

COLLEGE MAGAZINE

Pomona

Fall 2025

THE NEXT GENERATION



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...With Their Feelings

THE SEASONS OF SCHOOL



2025 Commencement

Some 447 graduates received their diplomas at Pomona's 132nd commencement in May. Speakers included Senior Class President **Shark Mutulili '25** (top left), Senior Class Speaker **Fares Marzouk '25** (top middle) and the following four recipients of honorary degrees.

W. Benton Boone '62

As ophthalmology faculty at UCLA and the University of California, Irvine, Boone has published extensive research on advancements in eye surgery and immunology. Certified in the supervision of hyperbaric oxygen therapy, he helped to pioneer the use of hyperbaric oxygen in eye disease.

Louise Henry Bryson

Originally a documentary film writer and public television producer, Bryson later became senior vice president of FX networks and then president of distribution for Lifetime Networks. She is a former member of the board of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and the former chair of the Board of Trustees of The J. Paul Getty Trust.

Halim Dhanidina '94

In 2012 Justice Dhanidina (ret.) was appointed to the Los Angeles County Superior Court, becoming the first Muslim to ever be appointed judge in California. Previously a litigator in arbitration and criminal investigations, an associate justice in the California 2nd District Court of Appeal, he became the country's first-ever Muslim appellate-level judge.

David W. Oxtoby

A recognized leader in American higher education, Oxtoby was Pomona's ninth president from 2003 to 2017. He also chaired the board of the American Association of Colleges and Universities and was president of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. [PCM](#)





Orientation Adventure Builds Friendships and Faith

In August 453 new students—first-years and transfers—kicked off their Pomona journey by participating in the annual Orientation Adventure (OA), a three-day experience that allows students to bond in the week before classes start.

A nearly 30-year-old tradition, OA features opportunities ranging from backpacking and surfing to “Quintessential L.A.,” which included taking in the Hollywood sign, Grand Central Market and an Angels baseball game.

The “Pali Retreat” group participated in a variety of outdoor activities that included archery, tomahawk throws, three ropes courses and a 40-foot harnessed drop known as the “Leap of Faith.”

Other excursions included “Farm and Fish” (think fishing trips and urban farms in Pasadena) and “Community Partnerships and Service,” where, among other things, students spent a morning helping the Claremont-based Prison Library Project find books for local incarcerated individuals.

Four years from now, OA friends will cheer for each other again—only this time, rather than being 40 feet overhead getting ready to leap, they’ll be walking across the stage at Commencement.

“This is only my second day here, and it’s already been amazing,” says Isaac Aguirre ’29, who hails from Buena Park, California. “There are great people out there.” [PCM](#)



Move-In Day 2025: ‘The Energy is Unmatched’

Cars started lining First Street at Columbia Avenue as early as 7 a.m. Saturday, the license plates along the queue as diverse as the Pomona community that the precious cargo inside the vehicles would soon join.

Hundreds of new students moved into their residence halls with the help of dozens of residential advisors and Pomona staff members.

Bailey Williams ’26, a computer science and politics double major from Dallas, Texas, was among the cohort of residential advisors outside Lyon Court offloading suitcases, appliances and furniture by the trunkload.

“The energy is unmatched,” he said. “Everyone’s excited to see the new class.”

With most new students moved in by noon, families shared a meal at Frank Dining Hall before students met with members of the Orientation Team, their resident advisors or their sponsors to make first connections with the Pomona community.

The Class of 2029 took a group photo on the steps of Carnegie Hall in the afternoon, then did the traditional “Through the Gates” walk with President G. Gabrielle Starr.

Starr, who returned to her post last month after a spring sabbatical, addressed the

first-years later in the evening, before a “Boba Break” at Harwood Pergola to cap off the day.

In total, 423 first-year students and 30 transfer students are joining Pomona this fall.

For Williams, the hustle and bustle of Move-In Day rekindled fond memories of his first days at Pomona.

“My advice to new students is [that] there’s a lot of things to get into, and you’ll find yourself and your place at Pomona eventually,” Williams said. “So take your time and take advantage of every opportunity that comes your way.” [PCM](#)



It’s a familiar refrain heard across dinner tables, holiday gatherings and comment threads: “*Back in my day...*” Every generation seems to carry a version of this lament—the notion that they had it tougher or that life was more demanding. Whether it’s holding down a job at 16 or walking to school uphill both ways, the past tends to wear a nostalgia filter, painted in hues of grit and resilience.

While there’s some truth to the idea that the challenges of youth are universal, in 2025 it’s safe to say that there are some pretty unique complexities ahead for folks born in the last 30 years (i.e. the elder “Gen Z” Zoomers, and the younger “Alphas”). The next generation is in the midst of navigating a thorny landscape littered with issues like loneliness, climate anxiety, skyrocketing housing costs, an AI-disrupted job market and political polarization.

This issue aims to explore the realities, hopes and hurdles of those coming into adulthood today, with a particular focus on the three topics of work-life, parenting and mental health. We delve into the future of office work and how young professionals are questioning hustle culture and demanding purpose alongside their paychecks; we talk to experts about how financial stress and shifting cultural expectations have made younger generations less likely to have kids; and we confront the ongoing mental health reckoning that has involved evolving conversations around self-care and seeking therapeutic support.

As we turn the page of this issue, we invite you to set aside the nostalgia and listen to the stories of those growing into adulthood at a time unlike any other. While every generation thinks they had it hardest, it just might be true that *this one* has it different—and is rising to meet it in extraordinary ways.

—Adam Conner-Simons ’08
editor-in-chief



Dear Pomona community,
I’m very excited to have joined Pomona as its new Chief Communications Officer (CCO) this July.

I bring over two decades of strategic communications leadership to the College, and most recently served as Assistant Vice President of Executive and Community Communications at the University of Southern California (USC). I know Pomona to be a remarkable institution whose faculty and administration put student belonging, experience and success at the heart of every endeavor. I feel very fortunate for this opportunity to lead our talented Communications team and help tell Pomona’s story.

More than anything, I’m looking forward to collaborating with our gifted academic community on a host of important initiatives and showing the enduring value of the liberal arts in shaping the next generation of leaders, scholars, artists and engaged citizens.

As a newcomer to the Pomona community, I know that your support and input will be an invaluable ingredient to my team’s success. Your ideas and feedback will always be welcome and I hope you won’t hesitate to reach out!

—Eric Abelev
chief communications officer



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Robyn Norwood (“Is Gen Z Getting Off the Corporate Ladder?”) was PCM’s editor from 2022 to 2024. She also was a sportswriter for the *Los Angeles Times* for more than 20 years and was inducted into the U.S. Basketball Writers Association Hall of Fame in 2014.

Chris Quirk (“Book Talk: Lessons in Leadership”) has taught at Hofstra University and St. John’s University, and has more than 20 years experience writing for colleges and universities, including Dartmouth College and Harvey Mudd College.

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POMONA COLLEGE
is an independent liberal arts college located in Claremont, California. Established in 1887, it is the founding member of The Claremont Colleges.

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FSC MARK





‘Through the Gates’ with President Starr

This fall I have come back to campus after an energizing and much appreciated sabbatical. I’m looking forward to working with the entire community as we begin this new academic year together.

Sabbatical leave is one of the important ways Pomona encourages great scholarship and, in turn, the exceptional teaching for which we are renowned. It is a gift of time to study intensively and keep the light of learning glowing brightly.

During my sabbatical I had the opportunity to work on my next book, which is about why human beings need beauty. I don’t think that beauty is icing on the cake of human experience; it is part of who we are and how we learn.

Beauty leads us on in our explorations of the world around us. The products of our creativity—from paintings and poems to buildings and even tools—are records of what we have learned about the world and how we have learned it. Our symphonies are explorations of the world of sound; they are products of feeling, too, but they are also markers of collective yearning, loving and living.

It is easy, as a college president, to be fully caught up in pressing day-to-day issues, and I truly love serving the College and our community. I’m glad to be back on campus,

living and loving our collective life. But, having an opportunity to focus for a time on my intellectual curiosity connected me closely once again with the heart of Pomona—our commitment to lifelong learning.

Students choose Pomona because they, too, are curious. So many elect to double major because it’s simply too hard to narrow their attention to just one discipline. And our faculty come here because there is no place better to discover, create, imagine and learn alongside each other and our incredible students.

I am grateful to the Board of Trustees and to Bob Gaines, who stepped in as Acting President, for this period of time to once again experience the life of scholarship and strengthen my kinship with our learning community. Bob’s steady, thoughtful and optimistic leadership was wonderful to see. I appreciate so much his willingness to take on the role and the expert way in which he guided the College toward the fulfillment of our mission.

Now, as we begin a new academic year, it is important that we as a community find ways to be a place of calm amidst the winds of discord and division that are currently buffeting our nation and our world. Pomona brings together people with different backgrounds, cultures, worldviews and passions. We have so much to learn from each other, ideas and imaginings

that can enrich each of our lives. The key is learning to listen, not just with our ears, but with our hearts and our full attention.

On the first day of orientation I walked, as is tradition, through the gates with our newest students. When I met with them later in our beautiful Center for Athletics, Recreation and Wellness, I encouraged them to look around at their classmates. These are the people, I reminded them, who will become their teammates and friends, not just for now, but perhaps for life. I encouraged them to pay attention to and care for each other on the journey they will share at Pomona. I ended with a quote from Apollo astronaut Rusty Schweickart that I think is apt for us all: “We’re not passengers on Spaceship Earth,” he said. “We’re the crew.” (And then, of course, I said it again in Klingon.) Whatever languages we speak, whatever creeds we hold dear, and wherever we go, we Sagehens will shape our future together, and that makes me very proud.

Pomona College has been making an outsized contribution to Spaceship Earth for more than 100 years because of the strength of our community. I eagerly anticipate building on that in the year ahead.

—G. Gabrielle Starr
President

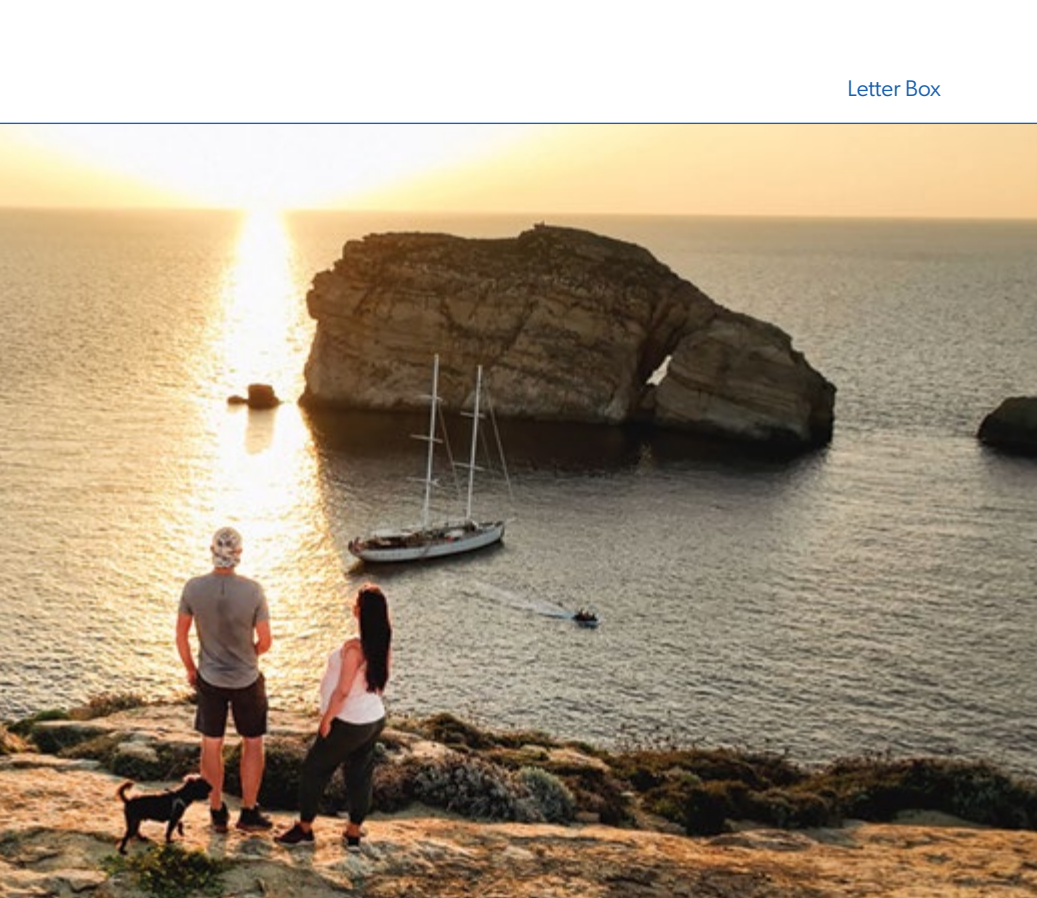
Come Sail Away

Perhaps it was because three of my grandparents were born in England, the fourth, an eighth great grandfather, born there quite long ago, or due to my dad and his father being in the Navy, I became interested in ancestry and boats. Over the last 25 years I’ve built several small wooden boats, and through that made several friends and organized many ‘Messabouts’.

Over the past decade I’ve been watching lots of YouTube videos on wooden boats and those that sail them, which led in time to videos of couples sailing wooden and fiberglass boats all over the globe for years at a time.

It was thus with great excitement that I read about “Project Atticus” in the Spring 2025 *Pomona College Magazine*. I’d not heard of this channel before, but I will now enjoy binge-watching the past decade of these videos, and any upcoming videos as well!

—Steve Lansdowne ’71



Prompts of Fond Memories

As a former editor of *Pomona College Magazine*, I read each issue with interest. The Spring 2025 obituaries have prompted some special memories of four people:

Perdita Sheirich was an unsung hero of the College; her myriad notes regarding births, professional and personal achievements, and obituaries captured, preserved and celebrated the fabric of the campus community for decades.

Gordon Hazlitt ’54 was a legendary editor of *PCM* when I arrived in 1984. He was one of several editors with whom I had the pleasure of working (Christine Kopitzke ’75, Dennis Rodkin ’83, Tom Wood, Mark Wood).

And finally, let’s remember parents and grandparents who are often unappreciated. The late **Peter and Winky Hussey** (parents of Duncan Hussey ’13) helped support athletics at Pomona, funding facilities and nearly single-handedly organizing tailgate parties before and after football games. They were tireless advocates and supporters of the College.

All four, in different ways, contributed mightily.

—Don Pattison
Pomona, California

Remembrances from the Golden Age

I was alarmed to find nothing in the Spring issue from my ’56 classmates. I miss knowing who is still around and what they are about. At 90, I would enjoy any bits about fellow aged lives. I have memories of the ’50s that are laughable now—Stinky’s hamburgers! May Queen! Gracious Living! I waited on tables at dinners. Are there still served dinners? My life is limited now, of course, to reading, writing a column for a local paper here in small-town Arizona, and musing about the meaning of life. I’m shorter and fatter and am married to my third husband. I don’t miss my teaching or my ministry, but I do miss my departed friends, like **Ann Williams ’56** with whom I had wonderful trips and many laughs.

—Elaine Stoppel Jordan ’56

Correction

Friends, on page 8 of the Spring 2025 *PCM*, you identify 1982 commencement speaker Bill Bradley as a New York senator. Although “Dollar Bill” starred for the New York Knicks, he represented New Jersey in the Senate.

—Steve Johnson ’82

Write to Us at PCM

Pomona College Magazine welcomes brief letters to the editor about the magazine and issues related to the College from the extended Pomona community—alumni, parents, students, faculty, staff, donors and others with a strong connection to the College. Write to us at pcm@pomona.edu or mail a letter to *Pomona College Magazine*, 550 N. College Ave., Claremont, CA 91711. Letters should include the writer’s name, city and state of residence, class year for alumni and contact information. With rare exceptions, letters should be no more than 400 words in length. Letters are selected for publication based on relevance and available space and are subject to being edited for brevity and clarity.

Shark Mutulili '25 Earns Pomona's First Rhodes Scholarship in 20+ Years

By Lorraine Wu Harry '97

This spring Shark Mutulili '25, a public policy analysis major with a politics focus, was awarded a Rhodes Scholarship. The prestigious international fellowship is awarded to about 100 students each year, 32 from the United States and the rest from countries across the world.

Mutulili was one of two students awarded the Rhodes Scholarship for Kenya. A Nairobi native, she is Pomona's 13th Rhodes Scholar, second-ever female recipient and first since Peter Chiarelli '03.

The oldest fellowship award in the world, the Rhodes covers all expenses to study at the University of Oxford for two or more years. Mutulili plans to pursue a Master of Public Policy at Oxford before returning back home to Kenya long-term.

Her ultimate hope is to "shape better systems to see the dignity in every human being," she says.

When Mutulili learned she was one of 10 finalists for the Kenya award, she had to quickly make travel arrangements to fly to Kenya in less than a week for the final interview—a flight made possible by Pomona's Office of the President. The day after the interview, while preparing to head to the airport, she received a congratulatory

phone call. "I was jumping up and down," she says. "I was in complete shock."

Mutulili served as Pomona's 2025 senior class president, leading committees to improve student life and foster community on campus.

"I wanted to serve and to understand the way people think, the things that bring them joy and the challenges they've gone through," she says. "I've tried my best for this to be a senior year worth remembering."

Her senior thesis focuses on comprehensive sex education to prevent gender-based violence against adolescent girls and women in Kenya. She looks at tribal knowledge, traditions and practices as well as colonial histories of education to understand how gender biases and power imbalances affect the policies that are created.

"Shark stands out at Pomona for her joyous spirit and her thoughtful and caring engagement across differences, whether of opinion, identity or discipline," says President G. Gabrielle Starr. "We at Pomona are so proud of her and thrilled for her to take advantage of these new opportunities at Oxford."

As a recently announced Napier Initiative Fellow, Mutulili will continue her work to improve living conditions for children and mothers in two rural prisons in Kenya, providing for immediate needs such as baby food, diapers and cots as well as working toward long-term goals such as improving sanitation, providing water tanks and creating child care spaces.

One of the first people Mutulili told about the Rhodes Scholarship was her academic advisor David Menefee-Libey, whom she says has been a staunch supporter at Pomona.

"Every time I talk with Shark, I learn about yet another amazing thing she's been in the middle of," says Menefee-Libey, the William A. Johnson Professor of Government. "And through all that she remains a kind and joyful person. I can't wait to see what she does next." [PCM](#)

Celebrating 20 Years of QuestBridge

This year Pomona is celebrating 20 years of partnership with QuestBridge, a national nonprofit that connects exceptional, low-income youth with leading colleges. Through the QuestBridge National College Match college and scholarship application process, Pomona offers a number of College Match scholarships annually that cover the full cost of tuition, room and board and are loan-free.

"The access to college that QuestBridge provides is closely aligned with our mission statement at Pomona College to gather individuals, regardless of financial circumstances," says Edward Pickett III, senior associate dean of admissions and director of recruitment.

Pomona has also hosted QuestBridge-related events such as the National College Admissions Conference, where QuestBridge participants can learn about the college admissions process and meet with admissions staff from partner colleges. This year there are 25 QuestBridge scholars at Pomona. Here's a snapshot of a couple of them!



Illinois native **Bayarmaa Bat-Erdene '26** credits QuestBridge for making her college experience. She says that her parents, who emigrated from Mongolia, worked really hard to get her to Pomona, and wants to make sure that her parents' "contributions and efforts were worth it." Bat-Erdene is studying sociology and public policy analysis, thinking closely about issues like income and immigration. Reading the book *The Maid's Daughter* for a class, she was able to compare it to her own experience as her mom worked as a housekeeper for a time.

Peter Schwammlein '26 was drawn to Pomona for the Claremont Colleges consortium, the liberal arts education, and students he had met through the QuestBridge network. Raised in Fayetteville, Arkansas, Schwammlein is majoring in linguistics and considering double majoring in German Studies. Schwammlein has especially enjoyed the students at Pomona. "People are willing to listen to other perspectives," he says. "The school pulls deep-thinking people that can see multiple sides and are not fully set on their ideology." [PCM](#)



The 2025 Wig Distinguished Professor Awards

Seven faculty members—including five first-time honorees—were bestowed at Commencement with Wig Distinguished Professor Awards, recognizing their excellence in teaching, commitment to students, and service to the College and the community.

Presented annually since 1955, the awards involve anonymous votes from Pomona juniors and seniors that are then confirmed by a committee of trustees, faculty and students.

Malachai Bandy is an assistant professor of music who plays some 20 different instruments spanning more than 800 years of music history. His expertise includes viola da gamba technique, history and iconography; historical performance practice; and 17th-century North-German music.

Mietek P. Boduszyński is an associate professor of politics and expert on U.S. foreign policy, democratization, post-conflict stabilization, Eastern Europe and the Balkans, and the Middle East and North Africa.

J Finley is an associate professor of Africana studies whose research looks at Black women's history, performance and cultural expression, and the performative and political efficacy of Black women's humor and comedy.

Frances M. Hanzawa, an associate professor of biology who's been at Pomona

for 30+ years, conducts diverse research in ecology, evolution, plant ecology, genetic and demographic consequences of seed dispersal and plant-animal interactions.

Tom Le is an associate professor of politics with expertise in Japanese security policy, the U.S.-Japan alliance, military and security balance in East Asia and East Asia regionalism.

M. Bilal Nasir is an assistant professor of Asian American studies whose research interests include policing and surveillance, critical race studies, secularism, social movements, science and technology, and anthropology of Muslims and Islam.

Shahriar Shahriari is the William Polk Russell Professor of Mathematics and Statistics and now a six-time Wig Award recipient, with expertise in combinatorics of posets, extremal set theory, finite group theory, representation theory of finite groups and surreal numbers. [PCM](#)



From left, Pomona Professors Shahriar Shahriari, Malachai Bandy, Frances M. Hanzawa and J Finley

Students Help Curate New Benton Exhibition

By Lorraine Wu Harry '97

As a teaching institution, the Benton Museum of Art strives to cultivate rigorous collaboration with the Pomona community—a philosophy borne out by this spring’s exhibit on “Black Ecologies in Contemporary American Art.” The show explores relationships among Black people, land and the environment, and features a variety of student contributions curated by J Finley, associate professor of Africana studies; Cherene Sherrard-Johnson, E. Wilson Lyon Professor of the Humanities and chair of the English Department; and Victoria Sancho Lobis, the Sarah Rempel and Herbert S. Rempel ’23 Director of the Benton Museum of Art and associate professor of art history.

As longtime collaborators with the Benton, Finley and Sherrard-Johnson often bring their classes for showings curated specifically for them. Sancho Lobis had the idea in 2023 to create this latest exhibition, inspired by Sherrard-Johnson’s Black Ecologies course. “[The class] is very much about the body within the environment and the kind of porous boundaries between the two,” says Sherrard-Johnson. “It’s about how the social and political, as well as climate change, impact the health and flourishing of bodies in those spaces.” This past fall, Finley’s class—Unruly Bodies: Black Womanhood in Popular Culture—explored images of Black women across popular culture, while Sherrard-Johnson’s course—Race, Gender, and the



Faculty Cherene Sherrard-Johnson and J Finley in front of the recent exhibit

Environment (co-taught with Aimee Bahng, associate professor of gender and women’s studies)—took an intersectional approach to environmental studies. Students from both classes visited the Benton vaults to help select works for the exhibition that spanned a range of mediums, including photographs, paintings and sculptures. Reflecting on the experience, Amirah Lockett ’28 says, “I was able to combine my love for art with what I learned from the course and the artworks themselves: appreciating the artists’ different experiences and how they represent those experiences through their work.”

In addition to being part of the curatorial process, the students created most of the object labels—texts that provide information about the objects on display. Both Finley and Sherrard-Johnson assigned label writing assignments in their classes, and Finley also organized a workshop on label writing by Brittany Webb, a curator at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts. “My main objective was to create a narrative that I felt truly conveyed the history, emotions and culture of the Black experience,” says Taylor Parks ’27. Isaiah Dawson ’26 adds, “Co-writing a label for one of the pieces in the exhibit deepened my engagement with the historical themes of the artworks.”

After months of preparation, Sherrard-Johnson says she was “very emotional” seeing the show for the first time. Finley also was appreciative of the opportunity to curate an exhibit with her students. “One thing I really like to do in my classes is have a creative component,” says Finley. “But I had never done something like involving them in the creation of an exhibition. I always tell the class, ‘We’re not just consuming the knowledge.’ This was an opportunity for us to put that into action.” [PCM](#)



Crunching the Numbers: A Pomona Tech Timeline

By Adam Conner-Simons '08

In the fall of 2024, Pomona launched a minor in data science. To commemorate the new concentration, let’s look back at some of the College’s milestones in computer science and technology.

- 1958:** Five years after first offering “computer classes” for word processing, Pomona opens Millikan Laboratory, its first computer lab, which included a Heathkit analog computer and the Bendix G-15 digital computer. One of about 400 manufactured globally, the Bendix was the size of a refrigerator, required punched paper tape to load instructions and data, and had “memory” in the form of a rotating drum the size of a wastebasket.
- 1964:** As part of the launch of the Seaver North science building, Pomona is one of the first U.S. schools to buy an IBM System/360 computer, which eager Assembly- and Fortran-learning undergrads used for work in chemistry, economics, geology and math. *The Student Life* newspaper marveled at how a unit the size of a cigar box could contain the computer’s entire memory of 16,000 bytes; today’s smartphones are roughly 16,000,000 times more robust.
- 1971:** The Mudd-Blaisdell residence hall is outfitted with a PDP-10 mainframe, immediately sparking the interest of first-year Don Daglow ’74, who used the computer to create several early video games, including what’s widely regarded as the world’s first “role-playing game,” which was a text-based game adapted from the then-new “Dungeons & Dragons” tabletop game.

- 1980:** Five years after purchasing IBM’s second-ever 5100 minicomputer, Pomona becomes the first educational institution to own and operate an IBM 4331, which opened students up to being able to use email.
- 1988:** The Mudd Science Library installs a VAX 6310, which permits the linking of computers to the other 5Cs, thereby introducing students to resources such as the internet. That same year Pomona and several other schools launched the Science, Technology and Society program.
- 1991:** The first two computer science majors graduate from Pomona. Computer science split off from math to become a separate department in 2006, and is now one of the College’s most popular majors.
- 2000:** Pomona launches the Andrew Science Hall for Mathematics, Physics and Computer Science—the first time there was a dedicated space for computer science as an academic discipline. By 1997, Pomona also had become one of the first colleges to hook up every single bedroom in its dormitories to a 56K network connection for internet use.
- 2014:** Pomona is named the country’s “most wired college” by the higher-education review platform Unigo, which previously cited Pomona’s innovation in being one of the country’s first colleges to provide Wi-Fi connectivity to all of its dorms. [PCM](#)



Pomona College Magazine



1958: Bendix G-15



1967: Programmer Bea Cooley in the Millikan Lab. Image courtesy Honnold Mudd Library



1971 Daglow coding in his Mudd-Blaisdell dorm room



1988: VAX 6310

In Search of the First Lights That Lit Up the Cosmic Night

By Marilyn Thomsen

Erica Nelson ’08 is aiming beyond the stars, to the origin story of the universe. Thanks to the 2021 launch of the James Webb Space Telescope, Nelson is taking pictures of the very first galaxies to learn what the universe was like at the beginning of time.

That quest has landed the University of Colorado-Boulder assistant professor of astrophysics on CBS’s *60 Minutes* and NPR’s *Science Friday*—and on an episode of the Pomona College podcast *Sagecast*, where she and her undergraduate mentor, Philip Choi, associate professor of physics and astronomy, explained the paradigm-shifting potential of what she and her colleagues have discovered.



How Pomona developed her interest: I remember my first astrophysics classes and being absolutely blown away by the scale of the universe and the incredibly complex physical processes that rule the universe on large scales. **We can use powerful telescopes to effectively look back in time.** As a kid I found that concept so mind-blowing that I couldn’t imagine spending my days thinking about anything else.

One of my favorite Pomona memories solidified that I wanted to teach and help the next generation. We had a computer programming assignment for Philip Choi’s class, and it was awful because I was so bad at coding. But Phil took the time to work through it with me until midnight. It was such an act of kindness and really launched me on my journey.

Her research focus: I’m looking for new methods to understand how galaxies and black holes form and evolve. Powerful telescopes like the Webb allow us to see really, really great distances. That means we can see light that’s been traveling for almost the entire age of the universe, from close to the beginning of time itself. We’re able to see how the universe and the galaxies in it evolved, and that allows us to piece together their origin story.

Finding a surprise in Webb images: When the first images were released, the most surprising thing we saw was these objects that were very, very red. They had been completely invisible to the Hubble Telescope. We had to use all of the physics and astrophysics we knew to try to infer what those objects were. They are incredibly far away, close to the beginning of the universe. Yet the masses we inferred for them were even more massive than our Milky Way galaxy is now. **According to our theories, the universe shouldn’t have had enough time to form things that were that massive that early.** It was surprising and stunning and, if true, upends our views of how the first cosmic structures formed in the early universe.



Galaxy cluster Abell S1063. Courtesy European Space Agency

The reaction of the astronomy community: There have been hundreds of papers on these [red] objects, and we are still figuring out what they are. One of the things that is surprising is that some of the most luminous objects in the universe are actually “supermassive black holes” [upward of 10 billion times the size of the sun]. There are some theories that can explain some components of the light we’re seeing from these objects as growing, supermassive black holes of a type we’ve never seen before.

The reason black holes can be so luminous is that when mass falls into a black hole, an immense amount of gravitational energy is released. Some fraction of that energy can be converted into light we see in the form of accretion disks around the objects and in these black holes blowing out enormous jets. They show up in different ways, but the reason they are so luminous is because there is so much energy available from matter falling into them. **The astrophysics community is completely undecided on what these objects are.** They are a complete mystery that we’re still working very hard to solve it.

(Wide) open problems that remain: A long-standing problem in extragalactic astrophysics is that at the center of every massive galaxy is a supermassive black hole, and we do not know how it got there.

One of the possibilities ... is a direct collapse black hole. Most black holes are the end product of the evolution of stars, which are powered by nuclear fusion. Once the [stars] have used up all of their fuel, they no longer have anything to support them against the immense force of gravity, and they collapse. If they are massive enough, there is nothing that can prevent them from collapsing into black holes.

But that only gets you to black holes that are on the scale of the mass of a star. The thing we need at the center of these galaxies is black holes that are millions to billions of times the mass of a star. It’s the subject of a lot of debate how you actually get a black hole that massive.

One of the possibilities for some of this light we’re seeing in the very early universe—which we’ve recently found evidence for—is the formation of a supermassive black hole directly from a cloud of gas without forming any stars. They look like stars, but instead of being powered by nuclear fusion, they are powered by growing supermassive black holes inside of them.

These are very strange objects. Understanding them is still very much a work in progress. It’s challenging, but not impossible, to truly understand the formation of the first lights that lit up the cosmic night. [PCM](#)



This interview has been edited for length and clarity. Listen to the full interview in Season 7 of the *Sagecast* Podcast: pomona.edu/sagecast.



Amped by the Sun: Musician Alums Charge Ahead with Annual Solar Fest

By Adam Conner-Simons ’08

Rock festivals like Coachella require massive resources and, thus, end up with enormous carbon footprints. Coachella’s 600,000 daily attendees translate into an estimated net total of 700,000 gallons of diesel over two weekends—or enough gas to power 1,250 cars for an entire year.

Merritt Graves ’20 and **Skylar Funk ’10** have spent the better part of a decade trying to play a role in minimizing concerts’ environmental impacts: 2026 will mark the 10th anniversary of their Sunstock Solar Festival, a California-based nonprofit indie-rock festival powered by multiple solar generators. The festival has drawn major rock bands like Ra Ra Riot and Wavves, as well as cumulative crowds of thousands over the years at locations such as Los Angeles and University of California at Berkeley.

Graves, who was in Funk’s class year but officially graduated 10 years later, met Funk in Pomona’s environmental analysis program. The duo spent much of their college years participating in climate activism and playing music, including in their band Trapdoor Social, which toured with The B-52s and just signed their first record deal.

In 2013, they used crowdfunding proceeds to put solar panels on the roof of the L.A. nonprofit Homeboy Industries, which works with former gang members and ex-convicts. Two years later, they invested

in a solar-paneled touring trailer outfitted with a 3.5-kilowatt inverter to power their subwoofers, speakers, amps, instruments and LED lights—which set the stage for not just Sunstock Solar Festival, but participation in environmental rallies like Youth Climate Strike Los Angeles.

This spring, Funk graduated with a master’s degree in popular music teaching and learning from the USC Thornton School of Music. During his time at USC, Funk found his way into its Student Sustainability Committee, and in his second year, worked as its graduate co-chair.

“Sky takes a collaborative, open-minded approach in his interactions with stakeholders, which ensures the students’ perspective is heard,” Chief Sustainability Officer Mick Dalrymple recently told *USC Today*. “He also leads students to propose well-researched solutions rather than taking the simpler route of voicing concerns. Through this added value, along with demonstrating persistence, Sky helps the students earn respect and accomplish their long-term sustainability goals.”

Graves is now a fiction writer, while Funk hopes to continue to integrate sustainability themes into his music teaching. As he told *USC Today*, “I’m in search of kernels of wisdom and knowledge that we can use to find that magical recipe for [climate] action.” [PCM](#)

100 Years of the 7 Colleges

By Marilyn Thomsen

The year was 1925, and Pomona College had a problem: too many students wanted to enroll. The solution it kick-started a century ago this fall set the stage for The Claremont Colleges, an educational system unmatched in American higher education—and it all began with then-President James Blaisdell’s audacious idea.

In the “roaring ’20s,” Southern California’s population was exploding. Within a 60-mile radius of Claremont, the population doubled in just six years. The attractiveness of Pomona was so strong that by 1926, only one in four applicants gained admission. Clearly, the college needed to expand. But how to do so without becoming, as 1907 alumnus and Rhodes Scholar E.H. Kennard warned in a 1925 article in *The Pomona College Quarterly Magazine*, “one more drab university”?

In Oxford, a university eight centuries older than Pomona, President Blaisdell saw a possible model for the future: a collection of small colleges that share some common facilities while each maintains its own independence and identity. “I should hope to preserve the inestimable personal values of the small college while securing the facilities of the great university,” he wrote.

By 1925, what became known as the Group Plan was quickly taking shape in the minds of Blaisdell and other leaders—some of whose names are now etched in stone across campus. Among them were George Marston, Ellen Browning Scripps and William L. Honnold. In March 1925 Blaisdell gave a trustee-appointed committee his summary of the Group Plan. His right-hand man, Robert J. Bernard, took an all-night train to Sacramento to file articles of incorporation for the new educational enterprise on October 14, 1925, exactly 38 years to the day after Pomona itself was incorporated.

The new entity, says Brenda Barham Hill, who served as CEO of The Claremont Colleges consortium from 2000 to 2006, had three main functions. It would provide common services, hold land on behalf of the group and offer graduate education.

With tuition set at \$150 per semester and seminars offered in 14 fields, including geology, Latin, psychology and zoology, classes began



in 1926 at the clunkily named Graduate School of Claremont Colleges, known since 2000 as Claremont Graduate University (CGU). That same year the inaugural class of first-years was admitted to a new Claremont college named after Scripps, a philanthropist and supporter of education and women’s rights whose fortune was tied to the E.W. Scripps newspaper publishing empire. An ardent advocate of Blaisdell’s vision, she made multiple real estate purchases that became a significant part of the footprint for Scripps, CGU and three additional new colleges.

The end of World War II saw a flood of returning GIs ready to continue their education, and The Claremont Colleges were poised to admit them. The next 20 years saw the launch of three more colleges, including Claremont Men’s College (1946, later renamed Claremont McKenna College), Harvey Mudd (1957) and Pitzer (1963).

Thanks to Ms. Scripps’ foresight and real estate prowess, the colleges are almost entirely contiguous, minus Keck Graduate Institute located west of Indian Hill Boulevard. One easily walkable square mile—these days often biked, scootered or skateboarded—is now home to roughly 9,000 students, 3,000 faculty and staff, and nearly 3.2 million square feet of building space. The central library is the third largest among private institutions in California, behind only Stanford and USC.

Blending the vision and needs of seven distinct institutions that are at once partners and competitors has required informal collaboration and formal agreements hammered out over many decades. Sharing



The Central Pacific Railroad passenger depot in Sacramento, where Robert J. Bernard filed the articles of incorporation for Claremont Colleges. [Credit California State Railroad Museum Library]



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services, from an early steam-heating plant to sophisticated modern cloud-computing clusters, has occasionally required challenging negotiation and a recognition of the importance of “group over the individual.” As Blaisdell put it, “The whole project depends upon whether the participants are primarily interested in their separate organizations or, first of all, concerned in the creation at Claremont of a common and efficient center....”

And yet, a century in, the experiment shoulders on. The consortium has been modified over the years: graduate education, once the purview of all the colleges, is now housed in two distinct consortium members, and individual schools can choose to participate in some shared services but not others, with procedural guidelines and formulas in place to promote fairness. “Part of the genius of the model from day one was that they saw the benefit of sharing, and that it’s not static,” says Barham Hill.

Blaisdell would no doubt marvel at how his idea has flourished in what’s now called the “City of Trees and Ph.D.s.” When he became Pomona’s president in 1910, Claremont had no paved streets and Marston Quad was still a rye field. Now the colleges have collectively graduated about 100,000 alumni, and all five of the colleges are among the most highly ranked liberal arts schools in the country.

Yet Blaisdell would likely not be surprised. As he wrote to Scripps in 1923, “all I can hope to do is to draw the outlines of a project so fine and yet so sane that the generations will not suffer it to fail.” [PCM](#)

The Claremont Colleges: A Timeline

1924: With the greater Claremont population close to doubling, Pomona’s board sets up a committee to consider expansion by way of other institutions

Spring 1925: President Blaisdell gives the committee “A Preliminary Statement for Consideration by the Committee on Future Organization”

Fall 1925: Articles of incorporation are filed in Sacramento by Robert J. Bernard, on the 38th anniversary of the College’s founding. Claremont Graduate School (CGS) is incorporated on the same day.

1926: Scripps College is founded

1927: CGS opens

1931: Construction finishes on Bridges Auditorium

1946: Claremont Men’s College founded (renamed Claremont McKenna in 1981)

1952: Honnold Library dedicated

1954: Claremont becomes the new home of what’s now the California Botanic Garden, the state’s largest garden of native plants (70,000+)

1957: Harvey Mudd College opens

1963: Pitzer College is founded

1997: Keck Graduate Institute established

2000: CGS becomes a separate entity within the consortium and is re-named Claremont Graduate University (CGU)

2025: 7C enrollment hits roughly 9,000 students, with combined alumni of around 100,000

James Blaisdell, 1925



Scripps College seal: La Semeuse by Lee Lawrie



Ellen Browning Scripps



Bridges Auditorium Construction

Featured in the May 1954 Pomona College Bulletin: “NEW SIGNS have been placed at the entrances to the city of Claremont...”



Honnold Library



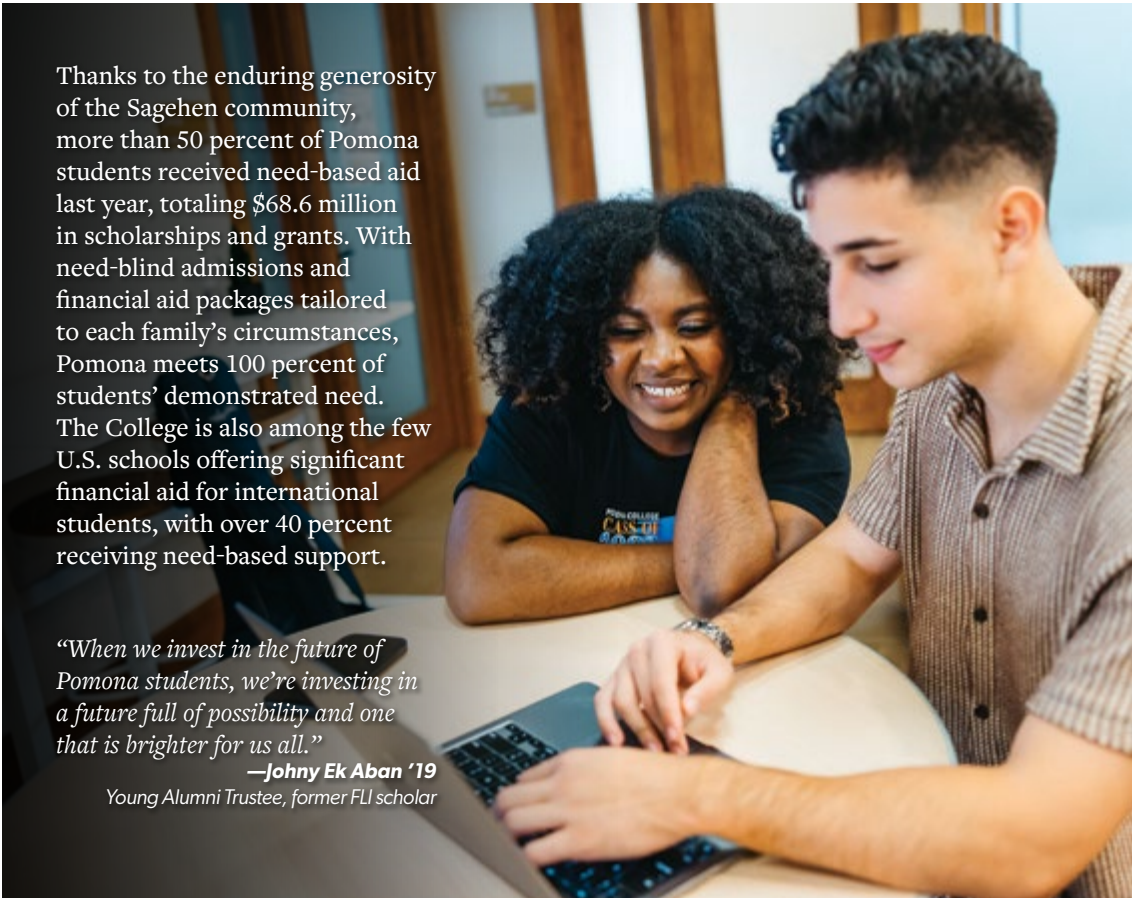
Sagehens Step Up: A Historic Fundraising Year for Pomona

For the second consecutive year, the Pomona College community has come together to support our students and faculty at unprecedented levels—surpassing all fundraising benchmarks in the College’s history.

More than 7,900 alumni, families and friends gave a record \$82.8 million in gifts and pledges, bolstering Pomona’s transformative liberal arts education and the Sagehen student experience. That’s a 45 percent increase, or \$25.6 million more, than fiscal year 2024’s historic fundraising total of \$57.2 million.

“The strength of Pomona comes from the people who believe in the College and our mission—and in our collective power to shape the world,” says Pomona College President G. Gabrielle Starr. “I am deeply grateful for the support of our community, which nurtures student growth, fuels faculty innovation and fosters an environment where meaningful learning and discovery thrive.”

Here are a few ways Sagehen support makes a difference at Pomona.



Thanks to the enduring generosity of the Sagehen community, more than 50 percent of Pomona students received need-based aid last year, totaling \$68.6 million in scholarships and grants. With need-blind admissions and financial aid packages tailored to each family’s circumstances, Pomona meets 100 percent of students’ demonstrated need. The College is also among the few U.S. schools offering significant financial aid for international students, with over 40 percent receiving need-based support.

“When we invest in the future of Pomona students, we’re investing in a future full of possibility and one that is brighter for us all.”
—Johny Ek Aban ‘19
Young Alumni Trustee, former FLL scholar



Students conducted innovative conservation research in Hawaii during spring break with Nina Karnovsky, the Willard George Halstead Zoology Professor of Biology, and Wallace Meyer, associate professor of biology. The trip was part of a semester-long course co-taught by both professors. This faculty-led study away course was one of two Global Gateway programs that Pomona piloted in 2025 to deepen students’ understanding of some of the world’s most pressing issues.

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“We give because it’s evident that every gift makes a difference, and even though our student has graduated, he is still a part of the Sagehen community. And so are we.”

—Mark Feng
proud parent of Matthew Feng ‘24
Last year, gifts from Sagehen parents and families supported student athletics, wellness programs, student research opportunities and more.



“For many athletes, the critical resources for training, team preparation, competition and recovery that the College provides make us feel like we are taken seriously and appreciated.”

—Hannah Gough ‘25
Women’s lacrosse team member, economics and international relations double major at Pomona



Read more about Sagehens making an impact at pomona.edu/stories-of-impact.

“For me, teaching is more than a profession. It’s a calling that began at Pomona. Giving back to the College through the Pomona Annual Fund, which supports student research, is a way of continuing the legacy.”

—Dr. Richard Lee ‘90
world-traveling physician, educator and humanitarian.

Last year, gifts like Dr. Lee’s supported over 200 Sagehens in the Summer Undergraduate Research Program (SURP). Pomona’s interdisciplinary curriculum ensures that physics majors like Toby Arculli ‘25, pictured here with Masha Prokopenko, visiting assistant professor of geology, gain exposure to a broad range of scientific fields.



“My Pomona experience has served me in every aspect of my life. How could I not give back to a place that has given me so much?”

—Andrew Brown ‘77
45-year consecutive Pomona Annual Fund donor, former regional chapter lead

Lessons in Leadership: Ex-College President Reflects on the Empathy in Higher Ed

By Chris Quirk

At a moment when college leaders are navigating choppy seas, Eileen Wilson-Oyelaran ’69 has written a timely analysis of university leadership that outlines what it will take to lead higher education institutions effectively in the coming decade and beyond.

The book, “*The New College President: How a Generation of Diverse Leaders Is Changing Higher Education*,” co-written with Terrence MacTaggart and published by the Johns Hopkins University Press, profiles seven university leaders and describes the skills and personal qualities they possess that have made them successful.

Few are as qualified as Wilson-Oyelaran to opine on the topic. She served as president of Kalamazoo College from 2005 to 2016, a period that included a major economic recession, and also was named as chair of the board of directors of the National Association of Independent

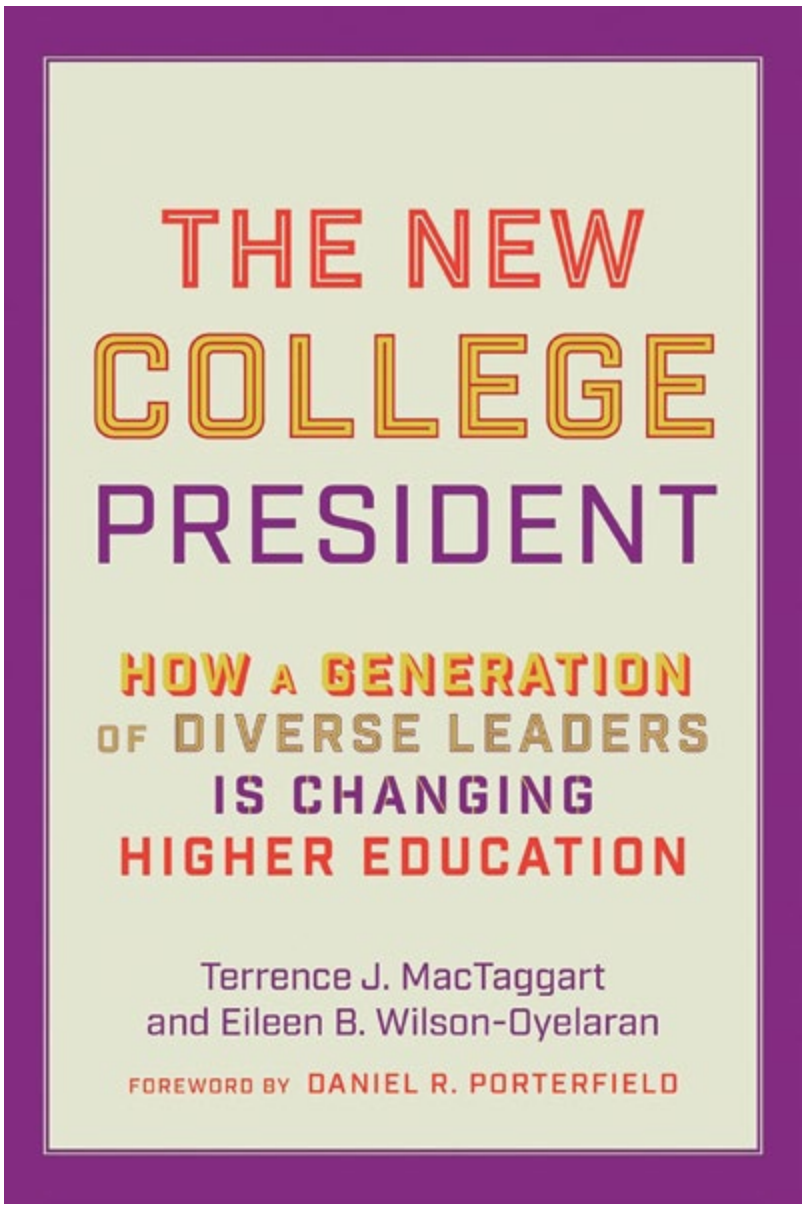
Colleges and Universities for the 2013-2014 academic year.

In the book, Wilson-Oyelaran discusses some of the major challenges facing the college and university presidency, among them high turnover rates, debilitating financial pressures and conflicting institutional strategies. For example, she says that presidents’ shorter terms may negatively impact institutions, since it generally takes time for presidents to understand school culture and garner the trust of their communities.

For Wilson-Oyelaran, that trust is more vital now than ever. “Colleges and universities are being asked to change more rapidly and more dynamically, but the ability to do that requires someone who is known and trusted, which takes time,” she says. “A leader who is embedded in the community is much more able to make the changes that are necessary right now.”

One quality that Wilson-Oyelaran and MacTaggart found in all the successful presidents they profiled was the significant adversity they faced. “Adversity gives you empathy and a great deal of resilience, which is of particular importance for leading institutions of higher education right now,” says Wilson-Oyelaran. “As the arrows get slung at you, it’s critical to be able to let them roll off and continue to move forward. You develop a sixth sense of how to keep focusing on what is of value and what to let go of.”

During her years at Pomona, Wilson-Oyelaran was a galvanizing figure who was instrumental in creating The Claremont Colleges’

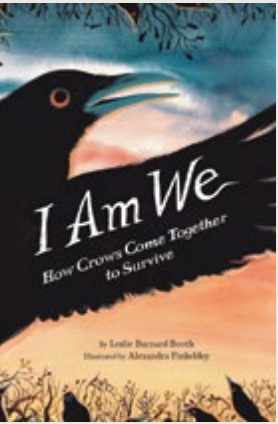


first Black Student Union in 1967 and the Black Studies Center in 1969. She says that she’s deeply encouraged by how her generation’s efforts transformed higher education, both in terms of what the student body looks like, and in the expanded breadth of the curriculum.

“When I look at Pomona today, in many ways the institution represents what we hoped to see,” she says. “It’s pretty incredible to see how the field of African American studies has flourished nationally, and to feel that I maybe did a little bit to move that forward.” [PCM](#)



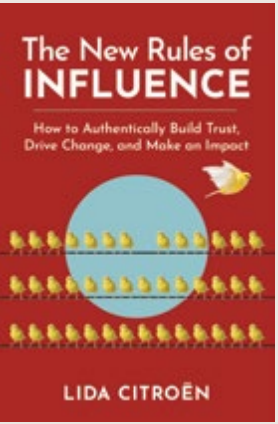
Tyler Barbour ’09 explores the intersections among Spanish literature, flamenco and the political resistance of the Franco Regime.



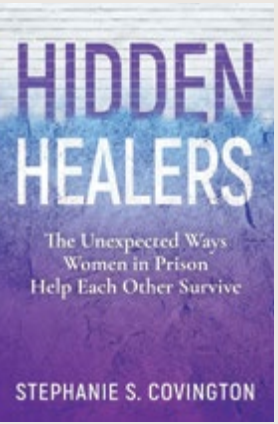
Leslie Barnard Booth ’04 delves into the mysteries of crow behavior in this lyrical informational picture book inspired by the urban crows of Portland, Oregon.



In this ethnography, **Vivian Y. Choi ’01** examines how the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami fostered new forms of governance and militarization during Sri Lanka’s decades-long civil war.



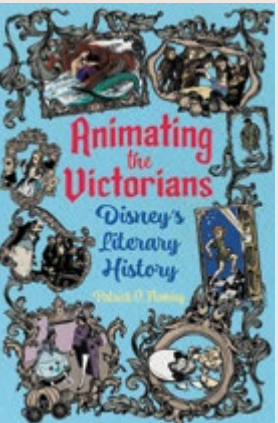
Lida Citroën ’86 guides leaders through a new paradigm of leadership in which authenticity, passion and honesty are required.



Through her experience providing therapeutic programs to prisoners, **Stephanie Covington ’64** gives readers a look inside women’s prisons along with recommendations for change.



Lian Dolan ’87 writes a modern comedy of manners in this novel about two mothers planning their children’s dream wedding in Montecito, California.



Patrick C. Fleming ’05 traces the links between the Golden Age of children’s literature and Disney films, exploring Disney’s adaptations of Victorian texts.



In this debut novel, **Christine Henneberg ’05** observes female friendship and 21st-century motherhood alongside themes of abortion and ambition.



Todd Severin ’85 crafts a medical and psychological thriller about a revolutionary medical breakthrough and the warring factions in medicine and politics to shut it down.

Book Submissions: If you’ve had a book published and would like to submit it for inclusion in Bookmarks, please send a review copy to **Lorraine Wu Harry ’97, PCM Books Editor, 550 North College Ave. Claremont, CA 91711** or email us at pcmbooks@pomona.edu.

Why have just one? For this issue’s “blurb,” we’re featuring five poems by alumni authors



Hongo poses in front of his poem, inscribed on a plaque at the Smith Campus Center

Under The Oaks At Holmes Hall, Overtaken By Rain

By Garrett Hongo ’73

A desert downpour in early spring,
and I’m standing under California oaks,
gazing through rain as the grey sky thunders.
I don’t know why the nightingale sings
to Kubla Khan and not to me, nineteen
and marked by nothing, not even ceremony
or the slash of wind tearing through trees.
I don’t know why Ishmael alone is left
to speak of the sea’s great beast, why
the ground sinks and slides against itself,
why the blue lupines will rise and quilt
through the tawny grasses on the hillsides.
I can’t explain this garment of rain on
my shoulders
or the sour cloth of my poverty unwinding
like a shroud as the giant eucalyptus
strips and sheds its grey parchments of skin
and stands mottled and nude in the
shining rains.
I want something sullen as thundering skies,
thick as earthmilk, brown and sluicing

across the streets, grievous as the flood of waters.
I want unfelt sorrows to give away and
wrought absence
to exchange for the imperfect shelter of
these oaks,
for the froth of green ivy around my feet,
for the sky without gods and the earth
without perplexity.
I want to have something like prayer to pay
or a mission to renounce as a fee
for my innocence under cloud-cover
and these furious nightingales of thunder,
companions of song in this untormented sea
of memory uncrowded with bliss or pain.

From “OCEAN OF CLOUDS: Poems.”
Reprinted by permission of the Knopf Doubleday
Publishing Group, a division of Penguin Random
House LLC. Copyright © 2025 by Garrett Hongo.
Hongo has published three books of poetry,
including “The Perfect Sound: A Memoir in
Stereo” (2022).

During Times of Trying to Forgive

By Brenda Hillman ’73

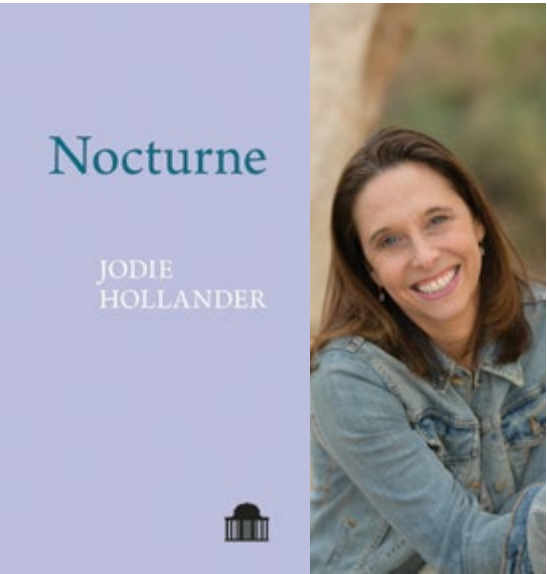
Evening deepens, Jupiter lifts
over Cetus, swaddled
in ribbons of fog. Early stars
retreat into science broth,
headlights on a hill, &
night stays calm. The source

of your hurt is tucked in.
Maybe you can’t forgive
each other yet, & who
can blame you after all
that happened, but still.
You try as a tide tries gray

again. As a friend whose body
had a tumor—whose body
has a tumor—reads in onyx light
till day. How many Mondays
will she have? Is the mystery
counting? She tries, it tries &

the ones who are almost
loved walk through the field.
Inexhaustible seeds are carried
through the field like codes
waiting to be read by air
until the ground is ready.

A Pomona College Magazine exclusive. Copyright © 2025 by Brenda Hillman. Hillman has published more than 10 books of poetry, including In a Few Minutes Before Later (2022). She’s a professor of creative writing at St. Mary’s College in California, where she holds the Olivia Filippi Chair in Poetry.



Moon

By Jodie Hollander ’99

do you ever dream
just as I do,
of having a kind of sister
with you in the sky?
To comb one another’s
milky white surfaces,
or gaze out in awe
at fierce bright stars;
just to be together
amidst the emptiness.
Or are you content
all alone up there,
hovering high above
those darkening trees,
who too must hover
above the world below,
that still somehow sparkles
with artificial lights?

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Hollander.

Hollander is the
author of My Dark
Horses (2017) and
Nocturne (2023),
which was longlisted
for the Laurel Prize
in nature writing.

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Cloud Study

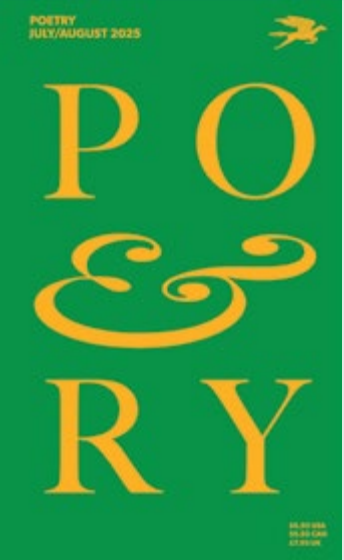
By S. Brook Corfman ’13

I believed long hair alone
would, like rain, wash
my gender away but the rain

rarely cleans, now—it misses
the spot under the tree, moves
the dirt across the street, cannot

reach into my throat or under
the car unless I open for it.

Corfman (they/them) is the author of the
poetry collections My Daily Actions, or The
Meteorites and Luxury, Blue Lace.



Night Class

By Bruce Bond ’75

We would only get so far,
given the casualties
buried in each point of view.
This one, this one, this.
To see them was to smell them.
One by one.
Then we read Wilfred Owen,
a lyric
whose anger comes later,
after the specifics.

Take this face,
how the penlight of the medic
pierces the addled eye
just so far.
In each a sky so deep
it swallows up the stars.
Take this gate,
how it chatters like a telegraph key,
and you wake afraid,
knowing so little of your subject.
The siren
in the distance is no stranger
anymore.

It is headed
for your hospital wing,
where it could be a while,
if you are waiting for your son.
We could stare at the wall
together,
as some at altars do,
where the mouths
of nocturnal flowers
open to accept,
as sacrament,
a bee across the tongue.

Poem first appeared in Poetry (July/August 2025) and is reprinted with permission. Bond has authored 37 books and poetry collections and is an Emeritus Professor at the University of North Texas.



WOMEN'S WATER POLO FOUR-PEATS AS DIVISION III NATIONAL CHAMPIONS

By Brian Whitehead

In May Pomona-Pitzer captured its fourth straight USA Water Polo Division III championship, defeating chief rival Claremont-Mudd-Scripps (CMS), 9-8, to cap another unblemished postseason run.

The four-peat sent Zosia Amberger '25 and Kaylee Stigar '25 into the sunset with the unprecedented milestone of having never lost a playoff game in blue and orange. Amberger

started in goal all four years and was named Tournament MVP this spring.

"Zosia's probably the best goalie I've had here [and] a huge part of what we've been able to do," says head coach Alex Rodriguez. "Kaylee really stepped up and played phenomenally in the finals—she had this anger and vengeance that really helped us."

As seniors, Amberger and Stigar were among the class of Sagehens that started at Pomona when students returned to campus following the initial pandemic shutdown. In that first year as Sagehens, Rodriguez says the current seniors learned much from the Class of 2022, including how to lead and handle adversity.

With as much winning as the program has done these past four years, the pressure to retain the top spot in Division III mounts, Rodriguez says.

"I have a simple philosophy that to get better, you have to play better teams," the coach adds. "Because our sport is small, we play a lot of Division I teams early in the season, and that's how we develop small goals. To be clutch, to be someone who plays well in big moments, you have to understand you're going to fail sometimes."

Despite losing Pomona grads Amberger, Stigar and a handful of seniors from Pitzer College, the Sagehens do not expect to relinquish their stranglehold on Division III women's water polo anytime soon.

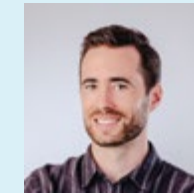
Rodriguez and associate head coach Alex La—one of the best coaches in Division III, Rodriguez says—expect leadership roles to be filled by Brienz Lang '26, Gabby Lewis '26 and Zosia's sister Mia Amberger '26, with key underclassmen continuing to develop and contribute in meaningful ways.

"The goal of every season is to try to have little championship moments every week," Rodriguez says. "We try to prepare to win certain types of games, get more feathers in our cap, then win a Division III championship by the end." [PCM](#)



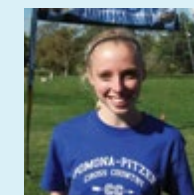
6 INDUCTED TO THE POMONA-PITZER ATHLETIC HALL OF FAME

This spring Pomona-Pitzer Athletic Hall of Fame inducted six new Sagehens!



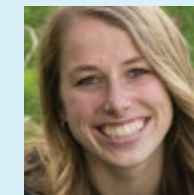
Anders Crabo '12 – Men's Track & Field

Crabo was a two-time All-American with a top-5 finish at the NCAA Championships, winning the SCIAC championship all four years of his collegiate career and setting the conference record in the steeplechase.



Annie Lydens '13 – Women's Cross Country and Track & Field

Lydens was an All-American in cross country and track and field, and remains one of the most decorated runners in Sagehens' history. She was a two-time SCIAC Cross Country Runner of the Year and is No. 10 all-time in the SCIAC in the 5K.



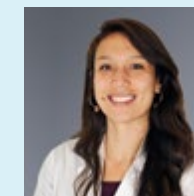
Martha Marich '12 – Lacrosse

Marich was a foundational member of the Sagehens women's lacrosse team and finished her career a three-time All-Region selection, a three-time All-SCIAC honoree, and a SCIAC Player of the Year. She is the program leader in career goals (332) and the first lacrosse player—male or female—to be inducted.



Luke Sweeney '13 – Football

Sweeney's 2011 season cemented his place in program history as he became the first Sagehen to lead the nation in rushing yards. His 1,419 rushing yards that year remains the program's single-season mark. He graduated as a three-time All-SCIAC honoree.



Alyssa Corley '11 – Softball

Corley made two All-SCIAC first teams and has set many Sagehens records, including being the program leader in home runs (35) and runs batted in (115). After graduation, she earned her medical degree at Dartmouth Medical School.



Kirk Jones – Distinguished Service for Athletic Training

Jones has mentored multiple generations of trainers after 45 years working at Pomona-Pitzer. Among the competitions for which he has served as a certified trainer: the International Swimming and Diving Championships and the Olympic Track and Field Trials. [PCM](#)

Is Gen Z Getting Off the Corporate Ladder?

By Robyn Norwood



The old career advice isn't relevant anymore.

Start in the mailroom. Get your foot in the door. Grab a rung on the ladder and start climbing.

But what if there's no actual office door, because your colleagues work remotely?

What if that mailroom is merely a metaphor in an age of electronic communications and AI-written emails?

And as for the ladder, who among us actually still stays at one company for decades, waiting for a gold watch and a pension?

"It's a totally different landscape," says **Julianna Pillemer '09**, an assistant professor of management and organizations at NYU's Stern School of Business.



Julianna Pillemer '09, an assistant professor of management and organizations at NYU's Stern School of Business



Hazel Raja, senior director of Pomona's Career Development Office (CDO)

A New Generation of Workers

Young workers inhabit a changed work world, and they bring very different attitudes than previous generations. The last of the baby boomers who dominated workplace culture for decades turned 60 last year and are moving toward retirement. A decade ago millennials became the largest generation in the U.S. workforce, surpassing Gen X. Just two years ago, the boomers were eclipsed by Gen Z, those born from 1997 to 2010.

What do young workers want? Among the key values identified in a 2023 survey directed by Georgetown University's McDonough School of Business was that workers ages 24 to 35 prioritized **flexibility** and **work-life balance**.

That rings true to **Hazel Raja**, senior director of Pomona's Career Development Office (CDO)—a Gen Xer who encouraged the office book club to read millennial author Lindsey Pollak's *The Remix: How to Lead and Succeed in the Multigenerational Workplace*, so that the CDO team could better understand both the job seekers they counsel and their own colleagues.

The Remote Work Revolution

The pandemic ushered in the era of telecommuting, but many young people who experienced the isolation of the COVID shutdown have come to crave in-person collaboration, while also appreciating the versatility of hybrid work options.

“I think there’s this feeling of wanting the best of both worlds, to have days in the office where you can connect with the community but also the flexibility to say, ‘I’m working from home today,’” Raja says.

Even after return-to-work calls following the pandemic, remote work is entrenched in many organizations. Folks with bachelor’s degrees have benefited most: 52 percent of college graduates now work remotely some or all of the time, compared to 35 percent of the overall workforce.

Hybrid jobs offer potential gains for work-life balance. Yet NYU’s Pillemer—who earned a Ph.D. in organizational behavior from the University of Pennsylvania’s Wharton School and studies workplace relationships—says friendships can be key sources of motivation and support at work when managed effectively.

“I think this is often what leads to work feeling like a community, a place where you don’t have to hide who you are,” she says, noting her research on the concept of “strategic authenticity,” which involves finding the right balance between self-disclosure and professionalism at work. “I think there might be a disconnect between how little this younger generation is thinking these relationships matter and how much they actually do matter to their workplace happiness.”

Gen Z workers say they yearn for more in-person connection, but that it doesn’t have to be with colleagues. Now trending: meetup activities such as book clubs and hiking groups, and even platonic matchmaking apps like Bumble BFF.

Still, remote workers may miss out not only on networking and friendships but also on mentoring, says **Carol Fishman Cohen ’81**, a regular contributor to *Harvard Business Review* and co-founder and CEO of iRelaunch, a career re-entry company.

“To be in the office side-by-side with more seasoned professionals and have informal interactions with people is part of how you

learn,” Cohen says. “You stop by someone’s office or walk out together from a meeting, and that’s where relationships are built and knowledge is transferred. If early-stage professionals don’t get to have that experience, it’s going to be much more difficult for them to learn what they need to know.”



Next-Gen Feelings

Liz Fosslien ’09 has spent nearly 20 years creating thoughtful, whimsical illustrations for publications such as *The Economist*, *The New York Times* and *TIME*. Often focusing on the topic of emotions as they apply to professional paths and workplace environments, she co-authored and illustrated the national best-seller *Big Feelings* and its follow-up *No Hard Feelings*, as well as helping illustrate Adam Grant’s *New York Times* bestseller *Hidden Potential*. Throughout this issue we’ll be featuring some of her illustrations that have resonated most strongly with younger generations, particularly those revolving around “the concept of giving yourself grace during hard times.”



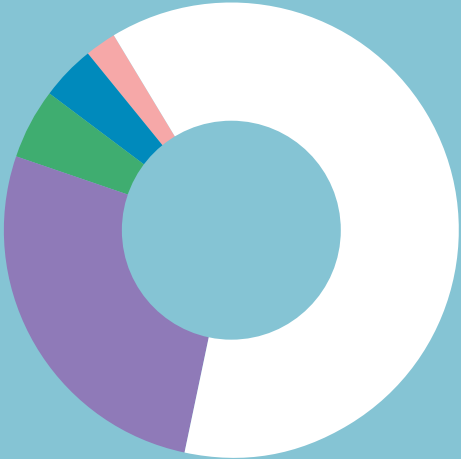
A popular strip that Fosslien says she couldn't imagine creating pre-COVID

2024 First Destinations Report

Each year, Pomona’s Career Development Office gathers career destination data of recent graduates following The National Association of Colleges and Employers standards. Here are some numbers for alumni who graduated between July 1, 2023, and June 30, 2024.

Career Outcomes

- 62% Job/Internship
- 27% Further Education
- 5% Fellowship
- 4% Other
- 2% Service Opportunity



30

fellowship recipients

13

Fulbright Scholars

Learn more at pomona.edu/outcomes

Seeking Balance Beyond Wall Street

By Robyn Norwood



Camille Molas ’21 landed a coveted Wall Street investment banking job before she graduated from Pomona. The entry-level role with JPMorganChase paid her in the low six figures with the potential for five-figure bonuses and a big future.

She left after only a year, jumping to Knowde, a startup focused on building software for the chemical industry.

The reason wasn’t only the famously grueling hours that Wall Street firms expect from young graduates.

“I was learning a lot and it was super interesting, but I felt like I was missing a certain something of actually building stuff,” says Molas, who completed the astrophysics track in the physics major at Pomona and spent her time with JPMorgan covering companies in industries such as aerospace, defense and chemicals. “These are already massive corporations that are no longer thinking about things like how you go from zero to one. I was really drawn to learning, ‘How do you even get things off the ground?’”

As part of the new Gen Z workforce, she also had expectations about balance, flexibility and personally meaningful work.

“I think what moved the needle for me to leave investment banking was that work-life balance,” she says. “It just kind of consumes your life.”

Working 80 or more hours a week is routine, and despite pledges by Wall Street firms to limit demands after the 2024 death of a junior investment banker at Bank of America who had been putting in 100-hour weeks, a *Wall Street Journal* investigation found some managers continued to pressure junior bankers to hide excessive hours.

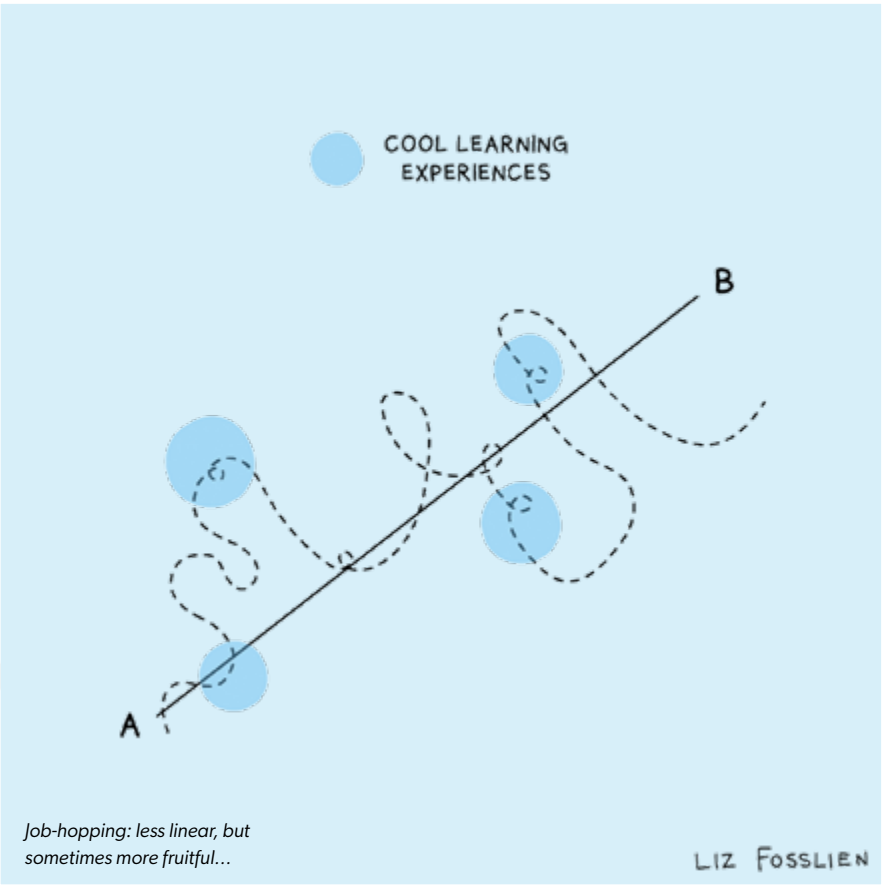
“It’s not necessarily that you are working nonstop, [but] that you’re required to be ‘on’ all the time, which is almost worse,” Molas says. “It could be 14 hours one day, then eight, then 12 on the weekend. You’re not able to anticipate when you can be free.”

Don’t mistake her decision to leave Wall Street as a lack of ambition. Her ultimate goal:

“I would like to start a company.”

While working full time, she also has enrolled in a part-time remote master’s program in computer science at Georgia Tech to be able to better translate between the business and engineering sides of a company.

“I’m very big on understanding and being able to communicate, and think it’s important to know the language,” Molas says. “I want to make sure that I have at least the framework of where the tech people are coming from. There are always going to be the businesspeople and the engineers. You really need someone who can talk to both.”



A Sense of Purpose

Work-life balance is no longer something people focus on only once they have kids and a household to run. Many Pomona students are thinking ahead, evaluating career choices by considering their personal priorities—sometimes choosing a city and then finding a job instead of finding a job and moving to that city—as well as by seeking more meaning in their work.

Raja says many students these days are often much more driven by things they’re passionate about, though she notes some students from less-advantaged backgrounds may still feel the need to maximize the financial return on their education.

“Generally, there’s not this aim for a ‘35 years of service’ pin,” she says. “More students are anchored by their values being met and doing work that is personally fulfilling.”

Nate Dailey ’23 (above right), a high school senior when his family fled Paradise, California, in the early morning hours of the November 2018 “Camp Fire,” is one example of melding professional skills with personally meaningful work. He arrived on campus less than a year after his family’s home was one of nearly 19,000 structures destroyed in the deadliest wildfire in California history.

After majoring in computer science, Dailey embarked on a career in wildfire science as a research analyst for Deer Creek Resources, which helps communities and landowners prepare for wildfire. There he developed a computer model to detect overgrown parcels from roadside imagery that aids in both vegetation management and evacuation planning.

“I was really inspired to pursue something that was connected to the Camp Fire, and also my interest in computers and maps,” Dailey recently told Professor Char Miller in a *Sagecast* podcast. “Now I’ve been able to put it all together, and I think my Pomona education really helped me with that.”

Another key differentiator for the next generation of workers is that if a job isn’t right for whatever reason, today’s young people are not afraid to move on. While job-hopping once was a resume red flag, Raja and others say that applicants are now more likely to raise eyebrows if they stay too long, potentially suggesting that they don’t have other opportunities.

According to U.S. Labor Department statistics, in early 2024 the median time



workers had been with current employers was only 3.9 years—the shortest tenure recorded since 2002. While the average job-stay for older workers was almost 10 years, for workers ages 25-34 it was a mere 2.7 years.

Camille Molas ’21, co-president of the New York City Alumni Chapter with her husband, **Diego Vergara ’20**, sees that phenomenon around her.

“A lot of people are on their third job already,” she says. “A friend of Diego’s already is on his fourth. Younger people are just more willing to say, ‘I’m out. This is not working for me.’” (See page 27 for more on Molas.)

Uncertain Outlook

While younger generations are being given more grace for job-hopping, their prospects aren’t uniformly positive. This year there were many headlines lamenting the job market for the Class of 2025 and, for the first time in decades, unemployment rates for college graduates under 27 have surpassed the overall average. Even the typically staid *Economist* chimed in with “Why Today’s Graduates Are Screwed.”

Factors include everything from federal spending cuts to the explosive rise of artificial intelligence, which experts say will affect entry-level jobs most because of more replicable tasks such as coding, number-crunching and summary writing. Despite that, Raja says

she has seen such admirable adaptability for Sagehen job seekers.

“While it’s nice to be able to get a job at Amazon or Apple or Google, I think students like ours are versatile enough to say, ‘Well, I have these tech skills I could apply to another industry,’” she says. “Maybe a lot of the values I have are still being met because I’m not only working in an area that I’m actually interested in, but I’m making the same salary or I’m still building my network.”

Ultimately, it may be the massive uncertainty in academia brought on by new federal policies that will have the largest impact on Pomona alumni, considering that one in four respondents from Pomona’s Class of 2024 First Destinations Report said they were headed straight to graduate school. In addition, many alumni who enter the workforce right out of college pursue a graduate degree within five years, Raja says.

Federal research grant cuts and wrangling over student visas and policies such as DEI mean some jobs and graduate school opportunities that used to be stable have evaporated, particularly in STEM fields and for international alumni. Proposals to limit federal loans for graduate students could also have a chilling effect, particularly on those seeking expensive medical degrees.

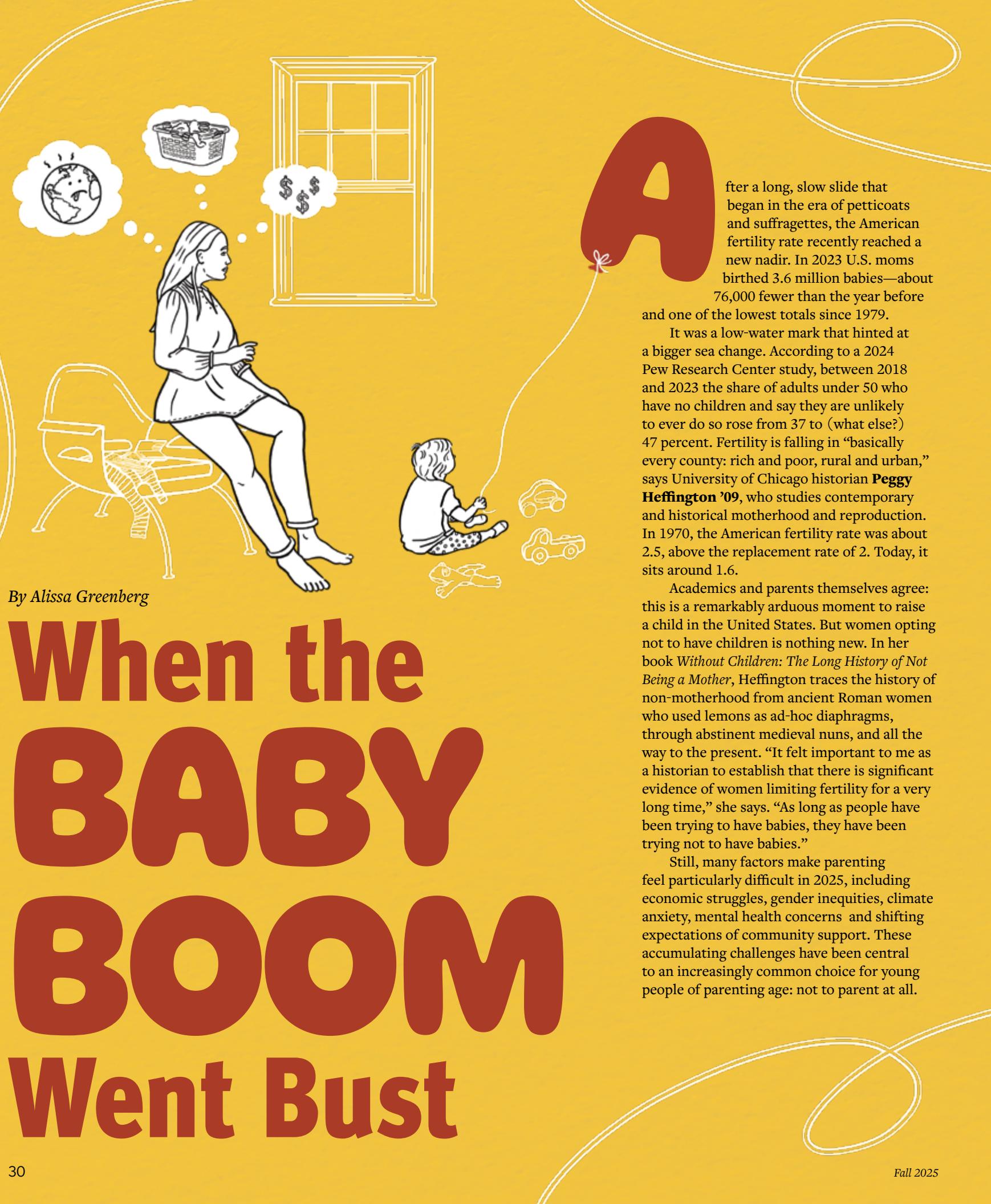
The impact on academia is likely to be felt by more than just graduate students: In Pomona’s 2023 Alumni and Family Attitude Survey, higher education was the number one job sector reported by alumni, ahead of science and medicine (36 vs. 27 percent).

Pillemer says most of her undergraduate business students at NYU remain focused on finance, consulting and tech, though they also are keenly aware of the potential to pursue more independent career paths such as internet content creation, entrepreneurship and gig work.

“As a scholar I’m reckoning with things like how we think about work and how organizations are structured, especially in a future when ‘employees’ could be bots and people are striking out on their own as entrepreneurs or influencers,” Pillemer says. “As students grapple with an uncertain job market and these sweeping changes in the way we work, they’re asking themselves, ‘What do I value?’ ‘What’s meaningful to me?’ And ‘How am I going to get paid to do it?’” **PCM**

By Alissa Greenberg

When the BABY BOOM Went Bust

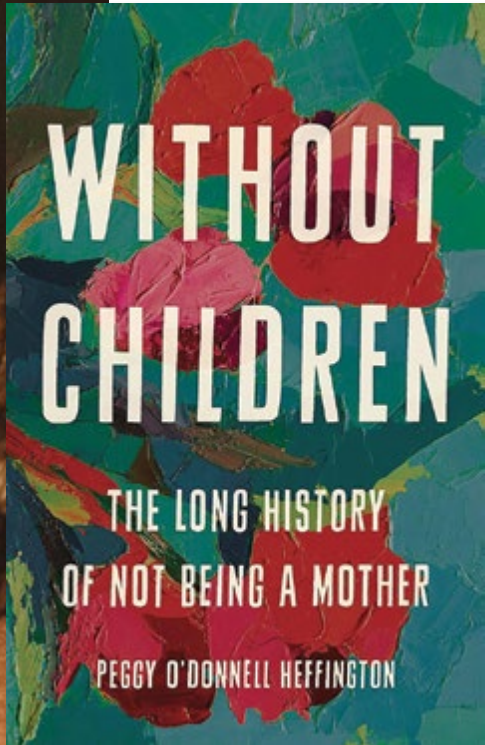


After a long, slow slide that began in the era of petticoats and suffragettes, the American fertility rate recently reached a new nadir. In 2023 U.S. moms birthed 3.6 million babies—about 76,000 fewer than the year before and one of the lowest totals since 1979.

It was a low-water mark that hinted at a bigger sea change. According to a 2024 Pew Research Center study, between 2018 and 2023 the share of adults under 50 who have no children and say they are unlikely to ever do so rose from 37 to (what else?) 47 percent. Fertility is falling in “basically every county: rich and poor, rural and urban,” says University of Chicago historian **Peggy Heffington '09**, who studies contemporary and historical motherhood and reproduction. In 1970, the American fertility rate was about 2.5, above the replacement rate of 2. Today, it sits around 1.6.

Academics and parents themselves agree: this is a remarkably arduous moment to raise a child in the United States. But women opting not to have children is nothing new. In her book *Without Children: The Long History of Not Being a Mother*, Heffington traces the history of non-motherhood from ancient Roman women who used lemons as ad-hoc diaphragms, through abstinent medieval nuns, and all the way to the present. “It felt important to me as a historian to establish that there is significant evidence of women limiting fertility for a very long time,” she says. “As long as people have been trying to have babies, they have been trying not to have babies.”

Still, many factors make parenting feel particularly difficult in 2025, including economic struggles, gender inequities, climate anxiety, mental health concerns and shifting expectations of community support. These accumulating challenges have been central to an increasingly common choice for young people of parenting age: not to parent at all.



A University of Chicago professor, Heffington '09 has written about motherhood and women's movements for *TIME*, *The New York Times*, and *The Washington Post*.

Adults under 50
who say they're
unlikely to have kids

37% 47%

2018

2023 (same as now)

Pew study, 2024



Factor 1: Money talks

More than one-third of respondents to the 2024 Pew survey cited money concerns as a major reason for deciding against parenthood. The financial landscape for young people is tough, to say the least: a 2016 study from the Center for Household Financial Stability found that median millennial savings were 34 percent below what historic trends would predict; in a recent survey by the financial platform Step, more than one-third of Gen Z respondents reported running out of money every month.

Among the many costs of raising a new human, child care has emerged as especially exorbitant. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, American families pay upward of one-sixth of their median income on care for just one child—as much or more than what most pay for rent or mortgage. As tech entrepreneur **Shadia Sigala '06** puts it, “You can see how with two or three children the calculus becomes absolutely untenable.”

On top of the cost of child care is its availability: over half of Americans live in “child care deserts,” with low-income rural and communities of color disproportionately impacted. This issue inspired Sigala to found Kinside, which provides a marketplace connecting families to caregivers in their area, helps companies build child care into their employee benefits, and works with local governments to improve larger care ecosystems.

But more accessible child care doesn't help those who struggle to get pregnant in the first place. Fertility issues afflict many aspiring mothers, and while technologies like in-vitro fertilization (IVF) have opened up many new possibilities, they don't come cheap, with a single round of IVF costing some \$20,000. Heffington argues that, for some, such technologies actually “increase the pain of infertility in offering a promise where previously there was nothing you could do.”

Empathy Across Generations With Prof. Jessica Stern '12

By Lorraine Wu Harry '97

This spring a child development paper from assistant professor Jessica Stern '12 was selected by University of California at Berkeley's Greater Good Science Center as one of 2024's "most provocative and influential findings on the science of a meaningful life." We talked to Stern to learn more about her paper "Empathy across three generations."

What is your study's central research question?

Adolescents get a bad rap. The misconception goes something like this: Teens are self-focused, easily pressured to do bad things by their peers, and lacking mature social skills like empathy. But does the evidence bear this out?

Not really. In our observations, teens are deeply engaged in supporting others, particularly their friends, and peer interactions often encourage them to be prosocial. Our research team wanted to understand: How do teens learn empathy? How is empathy transmitted across generations? And what's the role of teenage friendships?

How did you collect the data?

The KLIFF VIDA longitudinal study, led by the University of Virginia, began in 1998. We tracked 184 teens from age 13 into their mid-30s, and every year invited teens to the lab with their parents and closest friend, and recorded videos of their interactions. When teens were 13 we observed them talking to their moms about a problem they could use help on, and tracked how much empathy moms showed during that conversation. We looked for things like how emotionally engaged the mom was, whether she had an accurate understanding of the teen's problem, and how much help and emotional support she provided.

Then, every year for seven years, we observed teens talking to their closest



friend about a problem their friend needed help with. We looked for those same types of empathic behaviors in how the teen treated their friends. When some of those same teens were starting to have kids of their own about a decade later, we sent them surveys asking about their parenting behavior and their children's empathy.

What were your key findings?

We found that teens who experienced more empathy from their mothers at age 13 were more likely to "pay it forward" by showing empathy for their friends in adolescence. For the teens who later had children, practicing empathy with close friends in late adolescence predicted more supportive parenting behavior a decade later. We were able to see how empathy is transmitted across three generations.

Our message is this: if we want to raise empathic teens, we need to give them *firsthand experiences* of receiving empathy from adults at home. More than lectures or pressure, teens need to feel what it's like to be understood and supported. This gives them a model of empathy in action.

We also hope [to] give parents peace of mind, knowing that teens' desire to hang out with friends is a boon for their social development (and perhaps their future success as caregivers). Supporting teens to cultivate close friendships may be important for them to hone their social skills by practicing caregiving for their friends.

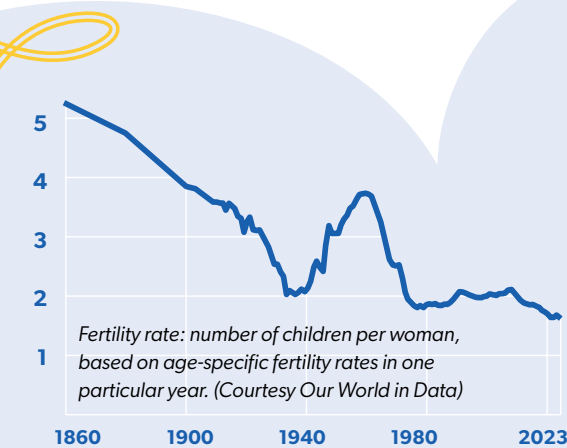
Factor 2: Balancing the load

As she discusses the current state of non-parenthood, Heffington cites a Pew survey statistic she finds telling: 45 percent of women said they wanted kids in the future, compared to 57 percent of men. "What we're seeing is not that women like babies less than they did," she says. "It's that they're very aware of who's going to be doing the work, whose career is going to take the hit, and who will do the vast majority of mental labor."

That dynamic is familiar to **Karen Magoon Pearson '05**, who adopted four children with her husband. As a couple, they seek to be egalitarian in their sharing of household chores, and mostly succeed. But, like many mothers, Magoon Pearson has been tasked with nearly all the intangibles: keeping track of the kids' schedules and school workloads, planning outings, problem-solving and managing the logistics of a six-person family. "Emotional labor, the mental load; the code hasn't fully been cracked there, even when both people want it to be," she says.

Sigala, who now has two children, has also struggled in that arena. She experienced deep postpartum depression after her first child, exacerbated by a lack of support from her then-husband. "Mothers are the nucleus and the electrons; they're keeping everything together," she says. "They're called to be many, many elements in the atom. And they're just breaking."

Although the twin concepts of mental load and emotional labor have finally entered the collective conversation, Heffington argues that that awareness is not enough to counter the deeply ingrained expectations that befall mothers. "Women have become more aware of the effect [parenting] will have on their lives, their marriages, their careers," Heffington says, "and are increasingly thinking that it's not a good trade-off."



Factor 3: A hostile climate

The changing climate has also had profound effects on people's parenting proclivities. In the 2024 Pew study, one in four respondents said their choice to not have children was primarily for "environmental reasons," while 38 percent cited a slightly broader "state of the world." (Cue meme of "gesturing broadly at everything.")

These choices are not evenly distributed among young people, notes **Jade Sasser '97**, an associate professor of gender and sexuality studies at University of California, Riverside. Surveys by the Yale Center for Climate Communications consistently find that people of color experience more emotional distress—and suffer from more clinically diagnosable mental health issues—due to climate change. Their fertility decisions are also more likely to reflect that experience. In a 2020 survey, 41 percent of Latino respondents and 30 percent of Black respondents cited climate change as a factor in why they did not have children, compared to 21 percent of white respondents.

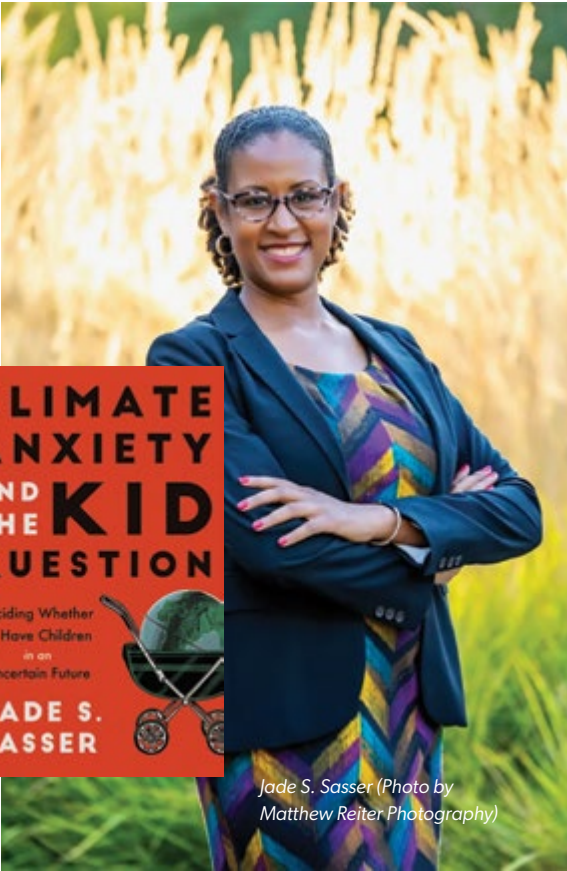
This trend was compelling enough to inspire Sasser to write a book about it. *Climate Anxiety and the Kid Question* explores younger generations' fear and grief around the climate emergency, the ways that people of color are disproportionately impacted, and the reproductive decisions that result.

One of Sasser's more surprising findings was that young people are less fixated on the negative impacts their hypothetical children

will have on the planet, than on the negative impacts the planet will have on their children. That is, in previous decades people who cited environmental factors in their fertility decisions were usually considering issues like overpopulation and pollution—how bringing a new human into the world would damage their surroundings. Now, the feeling is that the damage has been done, and the fears focus more on how the consequences will affect quality of life for a new generation.

Many people Sasser interviewed wanted children but felt that subjecting new humans to the potential horrors of climate change felt unethical. "If I had kids amidst a catastrophe like a hurricane, I would be worried every day," one woman told Sasser. Would she be able to keep them safe?

Although climate anxiety and grief are common across race and socioeconomic strata, people of color experience them more strongly due to structural inequities, Sasser says. (In her book, she points to one potent example; a report analyzing FEMA records from 1999 to 2013, which found that 85 percent of post-disaster buyouts went to white families.) "Climate change seems to be a threat multiplier," she explains, "meaning that the other reasons people have for either not wanting children or being ambivalent are compounded by emotional responses to climate change—and that's worse for young people from marginalized communities."



Jade S. Sasser (Photo by Matthew Reiter Photography)

LOW FERTILITY RATES

While the share of millennials who will never be parents is likely to climb to the highest in history, for now the generation with the lowest fertility rates in U.S. history is still those born between 1900 and 1910 who reached their childbearing years during the Great Depression. Amidst deep economic upheaval, a world war and a flu pandemic that killed millions, many women decided that now was **not** the time to create new life.

In fact, Heffington says that one-half to one-third of Depression-era pregnancies were aborted. "It's only reasonable that people were looking around and thinking, 'I can't feed the kids I have; it doesn't make sense to bring a child into this situation,'" she says.

MORE 'HUMANE' To Not Create MORE HUMANS?

bound not to have: "I'm terribly saddened by the fact that the most humane thing for me to do is have no children at all," she told onlookers.

In contrast to many of today's parental-environmental concerns, women like Mills were concerned about the polluting impact and resource-intensiveness of new babies—the impact their children would have on the environment, rather than the impact the environment would have on their children.

The year before, author Paul Ehrlich had published *The Population Bomb*, predicting dire effects for a runaway population: pollution, starvation, widespread destruction. The book contributed to widespread anxiety among women like Mills, who felt the best choice they could make was to opt out of motherhood and not add to the problem.



Single women picketing a relief headquarters in Boston, 1935 (Bettmann Archive)

GET THEE TO A NUNNERY

In 1869 Arabella Mansfield was the first woman to pass the bar to become a lawyer. This milestone was a sign of a larger trend: women gaining better access to education and entering the workforce in increasing numbers.

In response, starting around 1900, both private companies and government entities began instituting “**marriage bars**” that banned married women from the workplace. These bans, which stemmed in part from racist fears around a plunging white birth rate, were common in industries such as insurance, publishing and banking, but in some cases were implemented statewide. A 1935 Wisconsin resolution called working married women “a calling card for disintegration of family life.”

Heffington says that marriage bars were intended to force women to go back to domestic spaces after they got married, which is “often exactly what they did.” But a growing number chose instead to delay marriage or opt out of family life altogether—either to pursue their professional priorities or because they could not afford the economic costs of ceasing work.

ALTERNATIVE PATHS

Although they might not have explained their choices in so many words, medieval nuns have their own unique role in the history of non-motherhood. Heffington says that medieval biographies of saints showed these women to be “very clear from a very young age that they do not want to be wives or mothers, and [that] the path they choose is the only other option available to them.”

At that time, girls from good families would have been married off in their teens or younger, with the expectation that they begin birthing heirs soon after. But the convent offered an alternative, respectable path, where teaching and serving God was just as valuable as marriage and family. Many engaged in scholarship and mentorship, and became advisors to kings or emperors.

Their biographies portray this as a valid choice to “spend their time doing other things,” Heffington says. “Some of these women built lives that were clearly very rewarding—and didn’t include motherhood.”

Factor 4: The parenting happiness gap

One hot take you won’t hear on *Oprah*: American parents seem to consistently report feeling less happy than people without children. (Specifically, 12.7 percent less happy, according to a 2016 meta-analysis of adults across 22 countries.) Heffington says that, in the U.S. at least, there is no kind of parent—new parents in the thick of it, empty nesters, step-parents—that is, on average, happier than people without children.

The so-called “happiness gap” is particularly acute for women, which Sigala and others attribute to the true emotional weight of motherhood and the opportunities young women give up by having children. Since full-time child care can often cost as much as a professional woman earns, Sigala says that women around her often feel the “pernicious, intractable” pressure to step away from work and care for their children or families. “You can see how it starts to pile up, and before you know it, women are hugely disadvantaged in their professional lives and their ability to have strength and freedom,” she says.

Still, data from Europe suggests that, while raising children is challenging everywhere, the kids themselves are not the problem. In a meta-analysis, researchers found that in countries such as France, Finland, Norway and Sweden, the gap disappears or is even reversed, with parents reporting that they are happier than non-parents by up to 8 percent. Their results showed that a few simple factors make this paradigm possible: vacation time, parental leave, sick leave, and affordable or free child care. “It doesn’t require massive infrastructure,” Heffington says. “Just dialing down some of the pressure American parents experience could make a huge difference.”

Factor 5: Losing the village

In writing her history of non-parenthood, Heffington found that she was actually writing a story about the transformation of the American home, a transition “from something deeply embedded in community structures offering support to the isolated nuclear family.” Although the familiar single-biological-unit structure might seem inevitable from our perspective, work from Pomona professor emerita Helena Wall shows that alternative configurations were flourishing in North America as recently as 400 years ago. “Colonial Americans understood the family only in

context of community, with women from throughout a community taking active part in raising children,” Heffington explains. “They spent their whole lives passing in and out of each other’s houses.”

But during the 19th century, a major demographic shift found young people flocking from rural to urban areas for factory jobs—away from those support systems and toward the smaller, suburbanized nuclear family so typical today. Heffington sees today’s millennial experience as an extension of that shift. “We’ve replaced community support structures with ones you have to pay for,

with relatively predictable results in terms of fertility,” she says.

Indeed, the loss of the proverbial “village” it once took to raise a child is significantly impacting younger generations’ parental reluctance. For example, while a network of relatives and neighbors watched over Sigala during her childhood, as a young adult she lived in a succession of different cities, each time starting anew and alone. “When my friends have grandparents around to take the kids, even one day per week, I’m very envious,” she says. And babysitting neighbors? As extinct as the dinos and the dodos.

Magoon Pearson also struggled with a lack of support after her oldest child’s academic troubles led her to homeschooling; not long after, the pandemic found her at home teaching all four children. “By the end of that year, I just couldn’t do it anymore,” she remembers. Continued changes to parenting norms only intensified the difficulty. During her own childhood, she often spent time independently at friends’ houses or birthday parties. “It wasn’t like parents were expected to be everywhere all the time, doing everything their kids were doing,” she says. “Now, you kind of are, so you never get a break.”

MISSING COMMUNITY

One of Heffington’s favorite historical examples of non-motherhood comes from French Colonial Canada. Birth records from the 16th and 17th centuries tell a powerful story about the importance of community support in parenting. Demographers studying the era noticed that the farther a woman moved from her mother, the fewer children she was likely to have—up to four fewer children if she lived more than 200 miles away. Those children were also more likely to die early in their lives, while children whose mothers stayed closer to home had better odds of surviving until adulthood.

Heffington sees this pattern as proof of how much impact a woman’s community had on her parenting capacity. “It’s not just about where her mother was but about the community, about how important support networks are for people having kids and for those kids being able to thrive.”

Next steps: should we (population) panic?

Since President Trump started his second term, his administration has taken a staunchly pronatalist approach. Vice President JD Vance has spoken disdainfully of “childless cat ladies” while Trump touts \$5,000 “baby bonuses” for mothers-to-be.

Sasser interprets it all as part of a larger, politics-driven “population panic”—and one that she treats with a heavy dose of skepticism.

Indeed, while Magoon Pearson feels some anxiety when she considers a future with fewer children—what will happen to Social Security? Will there be enough young people to keep the gears of society moving?—she rejects the idea that the childfree are inherently selfish, citing family and friends who instead spend their time on other meaningful endeavors. With

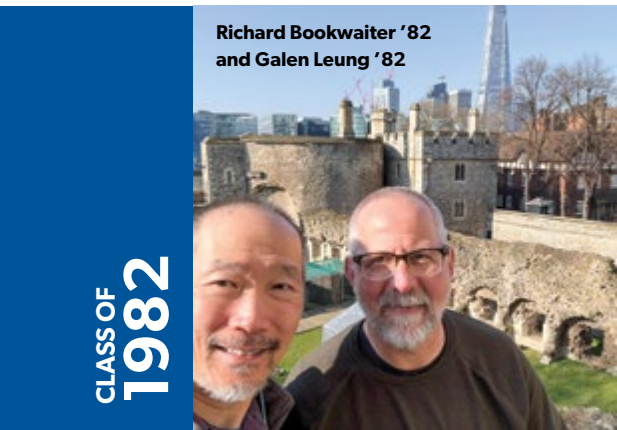
four children’s lives to manage, and so many places where the world needs help or healing, “I’m bogged down with this anxiety that I’m not doing enough, stuck at home,” she says. “Thank goodness there’s people out there with the time and energy I don’t have!”

Sasser, Heffington and others argue that any supposed population crisis is at best overblown, and at worst manufactured. While some East Asian countries are indeed seeing small towns depopulating and villages with no children, the U.S. has “the privilege of being a place where people want to come to raise their families,” Heffington says.

Zooming out, the larger context is that fertility rates tend to reliably settle under 2 across time and cultures as women get

more access to education, contraception and professional opportunities.

Heffington suggests that policymakers could look to the European countries with happier parents for a model of how to make parenting healthier. France and Sweden, for example, have built infrastructures conducive to parenting that include paid and extended maternity leave, prenatal care, free child health care and subsidized daycare. “If you’re forcing women to choose—whether it’s because of professional ambition or economic survival—some are going to choose not to have kids,” Heffington says. “If you make it easier for them to have both, they’re going to have both.” [PCM](#)



SageChat Across Generations

By Lorraine Wu Harry '97 and Marilyn Thomsen

We asked the same set of questions to 3 individual alums from 55, 30 and 5 years ago, as well as 4 couples across multiple generations. Ahead, our super-scientific results.

How did you meet?

Larry Hauser '64 and Barbara Hauser '65: We met in 1962-1963 at a “Served Dinner” at Frary Dining Hall, where a vigorous courtship ensued with lots of coffee dates that had to be completed by the 10 p.m. curfew.

Richard Bookwaiter '82 and Galen Leung '82: We met as first-years when we were both elected to the Freshman Dorm Council representing Oldenborg and Walker, respectively.

Rob Ricketts '97 and Karla Romero '97: We met in January 1996 in Harwood Basement. Rob was a transfer student, and Karla was his assigned sponsor.

Kai Fukutaki '17 and Sameen Boparai '17: While we first met during Orientation Adventure in Sequoia, we didn’t start hanging out until we crossed paths in the social dance clubs, including ballroom dance.

What is your favorite Pomona College memory together?

Hauser and Hauser: Our “Pinning Ceremony”—the entire Zeta Chi Sigma Fraternity marched down to South Campus and sang a romantic serenade at Mudd-Blaisdell, marking the start of our lifelong journey together.

Bookwaiter and Leung: After the “Survivors’ Party” for students who had made it through the fall, we were the only two who showed up on the cleaning committee.

Ricketts and Romero: Harwood Halloween, where we saw a relevantly unknown opening act called the Black Eyed Peas.

Fukutaki and Boparai: During senior week in San Diego, we put our liberal arts degrees to good use: we won pub trivia, sang karaoke and had our ecology friends help us identify tide pool creatures!

How long have you been together?

Hauser and Hauser: Married 60 years! We just attended Barbara’s 60th Pomona reunion and are forever bonded to this beautiful campus with all of its memories.

Bookwaiter and Leung: 34 years! By the end of our senior year we knew we wanted to be together. We married in August 2008.

Ricketts and Romero: We’ve been together since May 1996, with one brief intermission in 1998-99. We found our way back to each other, and have been inseparable ever since.

Fukutaki and Boparai: 9 years! We immediately had to do two years of long-distance after college but fortunately both ended up in Seattle for graduate school.

What is your secret to a successful relationship?

Hauser and Hauser: Patience, optimism and a sense of firm commitment. Per philosopher Brian Andreas: “I’m deciding everything is falling into place perfectly, as long as you don’t get too picky about what you mean by ‘place’. Or ‘perfectly.’”

Bookwaiter and Leung: Our relationship has lasted over 34 years because we are able to communicate with each other.

Ricketts and Romero: Relationships aren’t about being right—they’re about growing together. Also, we laugh a lot. Humor keeps things light even when things get heavy. We don’t agree on everything or spend every waking moment together, but we consistently show up for one another.

Fukutaki and Boparai: Cultivating healthy communities has helped us feel fulfilled and supported so that we don’t depend solely on each other. Staying curious and always learning new things, together and apart, keeps us excited about the world—and each other. [PCM](#)



What is your fondest memory of Pomona?

Blair: Groups of us would get tickets to classical concerts in Big Bridges, where we’d see Arthur Rubinstein, Van Cliburn, Christopher Parkening and the Romeros, among many others.

Trupin: I think a lot about the freshman seminar, the intramural sports and, of course, both the good friends and the meaningful conversations I had all the time there.

Addo-Ashong: I don’t think I could truly narrow down to just one memory—I look back at dozens of moments spent with my friends and laugh all the time.

Where did you and your friends hang out?

Blair: I developed some of my longer-lasting friendships when I lived in Oldenborg for two years. We hung out in the language lounge for the Russian and Chinese students. I was studying Russian. We studied, we partied and had a great time there.

Trupin: We attempted to study at pools, a lot. Somehow I still passed my classes. We ate a lot of fried food and shakes at the Coop. And we ventured to parties on whatever campus was hosting one.

Addo-Ashong: I could guarantee that you’d see me and my friends in Frary at some point, especially for Snack. My Sontag suite was also a glorified community center my senior year with the number of people that were in and out every day.

The career path you first envisioned in college—is that what you’re doing now?

Blair: I fell in love with the fields of anthropology and education. As a result, I studied at Stanford and received an MA in Education. Although later I studied theology, was ordained a Presbyterian minister and received a Ph.D. from the Claremont School of Theology, I was always using what I had learned at Pomona.

Trupin: I majored in American Studies, so I wouldn’t say I had a planned career path. But I did get to spend a lot of time focusing on youth homelessness at Pomona, including a Watson Fellowship in Latin America. I still work on that today, so the answer, I guess, is yes!

Addo-Ashong: I didn’t have one career path clearly laid out, but my current job working in data analysis and research for litigation is a good mix of my public policy analysis and math background. My next steps are to apply for a master’s in similar fields, so in that sense, I think I’m following what I set out to do!

What do you wish you’d known before you came to Pomona?

Blair: I felt instantly at home at Pomona because of the many new students who, like me, had lived outside the United States. I was embarrassed, however, that I had not yet heard of Jefferson Airplane and their music.

Trupin: This is a rare four-year opportunity that you’ll never get again, and you should take advantage of all it has to offer during your time there. A lot of us would come back for another year if we could.

Addo-Ashong: I wish I’d known that the pluses and minuses on grades do in fact affect your GPA, because that was a very rude awakening my freshman fall!

What was your favorite dining-hall food?

Blair: I have little memories of the food. It was better in Oldenborg than elsewhere.

Trupin: Fried mozzarella sticks at the Coop. In the dining hall, maybe the omelet bar—how nice it would be to have that in my house now!

Addo-Ashong: My usual breakfast omelet and avocado toast, maybe the tomato/burrata, and balsamic sandwiches and the oatmeal raisin cookies!

What was the best book you read during your Pomona years?

Blair: A book that over the long term shaped me the most was *Mysticism*, by Evelyn Underhill. I read it for a course I took at Pitzer; we also read Tillich and William James.

Trupin: *In the Name of Eugenics* by Daniel Kevles stuck with me and stays relevant today as a frightening and helpful exploration of using science to justify racism and every type of discrimination.

Addo-Ashong: I don’t know how many books I read for fun [at school], but I really enjoyed *American Hookup* by Lisa Wade!

What was your favorite band while you were in college?

Blair: The Beatles, then Jefferson Airplane and the Doors.

Trupin: I have fond memories of seeing No Doubt perform in my dorm. They weren’t my favorite band, and I think my glasses fell into the mosh pit and got crushed, but it still stands out.

Addo-Ashong: I’d say favorite actual band was Glass Animals, and individuals were SZA and Childish Gambino.

What was the first electronic device you ever owned?

Blair: I got my first computer in 1986, when I was working on my Ph.D. dissertation.

Trupin: My roommate and I had a combo tape/record/CD player that I think was the size of half of one of our walls.

Addo-Ashong: My Game Boy Advance. [PCM](#)

The Kids Are All Right ...WITH THEIR FEELINGS

By Sneha Villalva



The numbers tell a sobering story. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, for 10- to 24-year-olds—a hefty chunk of Gen Z—suicide is the second leading cause of death and has increased more than 50 percent since 2000. Across a range of psychological surveys Gen Z often is found to be the loneliest, most anxious, depressed and heavily medicated generation ever.

Many mental health professionals call it a crisis—but perhaps there is also a crisis of perception.

Gen Z folks—and, to some extent, their millennial elders—have often been slapped with disparaging labels like “the Anxious Generation,” “the Therapist Generation” or even “the Snowflake Generation.” While no one can contest the heartbreaking stats on suicide, loneliness and depression, another thing that can’t be dismissed is Gen Z’s ability to adapt to adversity. They report being sadder, but—based on conversations with several mental health professionals in the field—in many ways they are also braver.

We recently spoke to three experts on the topic:

- › Pomona College Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students for Academic and Personal Success **Tracy Arwari** (left)
- › Crisis Systems Medical Director at King County, Washington **Dr. Matthew L. Goldman** ’08
- › Licensed Clinical Social Worker and Clinical **Director Jasmine Lamitte** ’08 (below), author of *The Black Mental Health Workbook: Break the Stigma, Find Space for Reflection, and Reclaim Self-Care*

Today’s young adults have had more than their fair share of battle wounds. They were a key casualty of COVID-19, both in actual deaths—approximately 15 million worldwide—and in the wrap-around effects of the pandemic on their mental health. When some of your most formative years are spent communicating via screens, the consequences are sharply felt.

“Psychosocial development was basically stalled for a period of time for a lot of kids,” says Goldman. “The increased use of services, and increased suicidality among youth, suggests that COVID was absolutely a catalyst for worsening the youth mental health crisis.”

Lamitte agrees, pointing specifically to something she noticed when schools reopened: Young people who had isolated at home had

missed key developmental milestones, leading to behavioral challenges and a huge uptick in both social and generalized anxiety.

The social isolation may be exacerbated by increased digital connection. Social media and digital connectivity certainly have their benefits in increasing awareness of challenges that other young people might be going through.

Although Lamitte is encouraged by Gen Z’s growing comfort talking about mental health, she says that platforms such as TikTok have rampant misinformation that can lead users to self-diagnose and feel like they can handle things on their own without therapy.

Arwari says that help-seeking behavior has become much more ubiquitous on campus in recent years, which she attributes to Pomona’s own proactive efforts toward outreach and prevention, as well as a larger societal trend toward being open around mental health and self-care.

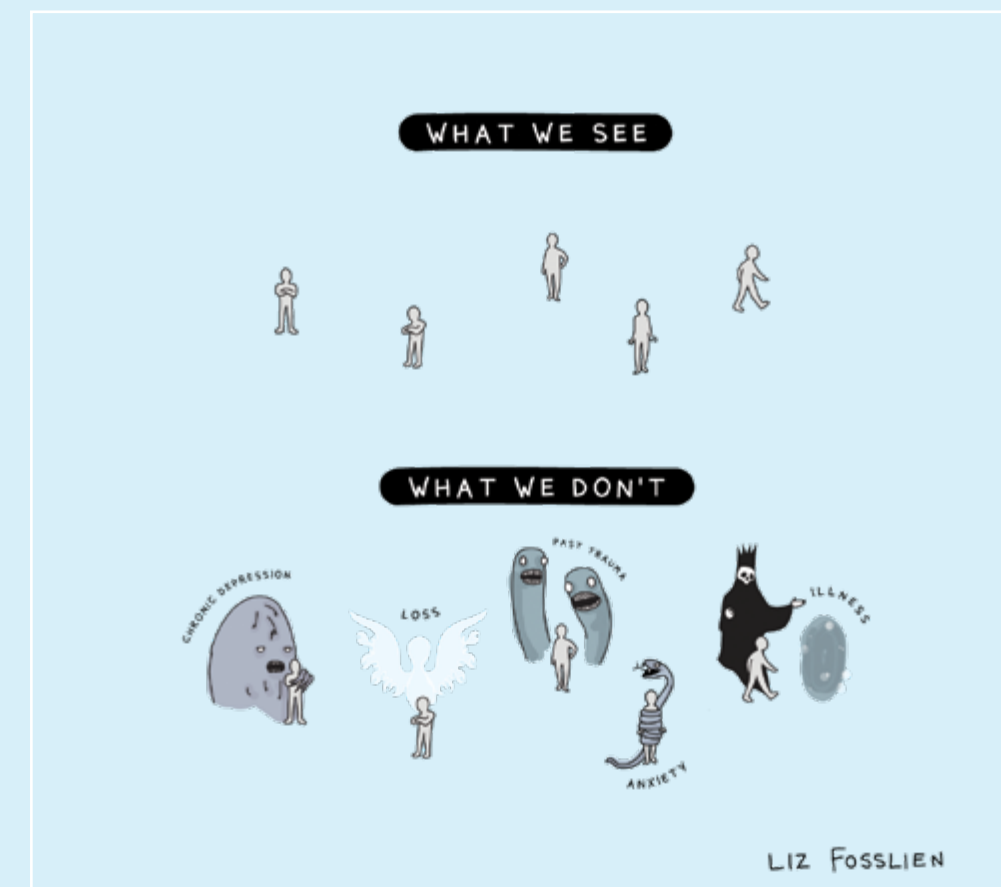
“Ten or 15 years ago, you did your best to tread water on your own and you had to have quiet faith that this, too, would pass,” she says.

Experts see a greater willingness among Gen Z to seek therapy earlier and more consistently, versus waiting until things get intensely challenging.

“With my generation, the process started in college or after,” says Lamitte. “Now kids are coming out in high school and exploring trauma they’ve experienced, to not necessarily carry that burden by themselves.”



Pomona College Magazine



The experts argue that Gen Z has gotten increasingly comfortable being vulnerable about everything from anxiety to past trauma.

While some label Gen Z as “the Therapist Generation” with disdain, Goldman considers it a net positive that there’s been such a banishment of stigma, which translates to prioritization of funding for mental health services, not to mention greater receptivity to treatment and more engagement in the healing process.

Lamitte adds that younger generations are increasingly open to exploring different modalities that they may have first encountered on social media, including mindfulness meditation and “Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing.”

New Models of Care: What Systems Need to Catch Up

If the youth have caught up with the times, the systems unfortunately have not. Goldman says that the greatest barriers to care are the lack of services plus access. It’s a bind: there aren’t enough youth mental health services in general, much less ones that insurance will pay for. Complicating an already knotty situation is that

pediatricians are often the ones prescribing medications for youth, without extra training in mental health or psychiatry.

“They’re doing their best and want to help, but often end up using the tools that they have at their disposal, like medications,” says Goldman. “There is plenty of data showing overprescription of psychiatric meds among kids.”

While many kids absolutely need the meds, data suggests widespread overprescription of antipsychotic medication that’s especially acute for children who are Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC), including boys who are involved in a juvenile justice or foster care system. Goldman says that this form of “diagnostic overshadowing”—in which BIPOC folks are more likely to be diagnosed with a psychotic disorder or more serious mental illness—often can mask other diagnoses such as trauma or complex trauma.

Concern regarding mental health among youth in general is appropriately high. In King County, where Goldman serves as medical director for its crisis systems, there will soon

be a 24-7 youth crisis facility with both urgent care and higher acuity units.

Given that dedicated behavioral health facilities tend to be much more effective at crisis care than in emergency departments or general hospitals, Goldman hopes that policymakers nationwide see the need to cover the gaps in care and support these crisis stabilization services. He cites Washington state’s requirement for commercial payment, which creates alternatives to sitting in an emergency room for hours or days waiting to be seen, or getting involved in a criminal legal system where people end up unnecessarily incarcerated.

Goldman says it’s also critical to have an outpatient system that can receive people in the aftermath of a crisis. Post-crisis follow-up resources tend to be quite limited. Someone may receive good care during the crisis, but then face a lot of post-discharge barriers to being able to access ongoing support to prevent future relapse.

“There’s a risk of them falling through the cracks again,” says Goldman.

To mitigate that risk, King County is investing in post-crisis follow-up services that are dedicated to the aftermath of a crisis, so that anyone who comes through the crisis centers has access to ongoing care. It’s based on one of the leading national models for youth crisis response, Mobile Response and Stabilization Services, or MRSS, a youth-specific model that comes from Connecticut; it is a field-based, community-based crisis response.

If a young person or a parent calls into a crisis hotline like 988 or other local hotlines or a teen-specific hotline, and the call taker is concerned that the level of the crisis is more acute or severe than what can be handled on the phone, then they might dispatch a mobile response-type resource. While a lot of places have a general mobile crisis response that serves both adults and youth, the gold standard model is to have dedicated youth-specialized mobile teams, Goldman says.

“They’ll do the initial mobile response, but then they’ll also continue to support that child for six to eight to even up to 12 weeks after the initial mobile response,” he says. “And the idea is that it’s the team that does the initial mobile response that makes that initial bond with both the child and their family and then can continue to support them for that extended period.”

Sometimes that’s all that you need, Goldman says. Long-term outpatient or any other kind of community support isn’t always necessary because if it’s a crisis that’s related to something situational or circumstantial—bereavement, some event that happens—then youth can eventually do really well.

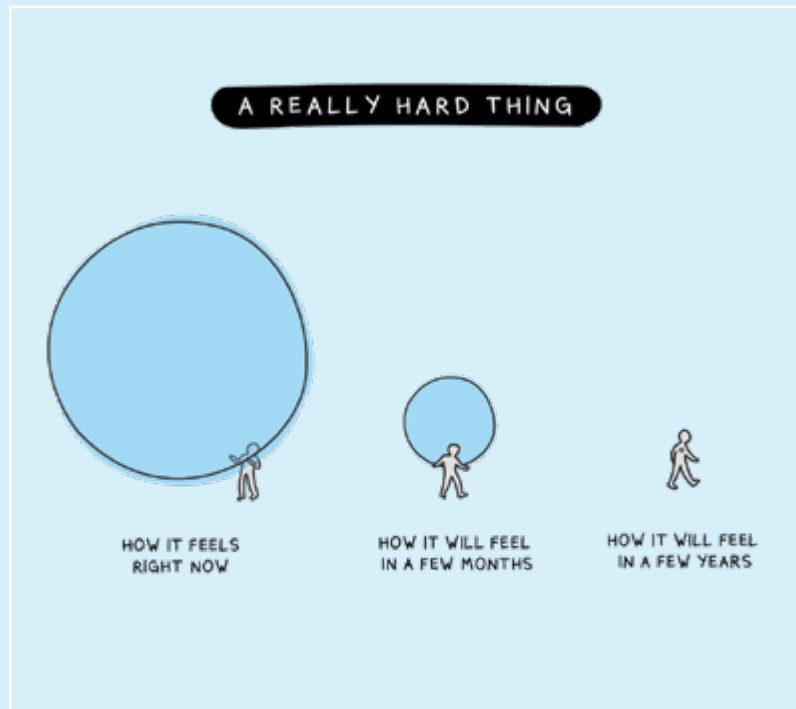
What Gives Us Hope

Gen Z’s crisis overwhelms, but there is hope rising nonetheless. For Lamitte, it’s their early pursuit of healing. For Goldman, it’s young people’s openness and receptivity. And for Arwari, it’s Gen Z’s commitment to kindness, camaraderie and advocacy.

“There is a lot in this world that can feel like doom and gloom at every turn,” she says. “But the thing that gives me hope is witnessing the way that students will hold each other up [and make] a rooted good faith effort to be kind to one another. The kids are all right.” [PCM](#)



“It’s easy to equate success with visible achievements like a promotion or a new job. But it’s important to acknowledge and celebrate all growth, especially when it comes to mental health and well-being.” —Liz



“Your anxiety or despair may sometimes be so overwhelming that you can’t see anything else. But it won’t be like that forever. There can still be lighter times ahead.” —Liz

Sagehen to Sagehen: Alumni Award Honorees Share Advice

As students, they studied on Marston Quad, discussed research with professors and dined with classmates under Prometheus’ watch. Now, our 2025 Pomona College Alumni Award honorees say those campus experiences and relationships shaped who they’ve become and the journeys they’ve taken since leaving Claremont.

They credit their Pomona education with helping them take risks, reach their goals and pay it forward. Presented with their awards during Alumni Weekend in May 2025, these exceptional Sagehens had a few words of advice for our students and recent graduates.



Your path doesn’t have to be straightforward

“Follow your inner spirit and your dreams, and try not to worry much about your journey being linear. The gifts that you’ve been given at Pomona really do stand you in good stead for whatever comes along. And believe me, the world needs you.”

— A composer turned international women’s advocate, Blaisdell Distinguished Alumni Award honoree **Susan Blaustein ’75** is the founder, executive director and board chair of WomenStrong International.



Embrace challenges with patience and build connections

“Use your time as a student to forge relationships, take risks and allow yourself license to fail. Give yourself and others the grace to start over. As students and alumni of such a diverse community, it is not always easy to reconcile the intent and impact of the choices we make, but Pomona’s values provide us tools to navigate in these times.”

— A leader and advocate for equity and inclusion in higher education, Blaisdell Distinguished Alumni Award honoree **Douglas M. Haynes ’85** is professor emeritus of history and African American studies at UC Irvine.



A Message from the Alumni Association Board

Dear Sagehens,

I want to extend a warm welcome to the Class of 2025—our newest members of the Sagehen alumni community! No matter where life takes you after Pomona, your fellow alumni are here to support you on your journey. Please update your contact information at pomona.edu/update-your-info to stay in touch, learn about Sagehen gatherings near you or organize an alumni event in your area.

As we celebrate our graduates and welcome the Class of 2029 to campus, I find myself valuing Pomona’s traditions more with each passing year. Traditions that older Pomona classes fondly remember—Mufti, dunking friends in the fountain on their birthdays, omelets at Frank and so many more—are woven with newer ones, like the Harry Potter holiday dinner and Ski-Beach Day. This evolution of traditions creates connections within and across classes, anchoring us to the special memories we created at Pomona.

All my best,
Andrea

— **Andrea Venezia ’91**
President, Pomona College
Alumni Association Board



Be willing to take chances

“Getting outside your comfort zone can lead to things that you otherwise never would have done or accomplished. The superb liberal arts education you receive at Pomona College gives you two tools with which to explore the unknown: the flexibility in thinking that comes from exposure to many academic disciplines and the ability to keep learning throughout your lives. Go out there and do something daring—and always take your intellectual curiosity with you!”

— An internationally recognized health economist, Blaisdell Distinguished Alumni Award honoree **Charles “Chuck” E. Phelps ’65** is a professor emeritus and provost emeritus at the University of Rochester.



Understanding who you are is essential

“Your time at Pomona is critical for gaining knowledge of academic subject matter and the world around you, but also of your own self. Self-knowledge requires flexibility, a willingness to challenge existing beliefs and exposure to the many kinds of experiences that are available to you at the College. Learn, and prepare to continue learning for the rest of your life.”

— A longtime Sagehen supporter who strengthens his classmates’ connection to Pomona, Alumni Distinguished Service Award honoree **John Rabold ’75** is a retired finance professional and community volunteer.



Stay active with the alumni community

“For the rest of your life, you will cross paths with other Pomona alumni—sometimes in the most unexpected places. After you graduate, keep and nurture those meaningful relationships you’ve developed with fellow students, alumni, faculty and staff. Stay connected to each other and be an active part of the alumni community. You are an important member of the Sagehen flock.”

— A former director of alumni relations at Pomona and dedicated volunteer, Alumni Distinguished Service Award honoree **Nancy Treser-Osgood ’80** is a senior consultant with The Phoenix Philanthropy Group.



Explore the unexpected

“Take classes outside of your major and other interests. It may be one of the last times you’ll have the freedom to learn subjects outside of your area of concentration in the company of some of the most wonderful people you’ll ever meet. The further afield the subject, the better; you never know where it may lead.”

— A global storyteller bringing underrepresented voices to cinematic life, Inspirational Young Alumni Award honoree **Priya Amritraj ’15** is head of film and television for Hyde Park Entertainment Group.



Read more at pomona.edu/alumni-awards.



Read more about
Pomona College traditions at
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Kristl Tomlin '05

Kristl Tomlin was featured in a pair of *New York Times* opinion pieces as a “reproductive rights refugee.”

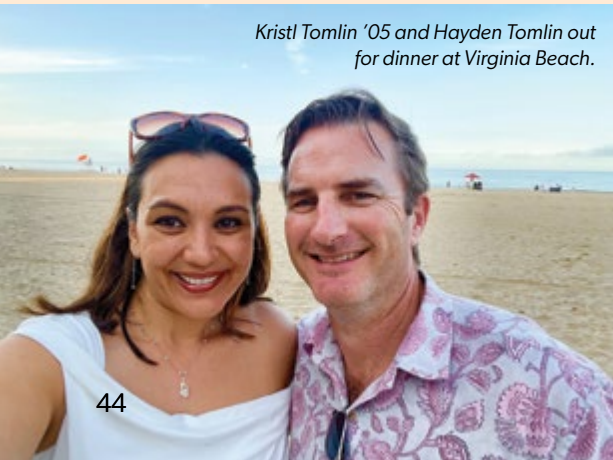
Tomlin, a pediatric and adolescent gynecologist, explained in an article and a separate podcast how the restrictive abortion and contraception laws in South Carolina tragically affected her ability to care for her young patients and forced her to move to another state. She left behind a rewarding practice of seven years in Columbia and a faculty position at the University of South Carolina.

In the post-*Roe v. Wade* world, 13 states have enacted abortion bans and restricted access to contraception. In South Carolina, abortions at the time were allowed up until a fetal heartbeat was detected by ultrasound, usually about six weeks, with extra time given to victims of rape and incest at 13 weeks.

Tomlin told *The Times* about two abortions she performed: one for a 12-year-old girl raped at a party by a 15-year-old boy, and a 13-year-old girl who was kidnapped off the streets and repeatedly assaulted.

“There was no ambiguity about it being rape,” Tomlin said. As long as she followed the onerous steps and timelines set up by the state’s Fetal Heartbeat and Protection from Abortion Act, signed into law in May 2023, Tomlin and the lawyers advising her employer thought it would be OK.

But when Tomlin reported the first abortion to law enforcement and the health department, it became clear that it wasn’t. After she gave the required information, the voice on the phone asked a lot of personal questions about the patient and about the doctor herself.



Kristl Tomlin '05 and Hayden Tomlin out for dinner at Virginia Beach.



Kristl Tomlin '05 moved her pediatric and adolescent gynecology practice to Virginia from South Carolina because of that state's restrictive laws on reproductive rights.

When she reported the second procedure, she was told that a uniformed deputy would be dispatched to the clinic “to talk to her.”

“Oh no you won’t,” Tomlin replied.

“They seemed emboldened to treat me like a criminal,” she told *The Times*. “And even when an abortion ban has rape and incest exceptions, it is exceedingly difficult to execute them.”

The tightening restrictions in the state laws regarding reproductive rights began almost immediately after the U.S. Supreme Court overturned the constitutional right to abortion in June 2022 with the *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization*. Many women’s health centers, including abortion clinics where women had often gotten their birth control, closed after the *Dobbs* decision.

“The week *Dobbs* was handed down, a 15-year-old was brought to my office for contraception,” Tomlin said. “There was a lot of fear about whether birth control was illegal, and there was a lot of confusion. The girl was crying, her mother was crying, and the grandmother was crying and said, ‘My granddaughter has fewer rights than I did. What kind of world is this?’”

Tomlin, her husband Hayden and their two daughters packed up and moved to a more lenient health care state, Virginia. Since

August 2024, she has been in private practice in Norfolk and is an associate professor of pediatrics and obstetrics and gynecology at Old Dominion University.

“We have been here a whole school year, but haven’t settled in yet,” Tomlin said. “And we all miss our house, the wrap-around front porch, the yearly St. Patrick’s Day parties and the community.”

“But I was forced to leave South Carolina so that I could continue to help girls and women,” she said. “It got to the point where it was intolerable and unsafe.”

Women and girls can travel to other states for abortions if they can afford it. But penalties in their home states for that are severe.

“We tend to think regionally, and some might say of the abortion bans, well that’s how they do things in the South,” she said. But the ideas are spreading.

“You might live in California or Maine, but you may not have the rights you think you have for much longer.

“Reproductive health care has never been more vulnerable,” Tomlin said. “The reality is that there are very scary restrictions proposed every day all across the U.S. People need to wake up and fight the fight.” [PCM](#)

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Solution for
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Puzzle on
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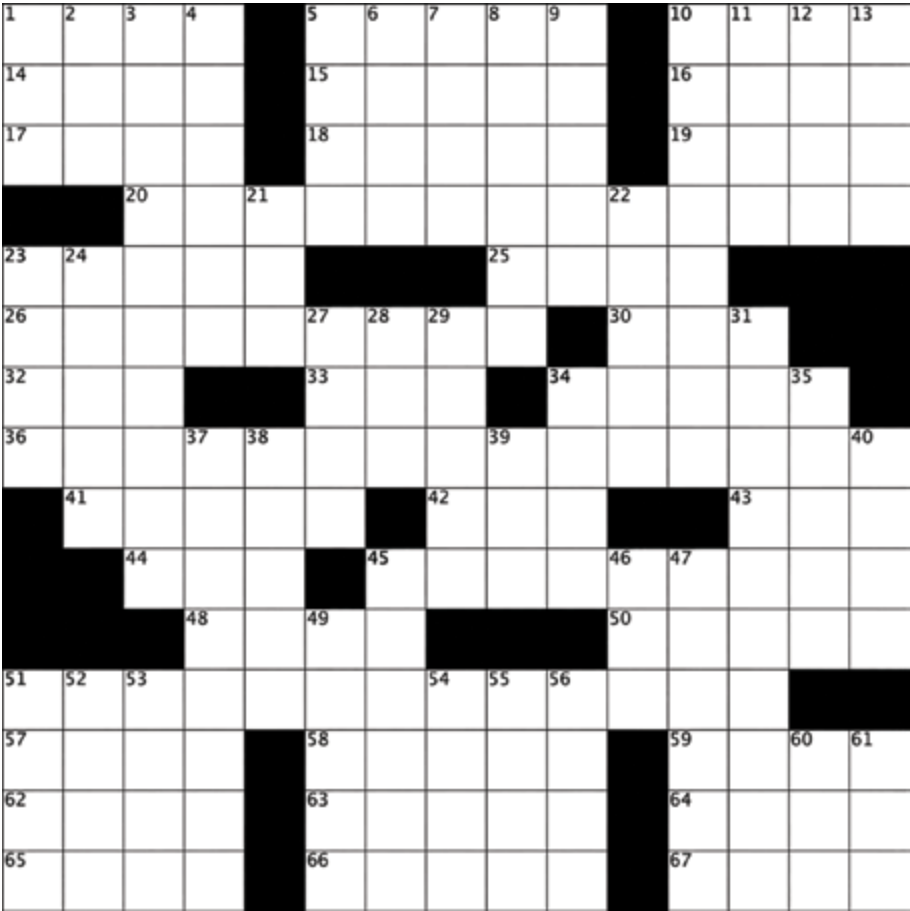
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Over the years by Jasper Davidoff '23

ACROSS

- 1. West Coast rapper Snoop
- 5. Doesn't raise
- 10. Kind of shortened top
- 14. "Arrivederci!"
- 15. Shoe for a 4-down
- 16. Possess
- 17. ___ mater (Pomona, for many reading this)
- 18. Disney film with the anthem "How Far I'll Go"
- 19. Rug measurement
- 20. *Fashion magazine hand-offs?
- 23. Slavic name that means "hope"
- 25. "Gotcha"
- 26. *Enemies that move with alacrity?
- 30. Textbook's replacement, perhaps (abbr.)
- 32. "___ a gift to be simple..."
- 33. Dominate, to a middle schooler
- 34. Output that has been criticized for devaluing and plagiarizing creators
- 36. Transfer from grandparent to grandchild ... or what the starred entries do?
- 41. Achievements by Whoopi Goldberg and Elton John, briefly
- 42. UCLA rival
- 43. Before, poetically
- 44. Cryptographic org.
- 45. *Ability to perceive nearby dark lords?
- 48. Consequently
- 50. Ewok's home planet
- 51. * "Anyone can wear this baby garment"?
- 57. Stylish footrest
- 58. Going whale-watching, perhaps
- 59. "To the best of my knowledge," over DM
- 62. Fatty cut of tuna
- 63. "Inside Out" protagonist Andersen
- 64. Hard cook on a swordfish steak
- 65. Toffee bar coated in milk chocolate
- 66. Appears
- 67. Phish's Anastasio or Pelicans' Murphy



DOWN

- 1. Alternative destination to IAD
- 2. Graza offering
- 3. Distinctly 21st-century major or media studies subject
- 4. One who interrupts points being made?
- 5. "I want to be looped in!"
- 6. Frequently
- 7. Shakespearean monarch
- 8. Hawaiian-style porches
- 9. What today's teens might call Beatlemaniacs
- 10. Was visibly annoyed by
- 11. Like a four-leaf clover
- 12. Walkie dispatch closer
- 13. Snow or snap crops
- 21. Muscle you work in a pull-up, briefly
- 22. Oldish tint that might appear on a newer show
- 23. JPEG-based investments that are now largely worthless
- 24. Similar
- 27. Gets kind of steamy (with up)?
- 28. Be on the hook
- 29. Feeling of despondent tedium
- 31. More likely to introduce oneself
- 34. St. Louis or Paris landmark
- 35. What most mannequins feature
- 37. Gets ready to take, say
- 38. Company that put out "Pong" in 1972 and "RollerCoaster Tycoon World" in 2016
- 39. Approx.
- 40. ___-do-well (loafer)
- 45. Sentimental person, even if they hide it
- 46. The Baltic or Black
- 47. Get to volunteer
- 49. Ten on a 21-speed bike
- 51. Decides
- 52. Paperback's replacement, perhaps
- 53. Belgian bill
- 54. ___ Royale National Park
- 55. Nearly overflow
- 56. Declares
- 60. Carly ___ Jepsen ("The Loneliest Time" singer)
- 61. Bawl

← Crossword Challenge

The solution is available on page 46.

Map o' Pomonas

For this issue's SageChat, we asked alums on Facebook: **where's the strangest place you've seen a "Pomona" out in the wild?**

Across the world there are at least 28 cities named "Pomona," spanning multiple continents, including sub-Saharan Africa, the coral reefs of the Caribbean and the tropical rainforests of South America. Our name also graces at least a dozen restaurants and businesses, including "Fattoria Pomona" (a farm in Italy), and the Pomona "Smoothie Dealer" in coastal Mexico. An honorable mention: Idaho's 230-acre Sage Hen Reservoir.

Enjoy this map of Pomonas around the world!



Pomona State Park, Kansas
If you were wondering about the name of Kansas' 17th most popular state park, fear not: it's Pomona! The space has a manmade lake and hosts events like a "vintage retro trailer rally."

Pomona, Illinois

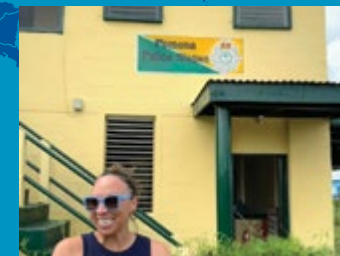
Pomona, New York

Pomona Smoothie Dealer, Mexico

Pomona Police Station, Belize

Ruinās de Pomoná, Mexico

Within the rainforests of southeastern Mexico lies a bed of Mayan archaeological ruins that historians believe to have been settled in the first century C.E. Only discovered in 1959, the site now has a museum showing off more than 120 stone and clay artifacts, with hieroglyphs suggesting that Mayans referred to the area as "Pakbul," meaning "the house of copal" (a tree resin used to make incense).



Sesyle Moorhead '99



Pomona Island, Scotland

The largest of the Orkney Islands, it's more commonly referred to as "the Mainland"—and was actually originally named "Pomona" thanks to a Scottish scholar mistranslating a Roman passage about it in the 16th century. Its erroneous legacy now lives on 11,000 miles away in New Zealand, where it became the name of the largest island in the country's largest national park.

Bageri Pomona (Pomona Bakery), Sweden

"I named the bakery after the Roman goddess of fruit and garden. I use a lot of organic and locally produced ingredients, and the food is vegetarian so I figured it would be a suitable goddess to name it after. Sometimes guests ask if it's from the American city of Pomona, or from Harry Potter!"
- Owner Elsa Sundell ("Elsa Pomona")



Matthew Toma '06 in front of Bageri Pomona, Sweden

Pomona Temple, Germany

While the Claremont location might not have a standalone temple, you can find one in Potsdam, the film-forward city known for being "Germany's Hollywood." Commissioned in 1800 to be designed by famed Berlin architect Karl Friedrich Schinkel, it was purchased by King Frederick William III in 1817 for royal visits before being reconstructed and converted into a modern-day event venue.



Pomona's Restaurant, England

Fattoria Pomona ("Pomona Farm"), Italy

Pomona City gated community, Zimbabwe

Pomona Road, Johannesburg, South Africa
(Courtesy Chinasa T. Okolo '18)



"Through the Gates"

Eli Fessler '17 was in Matsuyama, a city on the least populated and smallest of Japan's four main islands, and came across something surprising walking past the front entrance of an all-girls high school: Pomona President James A. Blaisdell's quote that appears on the beams "through the gates" of College Avenue.

Pomona, Queensland

During her travels down under Julie Trescott '08 stumbled across this town, which features a distillery and the self-proclaimed "world's oldest silent movie theater."





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