

FROM THE

# Head of School

Dear Members of the Pingry Community,



Pingry has long believed education should never be restricted to textbooks or limited by the property lines of our beautiful campuses. Instead, it's an on-going pursuit — one that takes shape wherever students open themselves to curiosity and connection. While our unwavering commitment to academics

continues to distinguish our classrooms, it's also the experiences beyond our classroom walls that define the Pingry journey. And increasingly, we're finding ways to dissolve the distinction between the education our students receive inside and outside the classroom, realizing they often can and should complement one another. Nowhere is this more evident than in the post-pandemic resurgence of our Global Programs offerings and the recent launch of travel Spring Intensives, which bring learning to life while also helping students become "citizens of and contributors to the larger community of the world."

Introduced as an optional part of the Pingry experience over 15 years ago, Global Programs has become an integral part of our school culture and I expect the same will soon be said of travel Spring Intensives. With a growing number of Upper and Middle School students venturing to an ever-expanding list of destinations both here and abroad, we continue seeing evidence of the new and unexpected ways in which these opportunities benefit the entire Pingry community.

These programs drive home the importance of becoming life-long learners. When the world becomes their classroom, students can better understand why learning is not limited to the traditional classroom. Travel requires students to abandon the familiar and to get comfortable with being uncomfortable. It's an unparalleled immersive experience, and living outside their comfort zones makes them more attuned to their surroundings. Travel also plants the seeds of empathy and curiosity by expanding perspectives and challenging assumptions. And the inevitable hiccups encountered

along the way due to circumstances beyond the control of our students and their faculty trip leaders help develop resilience, humility, and patience.

The Honor Code remains in full effect for every travel program Pingry offers. Experiencing different cultures and being in new places invites students to reflect on their own values while broadening their definitions of "community" and "common good" — central tenets of our Honor Code. Cell phones are also collected upon arrival, ensuring students remain fully present and fully unplugged for the duration of the trip. Was this travel policy developed in response to the recommendations found in Jonathan Haidt's bestselling book *The Anxious Generation*? Nope: it's a "pre-AG" policy in place for our trips since at least 2014.

Pingry is not only preparing students for college. We're also preparing them for life. Our travel programs have become an increasingly important part of the Pingry experience, making them not just enriching but essential to who we are and to what we aspire to become as a school community. We all benefit from the stories and perspectives students and faculty bring back to their classrooms. Their shared experiences form bonds that last a lifetime, and by creating that space for connection we're helping them develop transformative relationships that strengthen our community from within.

During a college counseling conference in Scotland several years ago, a professor from the University of St Andrews was asked to describe his experience with students from the United States. After pausing for a moment, he said "American students are comfortable providing answers, but less comfortable asking questions." While my subsequent round of golf on the legendary Old Course left me with more questions than answers (plus a Titleist Pro V1 that nearly went into the North Sea...), I'm proud that our travel programs are helping Pingry students to not only see the world but to ask bigger and bolder questions about their place in it.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tim Lear". The signature is stylized and fluid.

Tim Lear