

PITZER COLLEGE

Spring 2026

The PARTICIPANT MAGAZINE



The Mural of the Story

Public art at Pitzer doesn't just dress up campus — it's a reminder of our community's voices and values. **p. 24**

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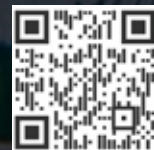
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Collective Voices

The mural, "Pitzer Past, Present, and Future," was painted by students on the east wall of Avery Hall under the supervision of Paul Botello, Pitzer's artist-in-residence during the 1996-97 academic year. Today, that mural – a joyful celebration of solidarity at the heart of the Pitzer community – is still in the same location, but it's now protected from the elements by the creation of the Stein Atrium. In 2008, Botello and a team of students expanded the mural, which greets visitors to events held at the college's Benson Auditorium. VIEW MORE HISTORIC MURAL PHOTOS: Scan code or visit www.pitzer.edu/participant



What Does It Mean to Learn Fearlessly?



Dear Pitzer Community,

At a time when the pace of change can feel overwhelming due to rapid advances in technology as well as environmental and political challenges, this question matters more than ever. Our students are entering a world that demands more than technical expertise. It requires curiosity, critical thinking and the courage to participate fully in an unknowable future.

That conviction lies at the heart of Pitzer's new strategic vision, embraced by our community last fall: to ignite change for a more just, sustainable, inclusive world by educating every student to think critically, act courageously and engage compassionately.

This newly adopted vision reflects principles that have a long tradition at Pitzer. Education here has always meant more than mastering a field of study. It means asking difficult questions, exploring unfamiliar perspectives, and connecting ideas across disciplines, cultures and communities. Learning takes place in classrooms and laboratories, but also in creative work, community engagement and the everyday conversations that challenge us to see the world differently.

The stories in this issue of *The Participant* offer a glimpse of that spirit in action.

You will encounter the work of Dean of Faculty Chawne Kimber, whose acclaimed quilts and scholarship demonstrate how creative practice can become a powerful form of social inquiry. Her work reflects the kind of intellectual and artistic exploration that encourages students to look beyond familiar boundaries.

You will read why the U.S. Fulbright Program named Pitzer the nation's top producer of Fulbright students among baccalaureate institutions. The honor reflects a culture of mentorship in which faculty, staff and alumni are working together to help students carry ideas from the classroom into meaningful global engagement.

And you will hear from students including Stella Stringer '26, who plans to work within the financial sector to advance sustainability, reflecting the growing determination among students to engage complex systems in pursuit of meaningful progress.

The cover story traces the history of mural painting at Pitzer, which has long given students a visible way to express their ideas and convictions. Over time, these murals have become part of the cultural landscape of our campus and reminds that learning often begins with the courage to make one's voice heard.

Across these stories runs a common thread: a commitment to learning that is both intellectually rigorous and deeply engaged with the world.

As I reflect on the work of our students, faculty and alumni, I am continually inspired by the ways they approach the future with curiosity, creativity and a willingness to challenge assumptions.

Provida Futuri,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Strom".

Strom C. Thacker
President



PITZER COLLEGE

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ON THE COVER: Details from several of Pitzer's campus murals are arranged here to form the shape of a wave form. To explore these and other murals, visit www.pitzer.edu/murals.



READ THE PARTICIPANT ONLINE:

Visit www.pitzer.edu/participant for related expanded content, photo exclusives, and more.

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GATHER TOGETHER

Exciting events are coming; we hope you'll join us!



Commencement

May 16, 2026

Under the big tent: A community-wide celebration of the Class of 2026!



New Student Orientation

August 22, 2026

Ready to move in? Incoming students and their families arrive for the 2026-27 academic year.



Rivalry Weekend

September 2026

It's payback time: The Sagehens need to take that trophy from the CMS Stags. Come and cheer them on!



Harvest Festival

November 2026

Music, food, and magic on a beautiful fall night, brought to you by the Office of Student Affairs.



Family Weekend

November 2026

A festive weekend for parents to see their students and enjoy the Pitzer experience.



STAY UPDATED: For more information on these events and more, visit www.pitzer.edu/events.



COMMENCEMENT

Truth to Power

Activist, educator and scholar Angela Y. Davis returns to Pitzer to give the keynote address at Commencement 2026

Angela Y. Davis, a celebrated political activist, professor and author deeply involved in social justice movements around the world, will deliver keynote remarks to the class of 2026 during this year's commencement ceremony in May.

Davis started her activist journey while growing up in Birmingham, Alabama, which was one of the most segregated cities in the country. She received national attention in 1969 after being removed from her teaching position in UCLA's philosophy department due to her social activism and membership in the Communist Party USA. She was also associated with other groups including the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee and the Black Panther Party. In the early 1970s, Davis was imprisoned

for more than a year and later acquitted, becoming an international symbol of political repression and resistance. Her 16-month incarceration sparked a massive international "Free Angela Davis" campaign, which led to her acquittal in 1972. She has described this time as a "formative" period for what became her lifelong work in prisoner rights.

Her work for more than 60 years has focused on prisons, police, abolition and the related intersections of race, gender and class. She is a founding member of Critical Resistance, a national organization dedicated to the dismantling of the prison-industrial complex. She is the author of many books, from "Angela Davis: An Autobiography" to "Freedom is a Constant

Struggle." Her recent books include "Abolition. Feminism. Now." (written with Gina Dent, Erica Meiners and Beth Richie) and the book of essays "Abolition: Politics, Practices, Promises, Vol.1." Davis is distinguished professor emerita of the history of consciousness and feminist studies at the University of California, Santa Cruz. Previously, Davis delivered commencement remarks at Pitzer in 2012.



WATCH VIDEO: To view Pitzer's 62nd ceremony on May 16 as a livestream or video, visit www.pitzer.edu/commencement.

AROUND THE MOUNDS



Celebrating Fulbright Alumni

The Claremont Chapter of the Fulbright Association hosted a fall celebration at the Grove House (pictured above). The event introduced the chapter's executive board members: President **Edel Jose '04**, Vice President **Dr. Rainbow Chung-Ou '06** and Treasurer **Kenneth Butler '22**.

Honored by the Obama Foundation

Environmental caretaker, Hawaiian cultural steward, and youth educator: **Kepa Barrett '17** embodies all three roles. His leadership has earned him a place in the Obama Foundation's 2025-26 Leaders Asia-Pacific cohort. Barrett is the manager of sustainability and 'āina-based learning for Kamehameha Schools Kapālama. 'Āina-based education emphasizes reciprocity between land, ocean, air, and all forms of life. Barrett helps K-12 students learn about environmental careers and their Hawaiian culture.



Leading the Sagehens

Pitzer and Pomona Colleges have appointed **Danielle Lynch, Ed.D.**, as the new director of athletics for the Pomona-Pitzer athletic program and chair of Pomona College's physical education department. Lynch previously served as the director of athletics at Haverford College, where she fostered an inclusive culture in which sports amplify education. Lynch started in her new role on April 1.

Student Senate Seeks to Make Care Accessible

Pitzer's Student Senate passed legislation that formalized the college's commitment to make free menstrual products available in women's and all-gender bathrooms in the academic quad. Student Senate President **Ella Hale '26** introduced the initiative and collaborated with staff members **Laura Schaefer, Mark Crawbuck** and **Maggie Hernandez** to turn it into reality.





Calling All Techies!

To join Pitzer Connect, the first tech club at Pitzer, expertise in coding and data is not required. Only curiosity. (From left) **Frederica Aboagye '28**, **Cephason Omonoh '28**, **Omar Mnfy '27** and **Amen Divine Ikamba '27** (not pictured: **Yaw Acquah '28**) founded the club this fall to support students interested in computer and data science. Their story was featured in the 5C newspaper *The Student Life*.

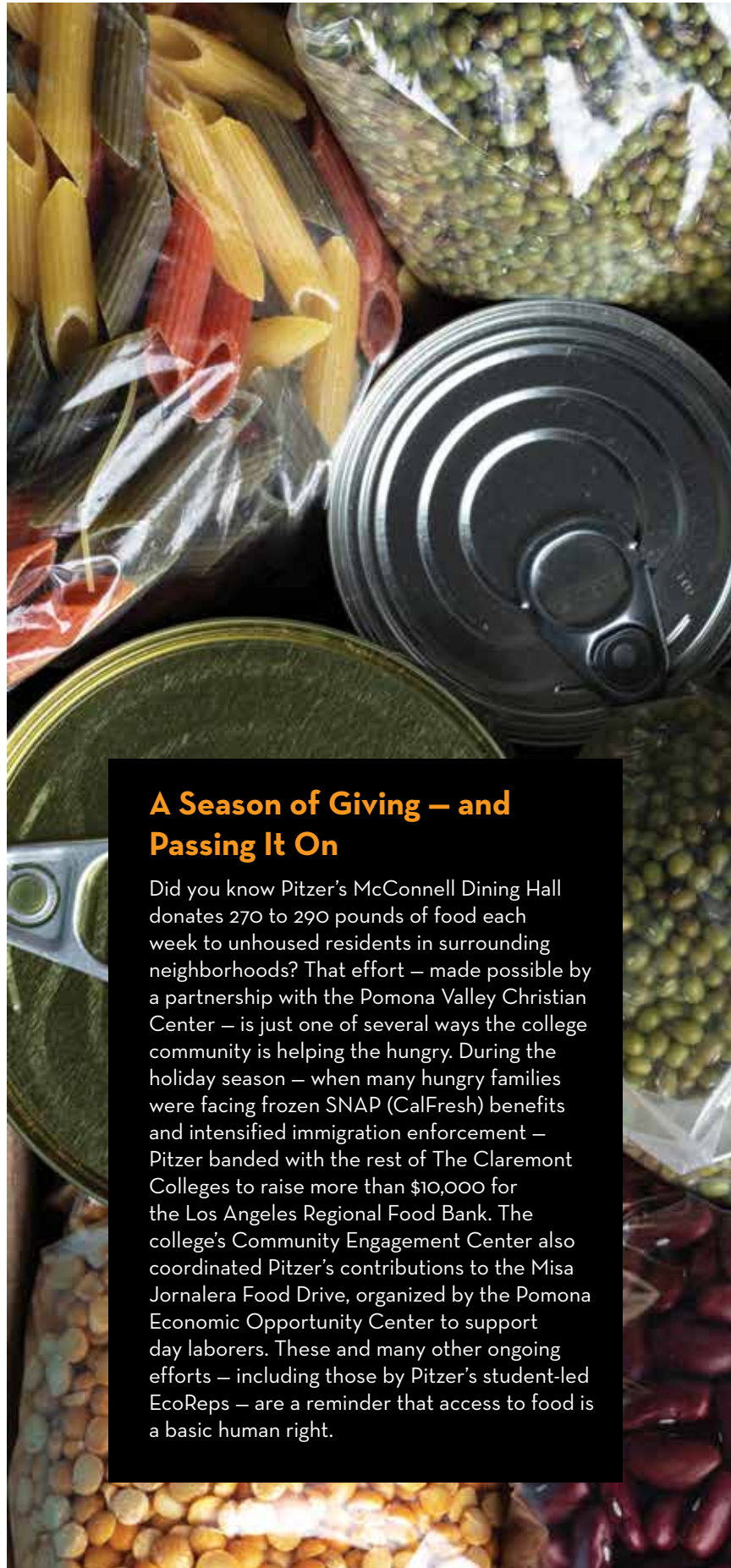
In Pursuit of Health Justice

A person's health amounts to more than a pill bottle. This conviction drives the activities of **Oswaldo Romero Vasquez '27** as a health justice and education advocate. Campus Compact has recognized his passion for change-making by selecting him as a 2025-26 Newman Civic Fellow, a program that seeks to nurture student development as civic leaders. Romero Vasquez, a biology and chemistry major, plans to pursue an MD-PhD track to understand human health in a community-oriented context.



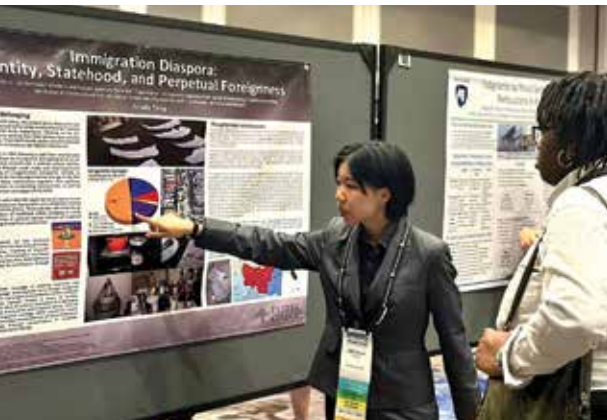
A Presidential Screening

During Family Weekend 2025, Pitzer's Presidential Initiative on Constructive Dialogue welcomed filmmaker Adam Bronfman PO '85 (and spouse **Cindy Bronfman '86**) for a screening of "I Have A Name." The documentary follows artist-activist Jon Linton and his Let's Be Better Humans project, which helps people experiencing homelessness. Pitzer President **Strom C. Thacker** joined Bronfman and Linton for a post-screening discussion. Learn more about the constructive dialogue initiative at www.pitzer.edu.



A Season of Giving – and Passing It On

Did you know Pitzer's McConnell Dining Hall donates 270 to 290 pounds of food each week to unhoused residents in surrounding neighborhoods? That effort – made possible by a partnership with the Pomona Valley Christian Center – is just one of several ways the college community is helping the hungry. During the holiday season – when many hungry families were facing frozen SNAP (CalFresh) benefits and intensified immigration enforcement – Pitzer banded with the rest of The Claremont Colleges to raise more than \$10,000 for the Los Angeles Regional Food Bank. The college's Community Engagement Center also coordinated Pitzer's contributions to the Misa Jornalera Food Drive, organized by the Pomona Economic Opportunity Center to support day laborers. These and many other ongoing efforts – including those by Pitzer's student-led EcoReps – are a reminder that access to food is a basic human right.



Anthropology in Action

Pitzer community members shone brightly at the 2025 annual meeting of the American Anthropological Association (AAA).

Ezriella Tang '27 (pictured) presented her poster, "Immigration Diaspora: Identity, Statehood, and Perpetual Foreignness." The AAA's Archaeology Division gave Tang the Student Membership Award for her work. Tang is pursuing a double major in anthropology and cognitive science, with a minor in French and francophone studies.

Xinyi Wu (吴心怡) '25, an environmental analysis major, presented her research about how bone ash apartments are an under-the-radar alternative to cemeteries in urban China. She published her research in "Platypus," the blog of the AAA's Committee on the Anthropology of Science, Technology, and Computing.

Professor **Claudia Strauss** was co-organizer of a panel on "Political Subjectivities in a Time of Ontological Threats, Trauma and Social Turmoil." She presented a paper titled "Personal/ Political Storylines in Turbulent Times."

Professor **Timothy Hartshorn** represented Pitzer at two roundtable sessions that engaged anthropological practice in the academy and in real life.

Professors **Jo Ann Wang** and **Eduard Fanthome** organized a panel that examined the politics of "presence" and "presencing" as described by James Ferguson (2021). They also presented their research into diaspora-turned-minority Chinese Malaysians.

Decades of Study Abroad Dedication

Associate Dean of International Programs **Kebokile Dengu-Zvobgo** retired from Pitzer in January after more than 35 years at the college. Dengu-Zvobgo first joined as director of what was then the Pitzer-Scripps study abroad program in Zimbabwe. Later, she grew Pitzer's exchange programs in the Dean's Office and Office of Study Abroad & International Programs.



Art and Nuclear Justice

This spring, Pitzer College Art Galleries presented "Atomic Dragons," a group exhibition by the intergenerational collective SWANS (Slow War Against the Nuclear State). Formed in 2022, SWANS examines the social, political and environmental impact of the nuclear age through various artistic forms and research-based works.



Rooted in feminist art lineages, decolonial practice, and anti-nuclear environmental activism, "Atomic Dragons" connected the personal and the political. The exhibition linked the Cold War and the start of the atomic era to present-day questions of waste, contamination, transgenerational nuclear justice, and more. Drawing on family archives from renowned physicists, the Manhattan Project, and histories of activism, several members addressed the impacts on their lives as they grapple with the nuclear legacy.

The exhibition culminated on April 4 with a symposium featuring the artists and Claremont Colleges faculty members.

An "Obra Maestra" That Matters



Nydia Armendia-Sánchez '02 grew up without seeing herself or her Latiné culture in children's books. Where was the casual blending of English and Spanish? Her multilingual experience inspired her debut book, *Not Far From Here*.

When Armendia-Sánchez was a child, growing up in Ontario, California, she was discouraged from mixing and matching languages. She wanted to illustrate speaking multiple languages as a strength – both in her household and in her writing.

"Today, there's a lot of emphasis on the power of the bilingual brain," said Armendia-Sánchez. "However your linguistic journey manifests itself is OK. ... There is value in commanding both languages."

Armendia-Sánchez majored in Spanish at Pitzer, which cemented her fluency in the language and her connection to her heritage. These aspects of her identity influence her as an author. Learn about her latest book on Page 43.

EASY PZ

Some facts and figures about the Pitzer Community

#1

Pitzer's place on the latest U.S. Fulbright baccalaureate list for having the most Fulbright student recipients (see more on Page 37)

8

Number of new murals added to the Pitzer campus in the 2025-26 academic year (see more on Page 24)

\$200,000

Gift from Emeriti Professors Ann Stromberg and Rudi Volti in support of study abroad opportunities (see more on Page 41)

270-290

Pounds of food donated each week by McConnell dining hall to feed unhoused members of the local community (see more on Page 7)

\$20,000

Grant from the Pepper Family Foundation to support artists displaced by the 2025 wildfires during a Pitzer residency (see more on Page 14)



COMMUNITY

In the Media

“What we want to make sure is that people get access to information that they need, that is useful for their lives, and that gives them a sense of connection to their neighbors.”

—Pitzer College Board of Trustees Chair and alum Michele Siqueiros '95 spoke to CNN about her work as the founding CEO of The LA Local



“This is the nadir, the pit of despair. They're thinking, better to be devoured by a beautiful lion than to be torn apart by a horde of foul wolves.”

—Visiting Professor of Political Studies Shervin Malekzadeh talked to The Guardian about online Iranian responses to the war in Iran.

DISTINCTIONS

Of Fireflies and K-Pop

Our faculty's latest accomplishments dive deep into the richness of nature, global cultural trends and much more

Fireflies and Medicine

In the hands of Professor of Chemistry **Aaron Leconte**, the source of a firefly's glow is a biomedical tool. The National Institutes of Health has awarded Leconte with a \$503,298 grant to explore firefly luciferase's potential in observing biological processes.

The NIH's three-year R15 grant will support Leconte and his student researchers' salaries, instrumentation, and materials for the next three years. Leconte is also a co-author of a recent American Chemical Society article that studies chemically modified forms of DNA (known as XNA).

Biochemistry of Canals

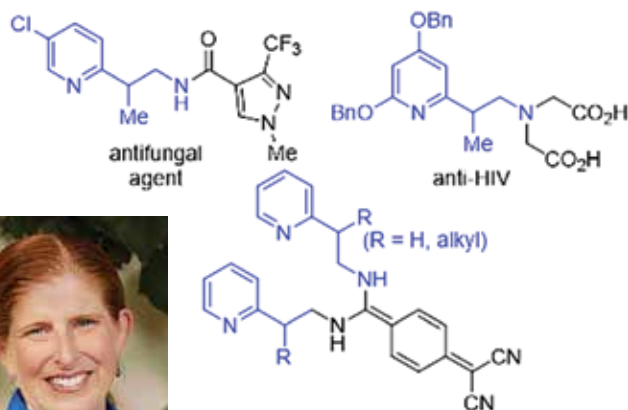
A three-year \$446,000 grant from the National Science Foundation has been awarded to Department of Natural Sciences Professors **Katie Purvis-Roberts** and **Pete Chandrangsu** to lead student researchers in their intercontinental project, "Canal, Chemistry & Community: Understanding Chemical & Microbiological Water Quality & Biodiversity." The NSF grant will support summer research experiences in Bangkok, Thailand, with students exploring the chemical and microbiological water quality and biodiversity of Bangkok's canal system. Purvis-Roberts is a professor of chemistry and environmental science, and Chandrangsu is an associate professor of biology.



(RUIRUITO - STOCK.ADOBE.COM)

Innovations in Chemistry

Professor of Chemistry **Anna Wenzel** has been awarded a \$250,000 grant from the National Science Foundation to explore the catalytic formation of compounds that are crucial for industries ranging from pharmaceuticals to agriculture. The three-year grant will support her project, "Leveraging Coinage Metals for Carbon-Nitrogen and Carbon-Phosphorus Bond Formation." Wenzel is a member of the Pitzer-Scripps Department of Natural Sciences. Her NSF project will support hands-on STEM training for undergraduate researchers from Pitzer and Scripps.



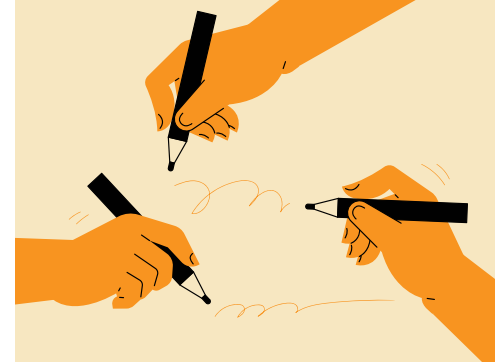
Past and Present Data

Associate Professor of Mathematics **Jemma Lorenat** co-organized the “Big Data Before Data Science” conference held in December at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver. The joint event, held under the auspices of the Pacific Institute for the Mathematical Sciences and International Centre for Mathematical Sciences, explored how legacies of past data practices continue to inform the present.



Habits of Mind

Is our attention span deteriorating? Is our attention being commodified and fracked by our increasing addiction to smart phones and social media? Pitzer College’s Munroe Center for Social Inquiry addressed these and other questions during its successful fall 2025 lecture series, “Cultivating Attention.” Professor of Cognitive Science **Timothy Justus** is the 2025-26 MCSI director. The Munroe Center for Social Inquiry is named after two of Pitzer’s founding faculty: the late Robert “Lee” and Ruth Hagberg Munroe.



It Takes a Village

How often do professors invite students to help shape their book-in-progress? Not every day – but at Pitzer, it happens. An associate professor of English and world literature is doing just that. As Pitzer’s 2025-26 scholar in residence, **Amanda Lagji** is teaching a spring course on counterinsurgency, in which students don’t just study texts—they are taking an active part in collaborating on her current book project.

Titled “Counterinsurgency and the Weaponization of Time: Insecure Futures in Contemporary Global Fiction,” Lagji’s book examines how novels and stories grapple with terrorism through four major counterterrorism frameworks. In the classroom, students read, discuss, and offer feedback on draft chapters as they work on drawing connections across literature, history and politics. Together, they are working with these fields of study in order to track the presence of counterinsurgency in colonial spaces.

It’s a hands-on approach that turns learning into a shared creative process. Students aren’t just learning new and unfamiliar texts; they’re getting a chance to take part in the creation of one.

Need a Korean Pop Culture Expert?

Assistant Professor of Media Studies **Andrea Acosta** recently launched MENT Magazine, a digital and print magazine for critical and creative work on Korean popular media and culture.

Acosta is the co-founder and co-editor of the publication. In collaboration with non-profits GYOPO and dublab, MENT Magazine’s launch party welcomed about 100 Los Angeles community members to learn about the publication. Visit www.mentmagazine.com for more information.

Acosta was also featured as an academic expert in the documentary film “Forever We Are Young,” which covers the rise of the K-pop act, BTS, and its global fandom.



Helpful or Problematic?

Medical marijuana – is it helpful or is it hiding deeper issues? In an op-ed debating this question, The Washington Post cited a research paper by **Jared Weisman '20** and Associate Professor of Psychology **Marcus Rodriguez**. The Post said that, according to Weisman and Rodriguez’s study, “only about a third of clinicians said they felt confident talking with patients about medical cannabis, and 86 percent wanted more training.” The study cited by the paper was Weisman’s senior thesis; Weisman was a human biology major and chemistry minor at Pitzer.



(JENNIFER - STOCK.ADOBE.COM)



New Arrivals in Humanities and STEM

Pitzer welcomed six tenure-track faculty for the 2025-26 academic year. New faculty in the humanities include (pictured, from left) Assistant Professor of Gender and Feminist Studies **Tahereh Aghdasifar**, Assistant Professor of Environmental Analysis **Maria Paz Almenara**, Assistant Professor of Modern Languages, Literatures, and Cultures **Mara Barbosa**, and Assistant Professor of Chicana/o Latina/o Transnational Studies **Debbie Duarte**. The Department of Natural Sciences also introduced Assistant Professor of Biology **Mihoko Kato** and Assistant Professor of Physics **Trung (Average) Phan** to the campus community.

Los Angeles Times

EN ESPAÑOL

Migration History The Patterns That Connect Us

Professor **Suyapa Portillo Villeda '96** was recently featured in Los Angeles Times en Español discussing the history and growth of the Honduran community in the United States. In the article, "Thanks to Morazán, the Honduran Community is Growing Vigorously in the U.S.," Portillo Villeda provides a historical perspective on migration patterns dating back to 1853 and the enduring impact of U.S. corporate extraction policies.



NOBEAST/SHERCE - STOCKADOB.COM

Fighting the Superbugs

Assistant Professor of Chemistry **Sierra Williams** and her student research team received a three-year \$457,000 grant from the National Institutes of Health to develop a new kind of protein-based weapon to fight drug-resistant bacteria. The project focuses on a group of proteins known as endolysins, which can destroy bacteria by breaking down their cell walls. Williams' lab will conduct research to create a fuller picture of these proteins as well as develop a tool to quickly test how well they work.

Classroom Liberation

How can higher education disrupt injustice and lead to collective healing? Professor **Tessa Hicks Peterson** equipped the campus community with tools to explore this question. During a Claremont Discourse lecture at The Claremont Colleges Library this fall, Hicks Peterson shared insights from her book "Liberating the Classroom: Healing and Justice in Higher Education."



Faculty Leadership

As of January 1, Professor **Harmony O'Rourke** is Pitzer's new associate dean for student and faculty development for an initial three-year term. O'Rourke is in the History Field Group and Gender and Feminist Studies Field Group. As associate dean, O'Rourke's responsibilities will focus on campus social justice initiatives, mentoring pretenured faculty, faculty professional development, and support for student research. Professor **Ahmed Alwishah** held this role for the past few years and is taking a much-deserved sabbatical in spring 2026.

Welcome to the Editorial Board!

Kevin Grell, an adjunct assistant professor in economics and environmental analysis, joined the editorial board of the Energy Nexus Journal. Energy Nexus is an interdisciplinary journal focused on the intersection of energy, water, and agriculture.

PUBLIC DIALOGUE

All in Good Faith

Pitzer Professor Phil Zuckerman and The New York Times' Ross Douhat sparred on the nature of belief in a recent public conversation

More than 14 years ago, in 2011, Professor Phil Zuckerman launched something unprecedented in the United States: a secular studies program. Guided by fearless innovation that's nurtured at Pitzer, Zuckerman set out to help students understand what ethical behavior might look like when it isn't tied to religious belief.

Over the years, that program has evolved. Today, its focus is less on challenging religion and more on understanding the dynamic relationship between the secular and the sacred.

In the fall, Zuckerman took part in a public dialogue with someone on the opposite end of that spectrum — New York Times columnist Ross Douhat, whose latest book, “Believe: Why Everyone Should Be Religious,” argues that religious faith should be a necessity for all. The two met onstage at Washington University in St. Louis' John C. Danforth Center on Religion and Politics. They offered audiences a thought-provoking exchange on what belief and doubt mean in America today.

Mysteries = God?

For Douhat, religion for the past 20 years has been “in a swift cultural retreat” because of the New Atheists, a group of journalists, public intellectuals, and scientists who, since the September 11 attacks of 2001, have argued that “religion is destructive ... and we'd be better off if we sloughed off its burdens.”

The polarization and toxicity we see in the world today, he added, show what has taken hold in this retreat, which is why his book asks readers to reconsider religious belief. He suggested that humanity's ability to understand the universe's complexity is compelling to him as a sign of a divine creator. In contrast, Zuckerman suggested



Professor Phil Zuckerman (center) exchanges a light moment with the New York Times' Ross Douhat (right) and event moderator Mark Oppenheimer. (PHOTO COURTESY JERRY NAUNHEIM/WASHU)

caution and reserve regarding things that are considered mysteries.

“What a precarious argument,” he said. “Is Ross saying if neuroscientists can't explain everything about consciousness, his god exists? But if they can explain everything about consciousness, God doesn't exist? Yikes. I would argue that the most sane, rational and reasonable position to take is that, when we encounter a mystery, remain in a state of unknowing. Be humble. Be agnostic. Say: ‘We haven't figured this out. We don't know.’ ”

Pitzer's Leadership in Secular Scholarship

Zuckerman continues to represent a program in secular studies that remains the only one in the U.S. Asked in a post-event interview if it feels lonely that Pitzer hasn't

been joined by other schools, he said his response is mixed.

“Is it lonely? Yes and no,” he said. “While ours remains the only such program, there have been so many parallel endeavors that have emerged since we came on the scene.”

Those developments, Zuckerman said, include the creation of the Nonreligion and Secularity Research Network as well as new academic, peer-reviewed journals on secular studies. He pointed to other developments around the world that are encouraging signs that other higher education institutions may soon follow Pitzer's example.



WATCH VIDEO: Professor Phil Zuckerman and The New York Times' Ross Douhat discuss religious belief.

SUSTAINABILITY ROUNDUP

Mindful of a Green Future

A look at various sustainability efforts pursued by the college community in 2025-26

Learning Through Action

Student engagement remains central to Pitzer’s sustainability work. Through the Robert Redford Conservancy for Southern California Sustainability, student fellows led environmental education workshops for more than 100 advanced placement science students from local high schools, introducing core ideas around water conservation and environmental stewardship. Conservancy fellows also shared their work with members of the Pitzer Board of Trustees during an open house (pictured: Student Garden Manager **Mia Teicher '27** with Trustee **David Good P'20**).

On campus, students continue to play hands-on roles in applied sustainability projects. The student garden supports a farm-to-table model, supplying herbs, eggs, and vegetables for Grove House’s student-run kitchen, while other student-led initiatives combine advocacy, research and community engagement.



Responding to Wildfires with Art and Tech

Following the Eaton Fire in Altadena, Pitzer deepened its commitment to climate response through creative practice. With a \$20,000 gift from the Pepper Family Foundation, the college hosted a residency last summer for artists who lost studios in the fire, providing access to campus resources and creative spaces.

This work currently continues with the Activist Artist-in-Residence program. For 2025-26, artist Cienna Benn is collaborating with students, faculty, and community partners to document and preserve Black life and legacies in Altadena. Her project, “Alta-Heirloom: West Lake Memories,” explores archives as both a social and institutional practice.

As the one-year anniversary approached of the devastating Southern California wildfires, the Conservancy also promoted the section of SoCal Earth’s dashboard about fire resources. This section not only presents a historical look back at the past 70 years of wildfires in the region, it’s also a proactive guide. The Conservancy team hopes to change how Southern California communities think about wildfires and to better understand the ways that urban settings interface with the region’s wildlands.



Artist Cienna Benn

Community Engagement

Student leaders continue to play a vital role in cultivating a culture of sustainability. Pitzer EcoReps have organized programs such as EcoFest, ReRoom, Pass-It On Pitzer, and the McConnell Dining Hall composting initiative, diverting food waste to local urban farms. Other efforts to build awareness include sustainability fairs held at campus locations, including the McConnell apron (pictured). At the consortium level, the Conservancy is working with 5C sustainability groups to support student-led environmental initiatives.



Leadership and Institutional Commitment

In fall 2025, Pitzer’s Board of Trustees approved a new long-term strategic vision that positions the college as a leader in environmental sustainability, alongside its commitments to justice-centered education and student success. To support this vision, the college launched the development of a comprehensive Sustainability Plan that embeds accountability, measurable goals, and funding pathways across departments. A newly formed sustainability plan working group – made up of faculty, staff and students – is now helping shape priorities and guide implementation.



Research and Innovation

In partnership with Cal Poly Pomona, Pitzer's Conservancy last fall launched Southern California's first agrivoltaics research site — an innovative model that combines solar energy production with crop cultivation on the same land. Supported by a multimillion-dollar grant, the project advances climate-resilient agriculture while providing research opportunities for students and faculty across disciplines.

The teams at the Conservancy and Cal Poly Pomona's Huntley College of Agriculture welcomed California Agriculture Deputy Secretary Virginia Jameson to visit the installation at Spadra Farm. Jameson delivered keynote remarks at the unveiling, telling attendees that installations like this one "really give me hope for the future of agriculture in California. This project is a microcosm of what farmers do every day. They wake up with the sun and try to figure out ways to do things better."

This year faculty and students at the Conservancy have continued to develop and broaden awareness about SoCal Earth, a publicly accessible climate-mapping platform created with Esri. With support from the Eileen and Harold Brown Foundation, the tool provides updated data on pollution, food security, habitat loss, and wildfire risk, helping communities better understand environmental challenges (see more about SoCal Earth's fire resources in the news brief on Page 14 about Pitzer's response to wildfires).



WATCH VIDEO: Learn more about agrivoltaics research conducted by Pitzer's Redford Conservancy.

Speakers at the agrivoltaics ribbon-cutting at Spadra Farm included (from left) Cal Poly undergrad Richard Connelly, Conservancy Fellow and Project Co-Principal Investigator Rose Olivas, State Deputy Agriculture Secretary Virginia Jameson, Redford Conservancy Director Susan Phillips, Cal Poly Associate Professor Aaron Fox, and Cal Poly's Huntley College of Agriculture Dean Ethan Orr.

Sustainable Campus Operations

Pitzer has integrated sustainability into daily operations through energy-efficient upgrades, EV charging stations (Pitzer is the only school in the consortium to provide this for free), water-saving infrastructure, and a tree restoration effort that planted more than 25 native trees in the past year. Recent work includes upgrades for classrooms and offices as well as for the Nucleus complex (including 124 sustainable features in the LEED Gold-certified Nucleus West building). New EV charging stations in the Sanborn parking lot on the west side of campus are providing additional support to our community; the lot also has received energy efficient lighting, including occupancy sensors; a storm water management provision, including permeable paving; and water-saving drought-tolerant landscaping.





CLASS OF 2026

Changing the System From Inside

Stella Stringer '26 will take her investment banking experience and apply it to global sustainability challenges

Spending her childhood in Zambia changed everything for Stella Stringer.

She said that living in Lusaka, the capital city, gave her an experience richly different from what might have been if she'd been a child in an American city. While her parents, both OBGYNs, worked with a nonprofit organization on HIV and AIDS research, Stringer and her two siblings attended an international school that included students from 46 different nationalities.

"Life moves at a slower pace, and children are less over-scheduled," she said. "There's a strong sense of community, and you learn to appreciate and depend on the people around you."

As Stringer looks ahead to her graduation this spring, she is preparing to join Wells Fargo as an investment banking analyst in the renewables and utilities space based in Charlotte, NC. The pace will be different, she acknowledged, but she sees the role as a training ground for the impact she hopes to have in renewable finance.

That space is an evolving area that focuses on generating, transmitting, and distributing essential services (primarily energy and water), with a significant and growing focus on transitioning from fossil fuels to clean, naturally replenished energy sources. Stringer wants to be a part of it; she said she's eager to understand more about the financing issues and challenges facing companies seeking to make that transition. Her interest in this area was piqued by her summers as an undergraduate spent as an intern for a hydroelectric power project in Zambia.

"I learned a lot about how the industry works," she said. "Last summer in Zambia, I was on the project side, while this summer in Charlotte I was on the financing side. I think it was very valuable to see it from both perspectives, the company's and the bank's."

““ At Pitzer I've been able to get quite a lot done by working through the system and making change from the inside. That's the same approach I want to take to the energy sector. ””

While investment banking is often associated — perhaps thanks to movies and pop culture — with individuals who accumulate wealth for wealth's sake, Stringer has other goals in mind. It all points back to her Pitzer experience, she explained, and her positive experiences collaborating with the administration.

"At Pitzer I've been able to get quite a lot done by working through the system and making change from the inside," she said of her efforts, including a current five-year sustainability action plan she hopes the college will adopt before she graduates. "That's the same approach I want to take to the energy sector."

At Pitzer, Stringer led a push to shift dining hall food waste away from industrial composting facilities and toward local, community composting. In spring 2025, the college began distributing that food waste to local farms — an effort that now receives official funding support from the administration. She also cofounded Pitzer's EcoReps, a group of students who work with the college and the student body on sustainability initiatives. Their projects include ReRoom, a program that collects unwanted items from students at the end of the year — furniture, supplies, and more — and redistributes them to the campus community and local area at low cost or for free.

"I've spent my time at Pitzer figuring out how to move an institution," she said. "Now I want to take those skills and apply them on a bigger scale."

Investment banking was something she was told by a variety of people — including Mia Diamond '25, an investment banking analyst who helped her with the process of applying to Wells Fargo — that she'd need to understand before moving into the area of renewable financing and helping companies to acquire more renewables and to develop renewable projects.

"My analyst job is definitely not my endpoint," she said. "I think that it is just a place where I'm going to learn what I need to be successful in this field and make the largest impact. Ultimately, I don't know yet what my final endpoint will be, but this is going to be an important stop on the way there."

CLASS OF 2026

An Artist's View of Her Immediate Future

For Chi Adi '26, graduation opens up a wide world of possibilities to explore

When Chi Adi '26 imagines her life after graduation, she doesn't see a fixed destination so much as an open field of possibilities. Artistic creation, self-exploration, and the continued development of her voice are at the center of her plans now ... and whatever form they ultimately take.

"My plans are all a work in progress, but that's good," said Adi, who transferred to Pitzer after a brief stint with Manhattan's The New School. "I feel confident enough in the skills I've amassed at Pitzer that I know I'll be okay no matter where I end up. A liberal arts education has given me a whole host of skills to do a number of jobs to support me in my artistic endeavors."

What are those endeavors? They span mixed media, installation, film and forms she has yet to discover. For Adi, the point of her post-Pitzer plans is exploration. That openness reflects a belief she has strengthened during her time at the college: that every student should have the opportunity to find — and use — their voice.

She has done exactly that through deep involvement in campus life and governance. Adi has served as an admission fellow and a Writing Center fellow, and was named a 2026 Napier fellow for her project to produce an environmental humanities impact documentary. During her undergraduate career she has also received a Katie Lawson Award for Helping Others and was a co-recipient of a grant from the Sontag Center for Collaborative Creativity (The Hive) to revitalize a 5C club for students interested in organizational studies, her major, which she has paired with a minor in sociology.

Adi's academic interests are rooted in her lived experience. Before her undergraduate

years, she attended Phillips Academy, the prestigious Massachusetts boarding school founded in 1778. The daughter of Nigerian immigrants, she took the lead in navigating the complex admissions process for an elite educational institution.

At Andover, she encountered both opportunity and inequity. Adi said she also found herself put into the role of speaking out for marginalized communities.

"I was very vocal as a student, but I felt I had to be," she said.

“It's a school that rewards you for being a self-starter. Those skills—street smarts and institutional literacy—have been really transferable.”

After graduating, Adi moved to New York City, taking a gap year that became an important period of artistic and personal growth. She pursued film fellowships, worked a range of jobs to support herself — including one that involved pulling stray threads out of large tapestries — and built connections in the city's creative community.

"I was really patchworking my life together, but it was good," she said. "I learned a lot about myself and what I was capable of."

She later enrolled at The New School but ultimately decided to transfer, drawn to Pitzer's shared governance model, intimate size, and its place within the Claremont Colleges consortium.

"At The New School, I saw shared governance described as an aspiration," she said. "But at Pitzer, students are actually part of the process. It wasn't just an idea here — it was real. That really appealed to me."

Adi said her past experiences have helped her navigate Pitzer with confidence. "It's a school that rewards you for being a self-starter," she said. "Those skills — street smarts and institutional literacy — have been really transferable."

Adi credits her liberal arts education, and especially her advisor, Organizational Studies Professor Barbara Junisbai, with helping her embrace uncertainty rather than worry about it. She has helped her treat it as a space for growth rather than anxiety.

"She's so open to meeting you where you are, not where she thinks you should be," Adi said. "She's been such a great sounding board. It means so much to have her as a mentor and in my corner."

As graduation approaches, Adi said she is waiting to hear about her application for a Watson Fellowship. But she plans to spend the immediate months after Pitzer traveling and continuing to explore her artistic practice regardless of the outcome, drawing on savings from years of work. She sees the time after college not as a break from her education but as its continuation — a chance to deepen the creative and intellectual pursuits she's identified as an undergrad.

"It's been a time for me to clarify my interests and how I like to work, and to plant seeds for the future," she said. "I've learned to see this time not as something I need to rush through, but as something meaningful in itself. What I'm doing now is discovering things for myself."





CLASS OF 2026

Pages From His Undergraduate Playbook

How a Pitzer network has helped Joaquin Valdez '26 find his way and break into sports media

What put Pitzer College on Joaquin Valdez '26's radar?

A message on his phone.

At the end of his senior season as a Seattle-area high school football player, Valdez was sitting on his couch one Sunday morning when a Twitter notification popped up. It was from the Sagehens football coaching staff.

"They liked my grades and film and thought I'd be a great addition," he said. "It was very cool that they reached out. It shows how, at a smaller school, athletics and admissions really work together. I wasn't just a number. They wanted to hear my full story."

Now an economics major, Valdez has built a successful college career with the Sagehens. He's scored in the annual rivalry game against CMS, contributed to the team's Southern California Intercollegiate Athletic Conference championship push, and built relationships that are shaping his professional future. This spring, he's interning as a production assistant at Fox Sports.

"I love sports. I always have," he said. "To be there, in the middle of everything, is amazing."

The opportunity came through fellow Sagehen Kenric Jameison '23, who works as a production assistant at Fox Sports and helped connect Valdez with the right people. Along the way, Valdez has discovered what he calls the strategic advantage of a small liberal arts network.

"At a bigger school, alumni in high-profile roles might get hundreds of messages asking for help," he said. "At Pitzer, it's

easier to reach out and get a response. There's almost always someone doing what you want to do — and they want you to succeed. They feel the same pride that you feel about our school."

“There’s almost always someone [in the alumni community] doing what you want to do — and they want you to succeed. They feel the same pride that you feel about our school.”

Valdez is spending the spring at Fox and will return to Pitzer in the fall to complete his senior year. It's not exactly how he envisioned his college experience, but being an athlete has taught him — among many other things — the need to adapt and improvise. During the second game of the 2025 season, the 21-year-old receiver fell and suffered a severe wrist injury, including a break and ligament damage, that ended what was supposed to be his final season prematurely.

With the support of his parents, he decided to use the recovery period to focus on professional development and gain some hands-on experience (and more professional connections) in sports production.

His path at Pitzer has included other pivots as well. Valdez said he initially

planned to study science and pursue a career as a pediatrician. But watching older teammates translate their economics degrees into strong careers shifted his thinking.

"I realized I wanted to do the same thing, and Pitzer's econ program is really strong," he said. "I've had some great professors."

He points to Professor Meric Keskinel's macroeconomics and economic development courses as particularly influential — challenging classes that sparked his interest in the business world and presented that world through a lens of economic equity (and inequity) as well as green applications. In addition to his work at Fox Sports, Valdez has also interned in cloud sales with Amazon, gaining real-world experience that complements his coursework.

What's sharpened his professional edge, Valdez added, is the fact that he's been a student athlete at Pitzer. Besides enabling him to pursue his love of sports as a Division III player, he said being a part of Sagehen Athletics has given him additional qualities that employers appreciate.

"I've found that people in the workforce like that you've been involved in college athletics because it's such a big commitment at this level," he explained. "Seeing that I come from a school with a great academic reputation and that I've been an athlete, they know I can manage my time and that I'm driven and self-motivating. Employers want that kind of energy around. Knowing how to be part of a team is huge. I've definitely found that at Pitzer."

GRANT

Pitzer Awarded \$1 Million Grant

An award from the Fletcher Jones Foundation will increase educational access for New Resource students

Pitzer College has received a \$1 million grant from The Fletcher Jones Foundation to expand opportunities for adult learners through the College's New Resource Student (NRS) program.

The funding will strengthen Pitzer's efforts to empower students and broaden access to a liberal arts education for nontraditional students age 23 and older. Many demonstrate strong academic promise but face a variety of barriers to pursuing an education, including gaps in financial aid coverage, family responsibilities and full-time jobs, and the rising cost of basic needs.

Established in 1975, Pitzer College's New Resource Student program was created to expand opportunities for adult learners to earn undergraduate degrees. Over the years, participants have balanced their studies with significant life commitments, bringing unique perspectives and experiences that enrich the classroom and strengthen the campus community.

"The Foundation is proud to support Pitzer's commitment to educational access," said Mary J. Spellman, executive director and treasurer of The Fletcher Jones Foundation.

The Fletcher Jones Foundation grant will provide direct support for up to 24 NRS students over the next three years, helping the College meet the full demonstrated financial need of these students along with ensuring that they receive the same comprehensive financial aid support available to first-year and traditional transfer students.

This grant award comes at a time of significant changes in the world of higher education. Nationally, the number of traditional high school graduates is expected to decline in the coming years, while the population of adults who began their bachelor's degrees (and never finished) continues to grow. Many of these students are closer to finishing their degrees than they might realize, and some may be able to complete their studies at Pitzer in as little as one year.

"Expanding access to a Pitzer education is central to our strategic vision," said Pitzer President Strom C. Thacker. "We're grateful to The Fletcher Jones Foundation for recognizing the importance of this work. Many talented adult learners are eager to complete the degrees they began.

Pitzer is proud to create pathways for them to return and finish."

Since its creation, the New Resource program has had a truly transformative effect on the lives of its participants, whose lives and responsibilities often don't line up with a traditional undergraduate experience.

Named for Fletcher Jones, the co-founder and former chairman and chief executive officer of Computer Sciences Corporation, The Fletcher Jones Foundation was established from Jones's personal estate in 1969. Following his death in 1972, the foundation's trustees determined that supporting private colleges and universities in California would be its primary philanthropic focus.

Through this investment, The Fletcher Jones Foundation will help Pitzer expand an important means of attaining academic opportunities by ensuring that students, regardless of their ages or their life circumstances, have a chance to experience the liberal arts environment offered at Pitzer.





STUDENT LIFE

Chronicling College Life With Style

How Rahim Chilewa '27 turned a passion for storytelling and fashion into a new magazine

Rahim Chilewa '27 was raised on stories. “Ever since I was a child, I’ve lived surrounded by storytellers,” he said. “My dad is a big storyteller. I think it comes from growing up in Tanzania — people getting together and telling and retelling stories was just part of the culture. Growing up in Houston, it was the same for us. Sitting with my two sisters after dinner, listening to him talk about Zanzibar and the Serengeti — that was how we spent so many evenings.”

While his father brought stories to life through spoken word, his mother offered another path. “She’s the pragmatic, practical juxtaposition to my dad’s storytelling,” Chilewa said. She regularly took him and his sisters to the library and instilled in them a passion for reading to carry their imaginations even further.

Together, those influences have shaped what the Pitzer junior calls a lifelong “reverence for story.” His interest in narrative and visual expression has found a unique outlet at Pitzer in Blaremont, the glossy magazine Chilewa founded and now serves as its editor, creative director, and photographer. Drawing inspiration from

classic newsstand titles like Vogue, GQ, Ebony, and Jet, Blaremont blends fashion and long-form storytelling into a publication that could find its place on any newsstand.

Launching a magazine would be an ambitious project for anyone — but Chilewa took it on while balancing a demanding double major in Africana studies and international political economy. For him, the workload is part of his creative drive. “I was thinking about all the magazines I admired, and then I started meeting so many incredibly creative people here,” he said. “At some point in my sophomore year, I thought, something really needs to come out of this.”

Blaremont became that “something” — a print publication with a strong digital presence, shaped by a growing team of collaborators. One of the advantages Pitzer has, for Chilewa, is that belonging to a group of higher education institutions has connected him with many other undergrads across The Claremont Colleges to bring this vision to life. He credits his assistant creative director, Mahbuba Mohammed PO’28, and many others for sharing their skills to produce Blaremont, which launched last spring.

Each issue is built like a visual narrative. Shoots are carefully staged by Chilewa, who produces most of the material in collaboration with Mahbuba. “I think about every feature like a scene,” Chilewa said. “Where is the story happening? What’s the mood? What should the lighting feel like?”

The result: a professional, high-class publication whose style reflects its creator’s — Chilewa has to be one of the nattiest-attired undergrads on the Pitzer campus.

In Blaremont, he showcases the stories and styles of everyone he’s gotten to know through his involvement with the Office of Black Student Affairs and Pitzer’s Black Student Union. He may have his hands full with two majors, but he’s made time for the publication because it’s more than a passion project for him — he sees its celebration of the achievements and experiences of Black students as a means of boosting intercultural understanding. Chilewa invites all readers to explore the publication and learn more about the lives chronicled there.

Chilewa said he is particularly grateful to the OBSA, which has given him something many magazine editors and publishers struggle for these days: funding.

“It’s amazing to have a dream you want to pursue and someone else says, ‘Go do it. We’ve got you covered,’” he said.

In an age dominated by screens, Chilewa’s commitment to print seems a little unexpected. After all, doesn’t he belong to a generation that is so thoroughly wired up that they don’t need anything else but a smartphone to access the world?

That may be true, Chilewa said, but he’s also noticing a shift. “People in my generation are starting to shift back to like the physical and tangible,” he said. “I mean, I love Spotify, but I want to own some CDs. And some vinyl. I still want my books and magazines. And I see Blaremont as a part of that shift, too.”



A PUBLISHER'S NOTES: Rahim Chilewa describes the process and the people behind his new publication.



Artists Joe Galarza and Dana Nothnagel '19 painted "Scared Yanga" on Scott Hall in spring 2017. The mural utilizes creation mythology to honor the original inhabitants of the Greater Los Angeles County and San Bernardino area.



CAMPUS LIFE

When Walls Are Witnesses

Pitzer's public art not only celebrates the beauty of the campus, it reflects a shared heritage and set of values

By NICK OWCHAR

When Peruvian artist Yandos Rios raised his brush to start a scene atop Avery Hall in 1973, a tradition of mural-painting began at Pitzer. Rios and a group of students created a joyous, vivid work of art known as the “Serpent Mural.” Though the mural was short-lived — it was painted over — Rios would return to Pitzer and recreate it in the same spot in 1996, more than 23 years later.

Rios' original mural may have been the college's first, but the oldest still in existence is the one above Mead Hall's west-facing entrance. It was painted by two art students, Aaron Rhodes '97 and Darci Raphael '97, a year before Rios returned. Their mural — along with the arrival of Los Angeles muralist Paul Botello as artist-in-residence — became the catalysts of a mural boom on campus. What soon followed were many others created along the walkway columns that once lined The Mounds. Even with the removal of those columns (and the murals), the boom has continued. Today, Pitzer has more than 50 murals on campus.

It isn't uncommon to find murals at many colleges. One can see some on other campuses of The Claremont Colleges. But Pitzer's approach has deeply integrated mural painting (and other forms of public art) into the campus' communal life over the past 52 years. Each year, murals are added to the exteriors of lecture halls, administration buildings, and residence halls. During the current academic year eight new murals have appeared.

As the number of murals has increased, the need to keep track has grown. To that end, a campus murals map now exists that was created by the Pitzer College Art Galleries staff and its Gallery Fellows.

Who is eligible to paint a mural?

“Any community member can propose the installation of a mural or other outdoor artwork, not only students,” said Melissa Burrows, assistant director of student success initiatives & operations and the current chair of the Campus Aesthetics Committee.

Murals are approved through a process involving CAC, and students are heavily involved and hold five voting spots on the committee, Burrows added — another example of how Pitzer's governance model enables students to leave their mark on the campus (in this case, literally).



A Constructive Form of Rebellion

The Story Behind Pitzer's First Student Mural

Pitzer's first student mural began as an act of protest. One night in fall 1995, Aaron Rhodes '97 and Darci Raphael '97 — who are credited with painting the mural above Mead Hall's west-facing entrance — made a decision with their friends: *We need to paint a mural. Right now.* Rhodes recalled how, earlier that year, another student was caught painting a mural and was threatened with expulsion. If he hadn't taken the risk, Rhodes said, the campus might never have had any murals.

At the time, the campus mood was tense as the student body pushed the administration to allow freedom to create what they called “spontaneous art.” Students rallied around the message that “They can expel one of us, but not all of us.” Raphael and Rhodes decided to paint something that would be on a larger scale — and hopefully more permanent.

Raphael led the design, creating a bold mural celebrating free expression. “Her artistic style is unmistakable,” Rhodes said. “The characters in the mural came straight from her broader body of work — I was a supporting brush.”

Campus security officers and a dean told them to stop, but Raphael continued, standing on Rhodes' shoulders to paint the higher sections. The Mead mural would spark campus debates, town halls, and articles in *The Other Side* urging the administration to support student expression. “It turned out to be a tipping point,” Rhodes recalled. “In the end, it opened up a big conversation about creative freedom.”

“It was one of the greatest moments in Pitzer history,” added Peter Harper '97.

Eventually the administration permitted murals on the columns of the walkways once surrounding The Mounds. Something was set in motion that would ultimately shape the College's public art policy. For Rhodes, it's satisfying to know that a night of rebellious creativity helped spark a lasting culture of public art at Pitzer. His one regret is that Raphael is no longer here to see it. She passed away last year, coinciding with the mural's 30th anniversary (see Page 47).





Above: Artist Paul Botello and Pitzer students collaborated to paint this mural on the wall of the McConnell Center patio in summer 2006.

Top, right: Detail shot of a student mural on Avery Hall in honor of Maria Gutierrez de Soldatenko, associate professor emerita of Chicana/o-Latina/o transnational studies.



Bottom, right: Student mural "Up in Smoke" painted on the north side of Avery Hall.



LEARN MORE: Explore murals on campus and learn more about this special Pitzer tradition.



Above: Detail of "Inside Out" on the south side of Holden Wall. This mural was painted in 2015-16 by Pitzer alumni Marie Flemming '16, John Kalapos '17, Emelia von Saltza '18 and Scripps alum Libby Reyff '16. The mural is designed to raise questions on how the prison industrial complex affects families, communities, and, ultimately, the environment.





Above: These and other student murals once populated Mead Hall in the wake of the first Mead mural by Darci Raphael '96 and Aaron Rhodes '96.

Left: Pitzer alum Adrian Brandon '15 painted "American Faces" on the northwest side of Mead Hall in 2014.

Anchored in Metaphors Alexandra Lombardi's '28 Mural Statement



At the end of fall 2025, Alexandra Lombardi '28 painted the mural "Breaking Unbreakable Chains" near Pitzer's Gold Student Center pool. Her piece draws inspiration from the Inside-Out program, hosted by the Justice Education Center at The Claremont Colleges. Inside-Out classes create space for incarcerated "inside" individuals to learn

alongside "outside" Claremont Colleges students.

Read an excerpt of Lombardi's artist statement, which has been edited for length and clarity:

"The mural features links of anchor chains, painted in blue. The breaking chain then turns into seeds that are being sown into a small plant. The background is a gradient of yellows to reds. This color choice is to allow the chain to stand out since they are complimentary colors. It is also meant to impose a specific mood that can be interpreted as either hopeful or important.

The chain breaking is supposed to represent what the Inside-Out program does for both inside and outside students. For outside students, the anchor chain represents being 'anchored' in their preconceived notions of the prison industrial complex. The chain breaking represents the process of taking classes within the Inside-Out program. Taking an Inside-Out class allows you to break out of the homogenized ideology of incarceration and learn incredible things from brilliant minds you otherwise would never have had the chance of meeting. The plant growing is a metaphor for becoming a better critical thinker, a more empathetic person.

For inside students, the anchor chain represents being stuck in place. The chain breaking represents breaking the cycle that mass incarceration causes and, in turn, sowing seeds into a brighter future where you can 'water your own garden.' Additionally, the program also allows inside students to build networks of students and faculty, which can sometimes lead to job opportunities and further education."

Lombardi plans to pursue a combined political studies and sociology major with a minor in art. In her free time, she loves painting, embroidery, creating music with friends, and exploring nature.

“Everything’s Just Bigger”

For Jessica McCoy’s students, the biggest surprise of painting murals involves scale



“I don’t really show my students how to paint a mural in my classes,” said Jessica McCoy, a professor of art at Pitzer since 2006. “We all paint together. We collaborate. We learn from each other how to paint that mural.”

In McCoy’s courses, students study the history of public art and explore how artists engage with the communities where their work appears. They travel throughout the region to see murals in context, and they become working artists themselves. Each year a community partner, such as a local school or library, selects one of McCoy’s student proposals for its site, and the class brings the design to life. The scale of the project, McCoy said, always catches students off guard.

“Everything’s just bigger ... the brushes, the amount of paint. You need more of everything,” she said. “Painting a mural forces you to think about scale in a completely different way.”

The physical demands come as a surprise as well.

“They definitely feel more tired than they expect,” McCoy said. “We’re hauling buckets of water and ladders, cleaning dozens of brushes, scrubbing walls before we start. When paint spills, we’re down on the concrete scrubbing that too. It’s a lot of dirty work — but it’s important. That’s part of how you build connection and trust with a community.”

An acclaimed painter whose imagery was translated into a tile mural welcoming subway riders in downtown Los Angeles, McCoy understands the power of those connections and makes sure her students do, too.

“I think the standard of mural painting at Pitzer is pretty high,” she said. “It’s exciting to see what students create here — and what many of them carry forward beyond campus.”



WATCH VIDEO: Professor Jessica McCoy describes her mural projects with students.





Left: In the 1996-97 academic year, Paul Botello was visiting professor and artist-in-residence at Pitzer and taught the class "Murals, World Wall Art." Botello painted the "Interhuman" mural on the east side of Mead Hall in 1997.

Top: The mural, "Consideration," located in the pool area behind the Gold Student Center, was restored in spring 2023 by Chae Chae '26.

Above: Artist Yandos Rios and Pitzer students originally painted "Serpent Mural" atop Avery Hall in 1973. This mural was later painted over, but Rios returned to Pitzer to recreate it in the same spot in 1996.

Above, right: A mural in an enclosed courtyard on the east side of Mead Hall, next to the Pitzer Student Garden.

SPORTS HIGHLIGHTS

TAKING A VICTORY LAP

The Sagehens scored major wins in NCAA Division III contests in fall 2025

Across the Finish Line

The Pomona-Pitzer men's cross-country team captured its fifth-straight Southern California Intercollegiate Athletic Conference championship. The Sagehens finished with 29 points and placed five runners in the top 10. The team later won its eighth-straight Division III Cross Country West Region Championship. The Sagehens totaled 43 points with four runners in the top fifteen.

Seventh-Straight
SCIAC Win

The Pomona-Pitzer women's soccer team scored a win in their Senior Day game against the University of Redlands. With the win, the Sagehens secured the 2025 Regular Season SCIAC Championship for the seventh year in a row.

Victory Afloat

The Pomona-Pitzer men's water polo team secured the SCIAC Regular Season Championship following a win against Occidental College. The Sagehens achieved their second-straight regular season conference title and locked up the No. 1 seed for the SCIAC Tournament. Pomona-Pitzer later advanced to the USA Water Polo National Championship game with a win over MIT. The Sagehens showed that same fighting spirit against CMS – keeping it close before falling to the Stags.

Athlete of the Year in
Water Polo

Goalkeeper **Greg Moore '27** (pictured) was named the Defensive Athlete of the Year in men's water polo. Moore received many SCIAC Defensive Athlete of the Week accolades in stopping a conference-best 54 percent of shots faced, ranking second in the league with 102 saves across only nine appearances. Moore was also included in the First Team All-SCIAC.

Athlete of the Year in
Soccer

SCIAC selected **Niclas Ulrich '26** as the Defensive Athlete of the Year in men's soccer. Ulrich also represented the Sagehens on the All-SCIAC First Team. Ulrich's impact on both ends of the field was crucial in the Sagehens' climb from ninth place last year to finishing a single point shy of sharing the regular season title. Ulrich also served as a team captain.

Newcomer of the Year in
Water Polo

Jaden Winters '29 was recognized as the Newcomer of the Year in men's water polo. Winters led the regular season champions to an unbeaten 12-0 mark with 35 goals and 49 total points. A natural in the role of center defender, Winters played all over the pool for Pomona-Pitzer while also racking up 16 steals, 11 drawn exclusions, and a 9-for-10 record on sprints. Winters also earned First Team All-SCIAC recognition.



CalHOPE Courage Award Recipient

Pomona-Pitzer cross country and track and field student-athlete **Kirk Lord '28** was selected as a December 2025 CalHOPE Courage Award recipient. Presented monthly since February 2022, the CalHOPE Courage Award honors student-athletes at California colleges and universities who have overcome stress, anxiety, and mental trauma associated with personal hardships and adversity. In addition to the recognition, a donation will be made on behalf of all honorees to support mental health services.

Newcomer of the Year in Cross-Country

Kate Sherry '29 was named as the SCIAC Newcomer of the Year in women's cross-country. Sherry also earned All-SCIAC Second Team recognition. At the 2025 SCIAC Championship, Sherry earned 20th place in the 6K with a time of 22:55.9.

Pomona-Pitzer women's soccer completed their 2025 season as SCIAC Regular Season champs.



SAGEHEN UPDATES: Get more news and game information about Pomona-Pitzer Athletics.



INNOVATION

Fertile Ground

At Pitzer Fintech entrepreneur Robbie Figueroa '17 learned that cultivating some risk is necessary to turn a vision into reality

Growing up in Queens, NY, Fintech entrepreneur Robbie Figueroa '17 needed what every kid does: cash.

His job bussing tables at a local bar and lounge wasn't enough. So Figueroa came up with an idea. The lounge frequently featured all kinds of performers — singers, burlesques, dancers — and he realized he had a talent that would fit right in.

Magic.

Closeup magic, to be exact. That's the kind that involves card tricks performed for diners right at their tables. Figueroa could move from table to table, dazzling diners with some sleight of hand ... and picking up some much-needed tips along the way. He pitched his act to the lounge's management, and they agreed — suddenly Figueroa found himself generating two streams of income at every shift: one as a busboy, the other as a card magician.

One of Figueroa's more popular tricks involved having someone pick a card, memorize it, and then return it to the deck—only then to discover it had mysteriously vanished from the deck and would suddenly reappear in their coat pocket or purse. He won't reveal how it's done (of course), but the illusion itself offers a fitting metaphor for entrepreneurship itself.

Like a magician, an entrepreneur invites people to believe in the unexpected, to embrace ideas that are new or defy convention. Both turn what's seemingly impossible into something real.

"I think I was always creative as a kid," he said. "Growing up with immigrant parents, I think you just have to muster your way through in a nontraditional route and get creative."

Though he's left closeup magic behind, Figueroa has stayed true to mustering through and creating new realities in unexpected ways. At 31, he has already made his mark in the entrepreneurial world with two big successes — first by helping build DoorDash's brand in Puerto Rico into one of the company's fastest-growing markets, and then by co-founding Maza, a fintech startup where he raised tens of millions of dollars from Silicon Valley's top investors to help Spanish-speaking consumers in the U.S. to gain access to basic banking services that many take for granted.

Last year, TechCrunch reported that the AI-native private bank Flex had acquired Maza for \$40 million, a deal that expands both firms' reach to an overlooked segment of U.S. consumers. It's not just a significant entrepreneurial feat for Figueroa and his two co-founders; Figueroa also sees it as a demonstration of something rooted in him from his undergraduate years at Pitzer: finding ways to create successful ventures that also solve real problems.

Figueroa said that an inspiration for Maza — a name that intentionally misspells the Spanish word for "dough" and puns on slang for money — stems from personal experience.

"My two cofounders and I all have family roots in Latin American parents who immigrated to the states," said Figueroa, whose parents are from Brazil and Ecuador (his father's a broadcaster for ESPN Brazil; his mother is a community college professor). "We saw firsthand with relatives how hard it was for many Spanish speakers to get a credit card or even a checking account. We knew that pain points existed."

So Figueroa and the rest of the Maza team had a simple goal: address those pain points and make everyday banking easier for people who manage their lives in Spanish. Many Spanish-speaking consumers face unnecessary hurdles when opening accounts or accessing online tools, often because of language or documentation challenges. Maza's user-friendly design and bilingual support have helped several hundred thousand customers gain the access they deserve — proving that technology can make equitable outcomes an important part of innovation itself.

"The skillset of rebelling and going against the incumbents and status quo is ironically foundational to entrepreneurship and capitalism, ... [a]nd if you're successful at it, you can apply the money you make toward social outcomes you are passionate about, through the core-values lens you learn at Pitzer."

Financial Myth-Busting

As a political studies major at Pitzer, Figueroa said he once imagined a career in government, believing it was the best path to make an impact in the world.

"When I applied to Pitzer I didn't know I wanted to be a startup founder. I just thought I wanted to run for office," he said.

But after holding internships in the U.S. Senate, he soon recognized what others have: that the bureaucratic pace, layers of red tape, and institutional resistance to innovation often get in the way of creating meaningful change. That realization led him to take a different path — one still aligned with Pitzer's ethos of transformation and challenging the status quo: entrepreneurship.

"The skillset of rebelling and going against the incumbents and status quo is ironically foundational to entrepreneurship and



“[A]ny teen who wants to be heard, who wants to be inspired to rebel and find new ways to induce change — whether you’re talking about politics, social justice or capitalism — should definitely consider attending our school.”

capitalism,” he said. “And if you’re successful at it, you can apply the money you make toward social outcomes you are passionate about, through the core-values lens you learn at Pitzer.”

Figuroa credits his Pitzer experience for boosting his self-confidence and sense of self-worth, two qualities every entrepreneur needs to have in abundance. What helped him realize these qualities in himself was the experience of belonging to and interacting with a diverse campus community like Pitzer’s. Faculty interactions played a big part, too: He fondly recalled riding his penny board over to Broad or Scott halls to see faculty like Rachel VanSickle-Ward — “she’s an awesome professor,” he said — and have one-on-one conversations that left a deep impression on him.

“These experiences were the first time I really felt I had such immediate access to people. In the real world it didn’t seem like this happened as much,” he said. “But I felt like if I can have that kind of experience with my professors at Pitzer, I should be able to do that anywhere. It made me feel less shy about reaching out and DM-ing people over the course of my career. I think it helped me realize I deserve to be in the room with them.”

Pivoting to Entrepreneurship

After graduating, Figuroa stepped into the world of finance — first on the Morgan Stanley trading desk, and then with private equity firm Pantheon Ventures. A Princeton in Latin America Fellowship followed after that (he declined a Fulbright) and it helped him understand the venture capital ecosystem in Latin America.

Figuroa said he also found himself surrounded by a young generation of company founders — young entrepreneurs in their 20s and early 30s who were already running successful organizations. It was a revelation to him. He realized that one of the persistent myths about business success — that you need to be significantly older and more experienced to build something impactful — is simply not true.

“At first I thought, wow, these guys must be real geniuses to have their own companies,” he said. “Some definitely are, but what you really need is just a rebellious spirit and a willingness to take risks.”

To pivot to the entrepreneurial space, Figuroa said he wanted operational experience working on a business and found an

opportunity at Door Dash right before its incredible success with its initial public offering. That IPO success led the company to look at international expansion, and Figuroa moved into the role of general manager for its Puerto Rico operation. During his time there, he scaled it into one of the company’s fastest growing markets. From there, Figuroa moved on to explore other entrepreneurial ventures with a startup studio he created with his Maza cofounders, Luciano Arango and Siggy Bilstein. They focused on ways to build consumer audiences with a number of viral projects.

“With our skillset of virality, we parlayed that into Maza,” he said, which started in November 2021 and, at its peak, had 190,000 Spanish-speaking customers who were using a financial system for the first time.

Strengthening Each Other

As Maza transitions under its new ownership at Flex, Figuroa has been helping to guide the handoff and raise new capital. After that, he said he has other ambitious endeavors in the works in the AI space. The horizon is wide open — which might intimidate others but, for Figuroa, the unknown offers endless possibilities to an entrepreneur.

In fact, through his work with DoorDash, Maza, and other startups, Figuroa has helped debunk another misconception: that capitalism and social activism are incompatible. His career, he believes, proves they not only can coexist — they can strengthen each other.

“My time at Pitzer encouraged me to find ways to have an impact on social justice, and I think we have,” he said. “We’ve been able to increase access to financial systems for a large demographic that has been left out.”

Complacency, he added, is definitely not an option in his view.

“Any student who just wants to follow the standard path shouldn’t apply to Pitzer,” Figuroa said. “But any teen who wants to be heard, who wants to be inspired to rebel and find new ways to induce change — whether you’re talking about politics, social justice or capitalism — should definitely consider attending our school.”

AWARD NEWS

Pitzer Named Top Fulbright Producer



Pitzer earns top recognition on the U.S. Fulbright Program's 2025-26 list of leading institutions, extending its streak to 17 years

Drawing on a deep culture of mentorship and student support, Pitzer College has been selected as the No. 1 producer nationwide of Fulbright students for 2025-26 in the baccalaureate category.

The U.S. Fulbright Program announced its new list of higher education leaders in February. This also marks the college's 17th consecutive year as a top producer of Fulbright awards.

"We're honored by this recognition," said Pitzer President Strom C. Thacker, a former Fulbright scholar in Mexico. "Pitzer prepares and supports students who are ready to take their learning beyond the classroom and into the world. This recognition reflects a campus culture, faculty, staff, and mentors deeply committed to helping students translate ambition into action and curiosity into global engagement."

In its most recent cohort of recipients, Pitzer had 18 students selected for the Fulbright U.S. Student Program, which is one of the largest cohorts in Pitzer Fulbright history. That success lifted the college to No. 1 in the baccalaureate category for 2025-26. Looking at all categories, Pitzer is among the top 23 in the nation for all institutions for the Fulbright U.S. Student Program for 2025-26.

Tied for second with 17 students are four schools — Amherst, Bowdoin, Williams, and Pomona Colleges — while other members of the Claremont Colleges on the list include Scripps (7 students) and Claremont McKenna (1 student). Pitzer's

next group of recipients will be announced by the U.S. Fulbright Program later this spring.

Noosha Malek, director of Pitzer's Office of Fellowships and instructor of the Institute for Global/Local Action & Study Fulbright courses, points to the college's intentional approach to intercultural education as a key factor in Pitzer's continued Fulbright success. Through structured advising and preparation, students are guided to develop projects grounded in responsible cultural engagement.

"It is a pleasure and a privilege to guide Pitzer students through the Fulbright process as they engage deeply with intercultural learning," Malek said. "I am proud to celebrate their accomplishments. We are honored to be the nation's top baccalaureate institution as Pitzer marks its 17th year as a top-producing institution."

Dedicated to Student Success

In addition to the advising offered through Pitzer's Office of Fellowships, the college also provides support through the Writing Center, where students can refine application materials and strengthen written communication as part of the Fulbright process.

Delaney Post '26, a Fulbright applicant and embedded tutor in the Fulbright course taught by Malek, noted that students worked tirelessly to articulate their strengths, vulnerabilities, and aspirations,

making the experience deeply meaningful. Stella Seid '25 added that the process extends beyond acceptance, fostering bonding, teamwork, and self-discovery, while Tye Iverson '26 highlighted how applicants transform their academic learning into real-world impact — making the experience inspiring for all involved.

For Stephanie Liu-Rojas, director of Pitzer's Writing Center, Fulbright applicants receive preparation that ranges from work on writing the application to practicing interviewing techniques learned from the Fulbright course.

"I am honored to be part of the Fulbright application process under Noosha Malek's leadership and proud of the collaborative work of the Writing Center fellows who support applicants through one-on-one tutoring," Liu-Rojas said.

The Fulbright Program is the U.S. government's flagship international academic exchange program. Since 1946, the Fulbright Program has provided more than 400,000 accomplished students, scholars, teachers, artists, and other professionals with the opportunity to study, teach, and conduct research abroad. "Fulbrighters" exchange ideas, build people-to-people connections and work to address complex global challenges.



LEADING THE WAY: Learn more about Pitzer's long history of success with the U.S. Fulbright program.





Chawne Kimber, Pitzer vice president of academic affairs and dean of faculty, with her quilt, "Bobby Dole's Blue Jeans."

PROFILE

The Fabric of a Life

Like her critically-acclaimed quilts, VP for Academic Affairs and Dean of Faculty Chawne Kimber has threaded together many elements to create a richly dimensioned career

Not many artists can say their quilt is in the Smithsonian American Art Museum. Fewer can say that they also happen to be a mathematician, activist, and higher education leader. Chawne Kimber, who is Pitzer College's vice president for academic affairs and dean of faculty, is one of the few who can do just that.

Since her arrival last summer, Kimber has supported Pitzer faculty and students in pursuing five core values: social responsibility, intercultural understanding, interdisciplinary learning, environmental sustainability, and student engagement. Her experience practicing these values over the course of her career informs how she is leading and facilitating community at the college.

"As a Black woman in math, I'm a bit of a unicorn and had quite varied experiences with my classmates and with my professors," said Kimber. "I realized that I didn't want to have the same sort of negative effects on my students."

Previously Kimber served as dean of the college at Washington and Lee University and oversaw 21 departments and 13 interdisciplinary programs. Prior to her tenure there, she was the Thomas Roy and Lura Forrest Jones Professor of Mathematics and head of the Mathematics Department at Lafayette College, where she helped to build a culture of inclusivity and innovation in STEM education.

"In my classes, I wanted to make math relevant," said Kimber. "I would teach social justice issues and how to measure justice and opportunity in my classes. I did it so students could take away a bag of tools to be better humans in their communities."

Kimber said she was drawn to Pitzer because of "the social justice mission of the institution and the actual practice of social justice and social responsibility that the students are required to do as part of the curriculum."



Kimber stands in front of her quilts “hope, half empty” (left) and “uoy evol I tub” (right).

Social Justice in Quilting

Art, quilts, and family heritage inspired Kimber in her own social responsibility practice. She grew up surrounded by her great-grandmother’s quilts, which were her father’s prized possessions. He recounted to her how his grandmother, Mamo, would work with other women on a large quilt stretched out on a frame. As a child, he would sit under the quilt and push the needle back up for them.

“He would tell stories of when, if he was super quiet, he could learn all the gossip of the community because the ladies would forget he was under there,” said Kimber.

To repair quilts, Kimber’s family made do with old clothes they found around the house. Those family quilts were “actually more of a sculpture because you’d have patches on top of patches after the quilt had been used for a while,” she said.

Kimber picked up quilting as a form of self-care when she was a professor. Sewing offered relief from stresses generated by her job. However, quilts meant more to her than comfort. Her family members were human rights activists as well as quilters.

“I grew up in a household where every human being is valued,” she said.

Kimber asked herself how her quilting could confront social issues. One of her most famous quilts, “still not,” evokes her enslaved ancestors’ history of picking cotton in Alabama and her present experience as a Black woman in America. The Smithsonian’s website references that quilt’s duality: “[Kimber’s] family participated in quilting circles to chat, cry, laugh, think, and mend — to create a home together. Mamo’s story was told through her quilts, and Kimber continues the thread.”

In her artistic practice, Kimber has created many other quilts in which she unravels complex emotions and ideas. Even when her quilt addresses a heavy topic, quilting is cathartic for her. She encourages young activists to find a catharsis that works for them.

“Most of the battles we’re fighting right now are not quick,” said Kimber. “They are long term. I’m thinking marathon, not a sprint. ... There are days where you have to understand that you’re not the only one who can solve a problem, that there is an army of people behind you, and that you can take a break.”

Preparing Students to Change the World

Kimber’s passion for equipping the next generation of changemakers is something Pitzer professors share. She admires their focus on “getting these students out the door as some of the strongest and most passionate citizens of the world that I’ve ever met.”

“You don’t do that by hiding yourself and writing your book,” added Kimber. “You have to be interacting with the students every day — and sometimes on really hard days where students are testing boundaries as part of their social responsibility education.”

Kimber balances two roles. As the dean of faculty, she partners with the faculty to support students. As the vice president for academic affairs, she stewards the college’s long-term needs.

“Some decisions that are really awesome for the faculty have to be mediated by reality,” said Kimber. “And so, there are times when I have to walk a really thin line between these two to make sure that I am still fully supporting the faculty, while also making sure Pitzer is still here in the future.”

Kimber collaborates with faculty, staff, and students through the college’s shared governance system. All stakeholder groups have a say in running the college. Kimber said this sense of ownership in the college is rare in higher education. She believes the liberal arts model also sets Pitzer students apart as problem solvers.

“A liberal arts student can see things from multiple perspectives and pull together one-dimensional solutions to make them multidimensional,” she said.

Pitzer’s core values enhance how students implement their educations. Kimber had a hard time picking a favorite one, but social responsibility has a special place in her heart. It’s because of this core value that students engage in community-driven learning.

“We were out there doing service in the community as children, and it is part of who I am,” said Kimber. “And so, students being part of the Claremont and Ontario community, it’s just one of those sources of pride.”

“A liberal arts student can ... pull together one-dimensional solutions to make them multi-dimensional.”



LEADERS IN FOCUS: Watch a complete video interview with Chawne Kimber, Pitzer’s dean of faculty and vice president of academic affairs.

ENDOWED PROGRAM

Six Life-Changing Weeks

Emeriti Professors establish an endowment to expand opportunities in the college's Costa Rica Summer Health Program

Emeriti Professors Ann Stromberg and Rudi Volti have made a generous \$200,000 gift to establish an endowment that will expand access to Pitzer College's longstanding summer health program in Costa Rica, helping more students gain an invaluable learning experience.

Their gift establishes the Stromberg Volti Fund, which will provide financial support to some Claremont Colleges students participating in the six-week summer program. Now in its 28th year, the program was created through a partnership with the Institute for Central American Development Studies in Costa Rica and offers students an immersive experience to understand health, healthcare, and social equity from a global perspective.

First envisioned for science students who wanted a study abroad experience without stepping away from their majors for a full semester, the program provides the full immersive experience that other students experience in semester-long programs, including home stays, intensive language study, and community-based learning (all students engage in internships in health or education). Stromberg, an emerita professor of sociology who joined Pitzer in 1973, proposed the idea to college leadership and was encouraged to move forward.

"One thing I've always appreciated about Pitzer is that when I've had an idea for an initiative, the college has generally said yes," Stromberg said. "It's always been willing to test a new idea if it seems worthwhile."

The program has also appealed to students in Pitzer's New Resources program, which supports older, nontraditional undergraduates who may not be able to spend extended time away



Professor Emerita Ann Stromberg (far right) with a cohort of summer program students and Institute for Central American Development Studies staff in 2023.

"Studying abroad is such a rich opportunity to gain new perspectives. Rudi and I don't want students to miss out on meaningful experiences because of cost."

—Ann Stromberg

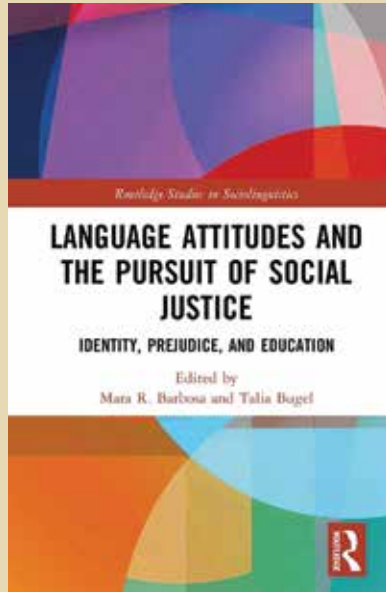
from their families or other responsibilities. The six-week format allows students to gain meaningful international experience without a longer commitment.

Financial aid is available to Pitzer students for summer study abroad, but it can be limited and requires students to use a half-semester of their eight total semesters (at the other Claremont Colleges, summer aid is not available or

is limited). Some students who need to earn money during the summer may be unable to forego six weeks of paid summer employment in order to participate in the program. The Stromberg Volti Fund addresses these barriers by offering dedicated support to program participants with financial need across the 5Cs.

"Studying abroad is such a rich opportunity to gain new perspectives," Stromberg said. "Rudi and I hope that, over the years, many students will benefit from our support, and that others might consider contributing to this fund," she said. "It's very special to be able to invest in our students and the college. And it's definitely a lot more fun to do this now — while we're alive — so that we can see students benefiting from an awesome Pitzer Study Abroad experience."

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COMMUNITY BOOKSHELF

In Their Own Write

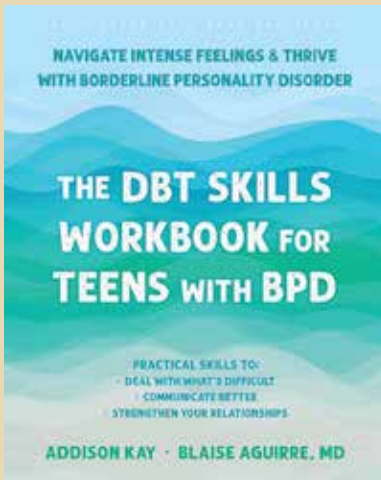
A troubador’s songbook, help for teens with BDP, a technicolor dreamcoat and other recent publications from our Pitzer Community

1. “Language Attitudes And The Pursuit Of Social Justice” (Routledge Taylor & Francis Group)

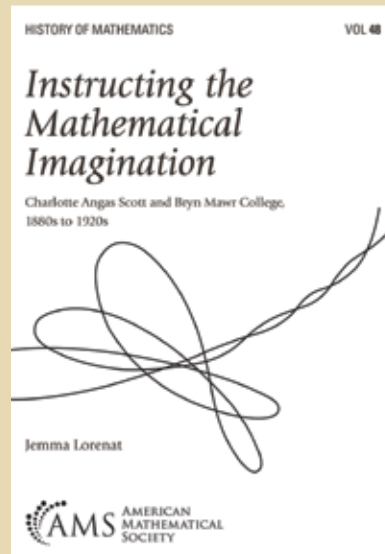
In “Language Attitudes and the Pursuit of Social Justice,” edited by **Mara R. Barbosa** and Talia Bugel, the relationship between language attitudes and forms of inequality and oppression is explored. In doing so, the volume fosters greater awareness of how linguistic choices become political ones and encourages the search for practices that promote social justice. In the book, established and emerging scholars explore — via a collection of case studies spanning cultures and languages across the globe — the ways in which language attitudes are informed by extralinguistic factors. The collection urges the development of critical linguistic awareness and a view of languages that recognizes how linguistic practices shift and change across time and space. At Pitzer, Barbosa, who speaks English, Spanish, and Portuguese, serves as an assistant professor of Spanish and Portuguese as part of the Modern Languages, Literatures and Cultures Field Group. Her research encompasses sociolinguistics, Spanish in the United States, and bilingualism and language attitudes in the U.S. among other topics.

2. “This Year: 365 Songs Annotated: A Book Of Days” (Macmillan)

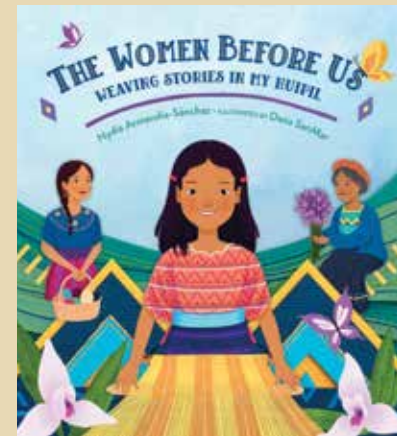
Cited as “a work of rapturous beauty,” “This Year: 365 Songs Annotated: A Book of Days” celebrates the creative life and musical genius of **John Darnielle ’95** by way of his most meaningful lyrics. From his early days recording on a boom box, through the evolution of the Mountain Goats from a solo project to a full band, to his continued influence on indie music, “This Year” pairs the definitive texts of 365 Darnielle songs with first-person commentaries on his life and music which reveal how the songs came to be and the people who inspired them. Darnielle graduated from Pitzer with a double major in classics and English. He started his best-known band, The Mountain Goats, in 1991 and has gained a cult following since then for his prolific output and literary lyrics, prompting a contributor to *The New Yorker* to dub him as “America’s best non-hip-hop lyricist.”



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3. “The DBT Skills Workbook For Teens With BDP” (Instant Help Publications)

This hands-on instructional workbook helps teenagers with BDP — borderline personality disorder — navigate intense feelings and thrive despite the challenges of the condition. The guide, written by **Addison Kay** ’21 and Blaise Aguirre, helps manage the intense emotions that are part of BDP. The workbook offers evidence-based tools to help sufferers find emotional balance, improve communication with others, and reach their fullest potential. Readers will discover how the core skills of DBT — dialectical behavior therapy — can help them stay grounded in the moment and see themselves more clearly, with empathy and self-compassion. And they’ll learn hands-on exercises to practice what they’ve learned out in the real world. Currently, Kay is completing his final year toward a master’s in social work education at Boston College with a goal of becoming a clinician and working with adolescents struggling with suicidality and self-injurious behaviors. Kay was deeply influenced by his time as a postbaccalaureate fellow at McLean Hospital, where he worked as a clinical residence counselor and educator.

4. “Instructing The Mathematical Imagination: Charlotte Angas Scott And Bryn Mawr College, 1880s to 1920s” (American Mathematical Society)

This book by Associate Professor of Mathematics **Jemma Lorenat** examines the creation and character of mathematical training at Bryn Mawr College between 1885 and 1926 under the leadership of Charlotte Angas Scott. Though designated as a college, Bryn Mawr boasted the world’s first graduate degree programs in which women taught women. The book rewards those interested in the disciplinary, epistemological, and material conditions of

mathematical research by exploring how a sustained and visually grounded style of mathematics emerged in this setting. Lorenat pursued undergraduate studies at the University of St. Andrews in Scotland, earned a bachelor’s degree (summa cum laude) from San Francisco State University, a master’s at the City University of New York Graduate Center, and a Ph.D. from Simon Fraser University (Canada) and Université Pierre et Marie Curie (France).

5. “The Women Before Us: Weaving Stories In My Huipil” (Candlewick)

In this picture book written by **Nydia Armendia-Sánchez** ’02 and illustrated by Dana Sanmar, a young Guatemalan girl reveals the ways her huipil, or handwoven tunic, connects her to generations of women before her. Huipils use colors, imagery, symbols, and motifs to evoke everything from the wearer’s village to her social status, from her cultural heritage to the things that she loves. Employing vivid cut paper and digitally painted illustrations, the book ends with an author’s note exploring the history of this rich tradition and the challenges of keeping it alive. Armendia-Sánchez is the author of two other picture books, “Not Far from Here” and “Frida Kahlo’s Flower Crown,” and the forthcoming “Vroom, Vroom, Vámonos” by Scholastic. She strives for inclusivity and diversity in all her creative endeavors as she draws inspiration for her libros from her children and her Guatemalan and Basque heritage.



READ MORE: Find these and other titles included in our regular Community Bookshelf feature.



A Message for Alumni

I want to thank our alumni for your engagement and support of Pitzer College in 2025. Our Engagement Tour was a success with stops in Boston; Washington, D.C.; New York; Beverly Hills; Bay Area; Seattle; and Portland. It was wonderful to see so many gatherings, and we're already building the schedule for fall 2026 and spring 2027!

Our Office of Alumni Engagement has launched a successful pilot Alumni-Student Mentorship Program. As mentors, alumni have helped guide and inspire current students as they explore academic paths, career possibilities, and life after Pitzer. All alumni are welcome to sign up to be mentors.

We're excited to see all of you for Alumni Weekend 2026, May 1-3! This year, Pitzer is hosting the 3C (Pitzer, Harvey Mudd, Scripps) Wine-Tasting Reception along with many new and exciting programs. Whether you've stayed close or drifted away, you're still part of what makes Pitzer special. Come celebrate the past, the present, and the people who make Pitzer feel like home. Interested in making Alumni Weekend 2026 extra special? Become a Class Agent! Want to host an engagement event in your city? Contact our Office of Alumni Engagement at alumni@pitzer.edu or (909) 607-4030. Thank you for all that you do!

In community,
Steve Flores,
director of alumni programs
Steve_Flores@pitzer.edu

**CLASS NOTES ARE AVAILABLE ONLY VIA
THE PRINT ISSUE OF THE PARTICIPANT.**

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THE PRINT ISSUE OF THE PARTICIPANT.**

IN MEMORIAM

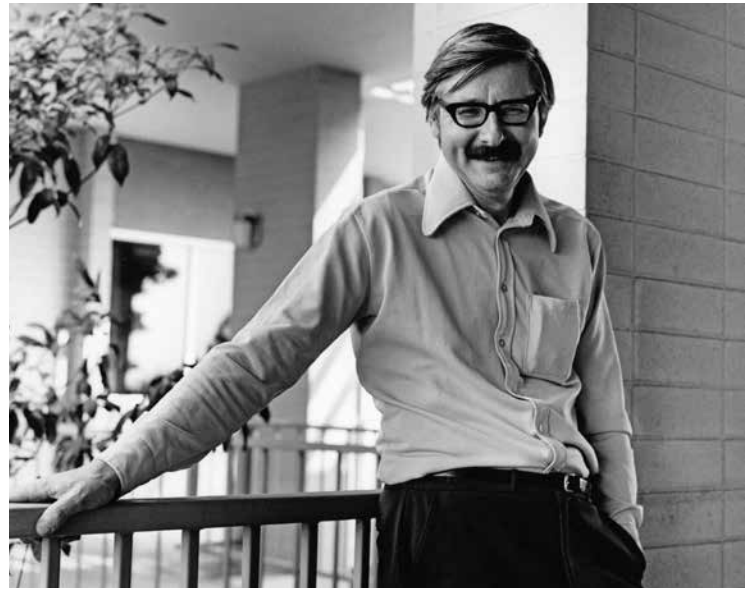
Ronald Macaulay

Professor Emeritus, Linguistics

A longtime Pitzer professor, author, traveler, and proud Scotsman, Ronald Macaulay passed away in September 2025 at the age of 97.

Born in the small western coastal town of West Kilbride, Scotland, Macaulay arrived at Pitzer College in 1965 to help establish a linguistics program that continues to thrive today. After an unsuccessful start at St. Andrews University, he returned to the university in 1951; during this period he met his future wife, Janet. Macaulay later moved to Lisbon in 1956 to teach English for the British Council; after their marriage, his wife joined him there, where their two children, Harvey and Anna, were born. In 1960, the Macaulay family moved to Buenos Aires for another teaching appointment with the British Council. It was there that the Macaulays befriended a couple that had been hired for teaching posts at Pomona College and the soon-to-open Pitzer College. This connection ultimately resulted in an offer to Macaulay from founding Pitzer President John Atherton to join the faculty as an assistant professor.

Macaulay built Pitzer's linguistics program and served as a dean of faculty. The author of many books and articles, he was a pioneering scholar in sociolinguistics, respected internationally



for his research on language and class in Scotland. In 1999, Pitzer hosted a symposium to celebrate his impact on the field. After his 2001 retirement, he remained a beloved figure across Claremont and the Colleges. Reflecting on his life, he once wrote, "having grown up in a society in which, to put it mildly, intellectual conversation was rare, to say the least, living in Claremont has been a paradise on earth." Macaulay is survived by his wife of 70 years, Janet; his children, Harvey and Anna; grandchildren, Isaac and Hannah; son-in-law, David; and daughter-in-law, Domenic.

James Bogen

Professor Emeritus, Philosophy

A professor of philosophy who shaped Pitzer's Philosophy Field Group and contributed to the interdisciplinary spirit that defines the college, James "Jim" Bogen passed away in December 2025.

As an undergraduate at Pomona College, Bogen became well-acquainted with The Claremont Colleges. After receiving his master's and doctorate in philosophy from the University of California, Berkeley, he returned to Claremont in 1967 and joined the faculty, serving with distinction for more than three decades.

Bogen was known for his work on a variety of topics in the philosophy and history of science, including scholarship on epistemology, causation, and the philosophy of neuroscience. His scholarship includes the book "Wittgenstein's Philosophy of Language: Some Aspects of Its Development" as well as numerous journal articles. In 2013, he was elected a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science for his research in the philosophy of science.

Even after his retirement from Pitzer in 2001, Bogen continued to teach and conduct research as part of the History and Philosophy of Science program at the University of Pittsburgh. In a message to the Pitzer community about Bogen's passing, Pitzer



President Strom C. Thacker quoted Pitzer Philosophy Professor Brian Keeley, who called Bogen "a trailblazer in philosophy, being one of the earliest philosophers to take a serious look at what the study of neuroscience can tell us about the nature of science more generally. ...He was a philosopher that scientists took seriously."

Marlene Bates '65

English Literature

One of the three graduates in Pitzer's inaugural graduating class, Marlene Bates passed away in December 2025 in Michigan after living with Lewy body dementia in recent years. She was 82. Born in Omak, Washington, Bates attended Mills College before learning about a brand-new college in Claremont that was welcoming its first students. Bates transferred to Pitzer as the college was opening its doors; she also attended the University of Michigan and Michigan State University, where she received a graduate degree in English, and served as an inspiring high school English teacher in Michigan's Harbor Beach Community Schools. Bates is survived by her husband of more than six decades, Peter; daughters Wynter Elwood and Shawn Muter; daughter-in-law Amie Bates; and several grandchildren. She is preceded in death by her son, Harper, and parents Ruth Moench Allen and David Allen.

Brooks Guyer '86

Film Studies

A cinematographer whose work includes dozens of major films, TV series, commercials, and music videos, Brooks Guyer passed away in January. He was 62. Born in Pasadena, California, Guyer spent much of his early life traveling with his family. He lived abroad in Mumbai, India, and Kabul, Afghanistan, during his father's service with the United States Peace Corps. He attended Flintridge Preparatory School before enrolling at Pitzer and pursuing film studies. His cinematography career spanned more than three decades, and he worked in a variety of roles, including as a camera operator and director of photography. He was a pioneer in the use of remote-controlled and gyro-stabilized camera systems. His film and television credits include "Edward Scissorhands," "War of the Worlds," "Mission Impossible III," "I Am Legend," and many others. Guyer is survived by his wife, Katherine, and their children, Sophia, Chloe and Titus.

Randall Elizabeth Flinn '96

Film Criticism

An educator whose passion for helping students took her from the classroom into various leadership roles, Randall Flinn passed away unexpectedly in November 2025. She was 51. Raised in Greenwich, Connecticut, Flinn graduated from Greenwich Country Day School and St. George's School before attending Pitzer College. After studying film criticism at Pitzer, Flinn attended New York's Neighborhood Playhouse School of the Theatre and performed stand-up comedy before shifting direction and moving into the field of education. Flinn started her teaching career as a lower school teacher in a New York City public elementary school before

becoming a borough supervisor in the New York City Department of Education. Her more recent roles included serving as the assistant head of the lower school at Convent of the Sacred Heart and head of the lower school of Grace Church School, both in Manhattan. She is survived by her mother, Elizabeth Tracey; her sons, Oscar and Emerson; and a large extended family.

Darci Raphael '97

Art, English and World Literature

An artist who left her mark as a teacher on countless children and as a muralist on the Pitzer campus, Darci Raphael passed away in 2025 after a battle with breast cancer. She was 49. Born in Fullerton, California, Raphael attended Pitzer College, where she played basketball and spent time abroad in Italy. Her artistic pursuits were most visible at Pitzer in the mural she created with other students on Mead Hall, the first student-created mural on campus (see Page 26). After college, Raphael lived in New York and traveled to China and other parts of the world. In recent years, Raphael returned to Southern California and enrolled at Art Center College of Design, where she studied environmental design. With her mother, she ran The Art House, a specialized fine art education program providing year-round, after-school, and weekend classes for students pre-K through grade 12. Raphael's involvement with the program enabled its growth into a treasured space that has influenced thousands of children in the Fullerton community. She is survived by her parents, John and Cherene; her siblings; and her beloved dogs.

Galen Kacey Jones '15

Economics

Galen Kacey Jones, a television network executive with a passion for travel and the great outdoors, passed away in September 2025 after a year-long battle with leukemia. She was 31. Born in Bronxville, New York, Jones — who was known to all as Kacey — grew up in Westchester County, New York, and attended high school at the Emma Willard School and Chewonki Semester School. She left the East Coast for Southern California sunshine when she attended Pitzer College. Jones started her career in management consulting; she subsequently attended Columbia Business School, pursuing her passion for TV media with an MBA in media and technology. This led to her taking on strategy and finance roles at Comcast Corporation and NBCUniversal in Philadelphia and Los Angeles. At the time of her passing, she was vice president of finance content strategy for Universal Studio Group. Jones is survived by her parents, Jill and Galen; sister Jennifer and brother Christopher; partner Billy Roll; her dog, Isla; and a large extended family.

PARTICIPATING

Office Hours for the Soul

The important life lessons one student has learned from Professor Eduard Fanthome

By SIENA GIACOMA '27

Walk into Professor Eduard Fanthome's office hours expecting to talk about ancient ruins, and you might walk out with advice about joy, softness or why "you don't matter," and it is the most freeing thing you'll ever hear. Sure, this semester he's teaching Space and GIS, Intro to Archaeology and Ancient(ish) Urbanisms, but the real syllabus he's handing out isn't about ancient ruins or mapmaking. It's about how to live.

Fanthome's own teaching origin story is worthy of a Netflix miniseries: His parents were the founding teachers of a high school in Bhutan, where his dad taught English and his mom taught chemistry. More than genetics, however, what he really inherited was the conviction that teaching changes lives. For decades, his parents weren't just educators; they were pillars of their community, guiding entire generations of Bhutanese students. Growing up with that legacy left him deeply inspired and acutely aware of the ripple effects a good teacher can have.

When I asked Fanthome what advice he'd give his 20-year-old self, he didn't hesitate or reach for something polished. He went straight to a word most people avoid: softness.

"Being soft and strong at the same time is very difficult," Fanthome said, "but it would've made me a much better friend."

The best advice he's ever received? "You don't matter." Which, yes, sounds like the world's harshest fortune cookie, but Fanthome swears it's anything but depressing. In his mind, it's liberating. If no one's ranking you on some cosmic leaderboard, the pressure to measure up, to compete, to perform according to someone else's rules, evaporates.



Catching up: Professor Fanthome and Giacomoma '27 touch base during Fanthome's office hours in Scott Hall Courtyard.

"You stop trying to live up to hierarchies that were never worth your time in the first place," Fanthome said.

Much of Fanthome's life philosophy can be traced back to an unlikely source: a Snoopy comic strip. In it, the question is posed: What do you want to be when you grow up? The answer is simpler than most think. Not a career or a title, but to be happy. Simple. Obvious. Yet revolutionary if you actually stop to think about it.

For Fanthome, this small comic carried a huge lesson: Life isn't a checklist of achievements, promotions or accolades. It's about the ongoing, messy work of finding joy, curiosity and fulfillment. That little strip reminded him early on that the end goal isn't a résumé, it's a life you actually want to live. He carries that lesson into the classroom, showing students that the pursuit of knowledge, curiosity and connection can be about far more than grades.

For him, there's a special kind of satisfaction when a student finally grasps a tricky concept, when the gears click and they see the world in a new way. But

there's something far more meaningful: The moment a student recognizes that the thought they've been nursing, perhaps doubting themselves for weeks, isn't just valid — it's brilliant.

For Fanthome, this is the reason he keeps showing up, day after day, to classes, office hours and conversations. The tiny sparks of validation, he said, are the real currency of education: "I find those moments of affirming students — and it can happen one-on-one, it can happen in a classroom — ... the best student scenes that you can have as a teacher."

So yes, Professor Fanthome is the guy who teaches classes with titles such as Critical Cartography (punk band name pending). But the real curriculum? How to be soft without breaking, how to be strong without hardening, how to laugh at hierarchies that don't deserve your energy and how to remember that "happiness" is a perfectly good life plan.

An unabridged version of this piece originally appeared in "The Student Life."

GAME-CHANGER

Jasper Broad '26 transferred to Pitzer for a more personal, purpose-driven education — and it changed everything

As a dual major in political studies and public policy — and captain of the Pomona-Pitzer men's soccer team — Jasper found an environment that allowed him to grow academically and personally.

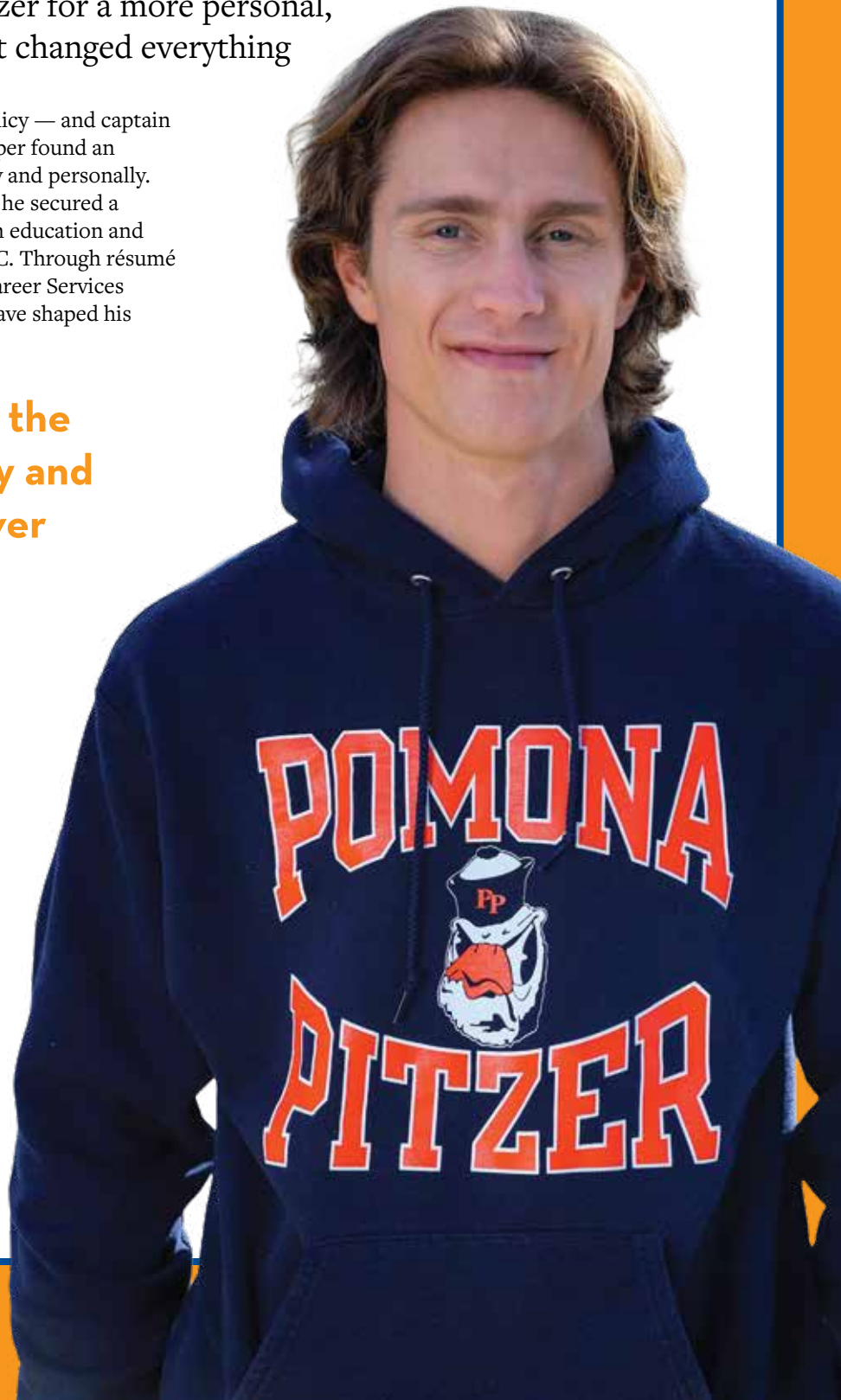
With support from Pitzer's Career Services team, he secured a competitive internship with the Penn Hill Group, an education and workforce policy consulting firm in Washington, D.C. Through résumé guidance, interview preparation and mentorship, Career Services helped him confidently pursue opportunities that have shaped his professional path.

“Career Services gave me the confidence to tell my story and pursue opportunities I never thought possible.”

Jasper understands that experiences like his are made possible by you. The Pitzer Annual Fund strengthens Career Services and expands access to transformative internships and professional development opportunities.

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