of School Tim Richards convened five **student life task forces**. The task forces include Athletics, Social Media and Technology, Bullying, Wellbeing, and Gender and Student Culture. An additional task force focused on Master Planning.

For the second year in a row, Pomfret partnered with Indiana University Center for Survey Research and the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) to administer the **Independent School Health Check** (ISHC). The ISHC collects information about students' attitudes and life experiences, touching on many aspects of student wellbeing, including nutrition, exercise, sleep, self-esteem, stress, integrity, sexual behavior, and substance use.

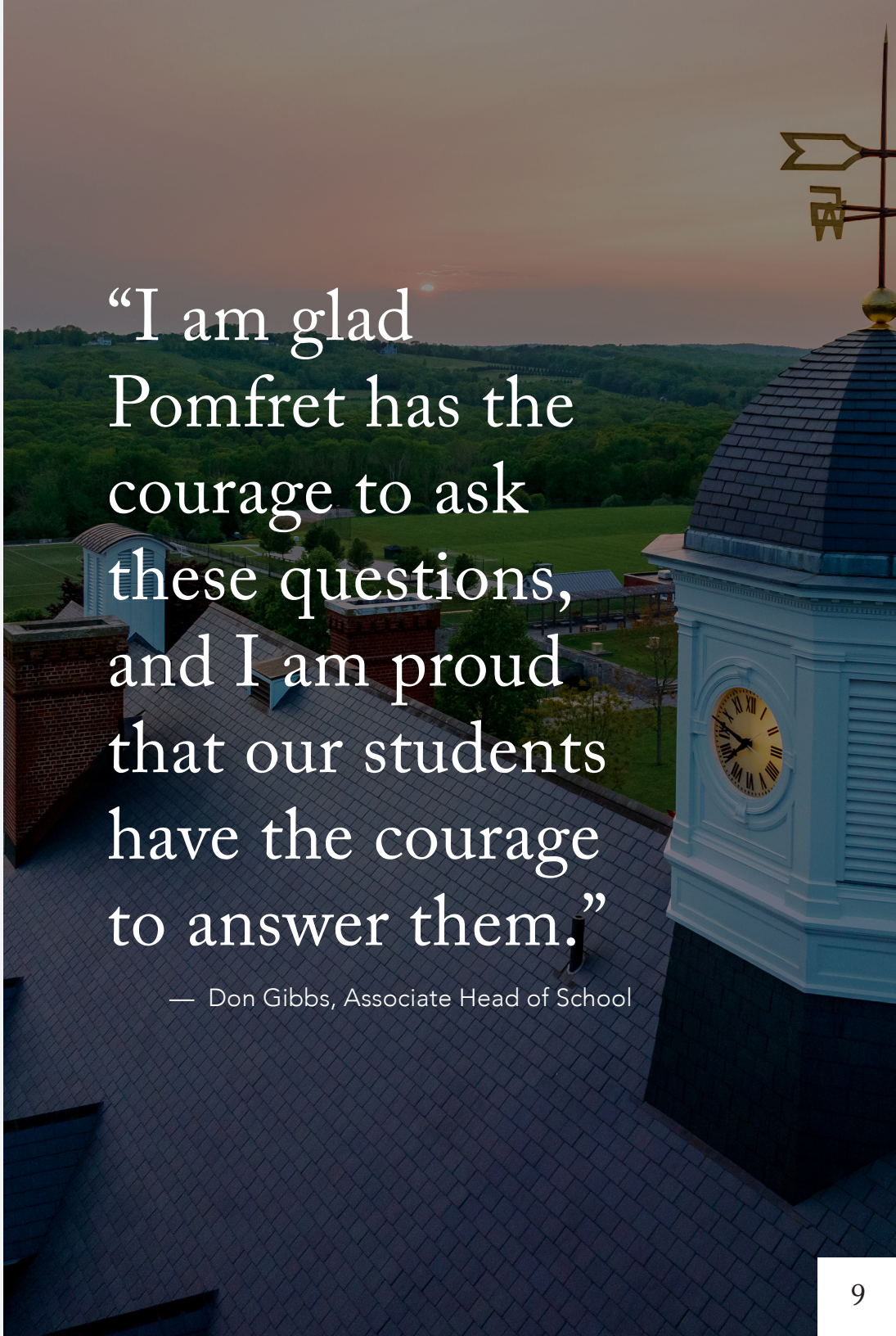
This year, the Dean of Students Office launched a **Growth and Accountability Plan**. Reflective of Pomfret's commitment to restorative justice, the plan maps out the specific steps a student must take to demonstrate growth and make amends with the community following an infraction, which is based on the nature and severity of the infraction.

More Highlights

- Dr. Coretta McCarter, dean of diversity, equity, and inclusion, developed a new **Bias Incident Form**, giving students access to a clear, well publicized process to communicate with administrators when they are experiencing harassment.
- Over the summer, Pomfret joined the local chapter of the **NAACP Youth Charter**. This forum, available to all students, is intended to create a space for our youth to advance economic, education, and social issues and to develop the next generation of civil rights leaders.
- Dean of Faculty Martha Horst worked to improve **faculty retention** through stay meetings, exit interviews, and evaluation of personnel needs. In alignment with our workforce diversity initiative, she expanded her areas of recruitment by optimizing the 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.
- This year, the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion outlined the purposes, goals, and mission statements for all **affinity groups** at Pomfret. The current roster includes La Familia for Latin and Hispanic students, the Black/Brown Student Union (BSU) for Black/Brown students, The Jewish Student Union (JSU) for Jewish students, the Gender Sexuality Alliance (GSA) for LGBTQ+ students, and the Asian Students Association (ASA) for Asian students. Lastly, this year marked the resurgence of VOICE on campus.
- This year CFO Ed Griffin increased the budget of the **Experiential Travel Fund** to $83,000 and modified the policy to allow students to apply for multiple grants during their time at Pomfret. This benefit is available to all students, not just students who receive traditional financial aid. Decisions will continue to be based on the family's ability to pay for the specific program in question. Financial awards, for those who demonstrate appropriate need, will range from a partial reduction of the program fee to full forgiveness.
- In April, Pomfret admitted its first wheelchair-bound student. As part of our ongoing commitment to **accessibility**, a committee has begun planning for the student's arrival in September. The installation of an elevator during the Hard Auditorium renovation and a new elevator in VISTA will be helpful. Automatic doors, ramps, and the scheduling of classes in accessible spaces are currently being discussed, and we are looking forward to partnering with the student and his family to make sure his access to campus is unhindered.

Additional Actions

- The School created a process for students to provide preferred names and pronouns in our Student Information System (SIS) Sundial.
- The Admissions Office audited its data regarding acceptance and matriculation rates, financial aid, and attrition rates for BIPOC students. P



"I am glad Pomfret has the courage to ask these questions, and I am proud that our students have the courage to answer them."

— Don Gibbs, Associate Head of School



INITIATIVE THREE

Stewardship and Sustainability

Ensuring Pomfret stands the test of time.

- Capitalizing on emerging best practices in admissions and retention.
- Launching the School's comprehensive campaign.
- Modeling excellence in fiscal management.
- Reducing the environmental impact of campus operations.

Primary Highlight

In March 2023, Pomfret broke ground on a new $22 million science center. In just a few short months, VISTA (Venue for Innovation, Science, Technology, and Academics) will open its doors to students and faculty, on time and on budget.

Amplify: The Campaign for Pomfret School is entering its final year. To date, thousands of donors have contributed more than $73 million in gifts, commitments, and pledges. During this year's Day of Giving celebration, Pomfret is People, the School raised more than a million dollars in twenty-four hours, the first time this has happened.

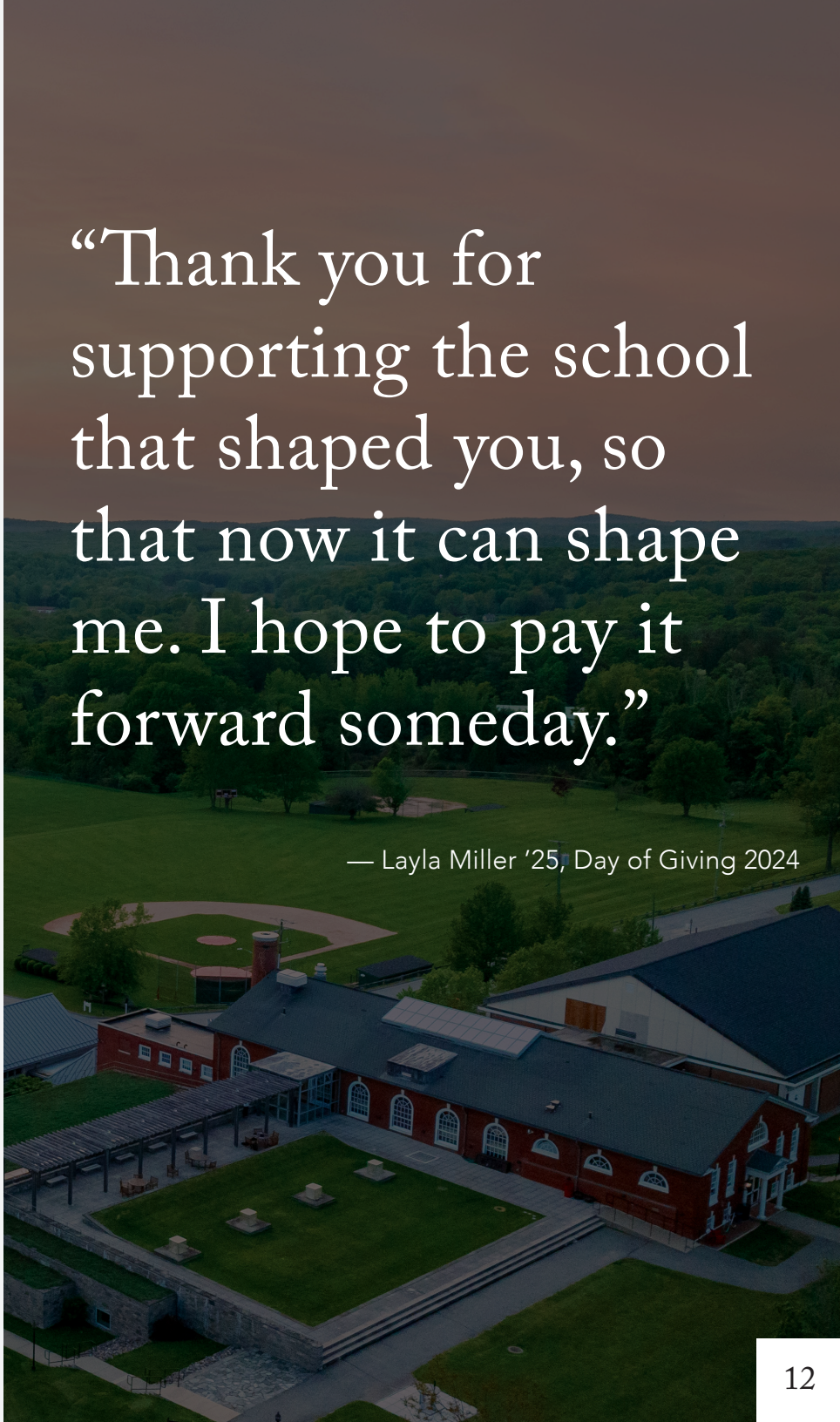
Finally, the ***Master Planning Task Force*** completed laying the foundation for a formal master planning process that will begin in two years. Early survey work suggests dorm space and athletic facilities will be a high priority. This is the first full master planning process the School has undertaken in more than a decade.

More Highlights

- Head of School Tim Richards introduced a **new chief financial officer**. Melissa Woodin will take over on July 1, following in the footsteps of Ed Griffin, who has been at the helm since 2015. For nearly a decade, Woodin served as the controller at the Hotchkiss School and was the interim CFO during the 2018–2019 academic year. "Everyone who has worked with Melissa sings her praises," said Head of School Tim Richards.
- Advancement Director Will Mitchell and his team categorized, defined, and enumerated Pomfret's **planned giving pipeline** for the first time. Based on their research, Pomfret anticipates receiving more than $30 million in future giving through bequest intentions and other deferred giving arrangements.
- The School named Director of Wellbeing Erin Fisher as its first **Service and Stewardship program coordinator**, signaling a new phase in the development of Pomfret's commitment in these areas.
- Campus sustainability also took another big step forward this year. In partnership with Flik Dining Services, Pomfret implemented **a composting program** in the Dining Hall. The environmental club, Green Griffins, created Griff Tank, a competition where students pitch environmental initiatives to a group of student judges.
- Following up on last year's market research, the Marketing and Communications Office released all new **marketing collateral**, including a new search piece, viewbook, photobook, acceptance package, and website, with refreshed videos, emails, and social campaigns on the way.

Additional Actions

- The Advancement team held the inaugural Pomfret Around the World, a global event hosted by community members in various locations around the world, including four events in Asia. It was Tim and Anne Richards first visit since 2019.
- The Office of Admission recorded strong international growth in this year's yield class, including students from Cayman Island, Singapore, and Puerto Rico.
- The Advancement Office established a Student Advancement Board to help demystify the role philanthropy plays at schools for students. Members help educate fellow students about the impact of philanthropy on the Pomfret Experience while taking advantage of opportunities to meet, network and engage with alumni. P



"Thank you for supporting the school that shaped you, so that now it can shape me. I hope to pay it forward someday."

— Layla Miller '25, Day of Giving 2024

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

Project Managment and Oversight



Garry Dow
Director of Strategic
Marketing and Communications

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 Two implementation of our strategic plan. 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.