

houses in the last six years and we've just rented another one. We have decided to put back on the master plan something that fell off a while back, which is freestanding faculty housing on our 600 acres. So, we are not right now in a position to do what we need to be doing for our faculty in the longer term. That's going to be expensive, and it changes the whole model of how you finance things in a boarding school.

**Christopher:** From the other side of the country, I can also attest to the housing challenge. It's not special to Putney, right?

**Emily:** Right.

**Christopher:** When I was writing my board report in May, the cheapest house available within a 20-minute drive from our campus was \$1.1 million!

### Financials

**Christopher:** People underestimate how frequently heads of school are called upon to play King Solomon, to pull out the golden scissors and make really hard decisions. It's obvious that we don't pay or compensate our faculty enough, whether it's in dollars or in housing. But that's 70 or 80% of where we spend money. We can't pay the faculty more by using less paper at the photocopier. It doesn't move the needle. You want to move the needle? You need more students, or you need less financial aid, then you can have more compensation. But both of those approaches present challenges. There are some very powerful limitations. For example, we're definitely not going to mess with financial aid. If anything, we want to offer more financial aid in this day and age. And then you end up with only a couple of dials you get to adjust. Things like a copious endowment and a robust and strong annual fund make a huge difference. That doesn't come from us hoping that one person's going to make a big gift. It comes from people like me and every single other alum, writing that \$1,000 check every year. Saying, "I believe. I want to make sure that all of Emily's efforts translate into the future, and carry on to the future, to the next head," and that comes from that robust support.

### What qualities will the next head have to possess?

**Christopher:** You really are looking for that person for whom the mission and the fundamental nature of the school resonates so firmly that whatever their weaknesses are, they will address them and fix them, because they're so passionate about the mission. It might be that the perfect person isn't a savant with Excel, but everything else is perfect. So if that's the person, and if they're passionate enough about the mission, they'll backfill that gap.

**Emily:** I agree that people want a head who can do everything, but I think the key is to look at the school and ask, "What's the weak link at the moment? What needs the most attention?"

**Christopher:** If you end up with a checklist, you end up looking for perfection you'll never find: "We need somebody who has raised \$10 million in one capital campaign, who has been on at least two or three accreditations for independent schools, someone who is an artist and a singer. We need somebody who's a brilliant writer..." If you do this, you eliminate the very thing you need more than anything, which is somebody who comes to the table and inspires folks with a commitment to and passion for the fundamental mission of the school.

### What is a major takeaway from your Putney education?

**Christopher:** Ever since Putney, off and on, I have done real things with my hands—building and construction, maintenance, and crafts (post-Putney I went through a serious knitting phase!), all of which have been an important part of my life and stem from my time at Putney.

**Emily:** I asked my parents if I could go to Putney, and they rolled their eyes and sent me to a more conventional school. Probably a good idea, as I was a bad-attitude kid, determined to undermine whatever authority was around, and at Putney in the 1970s I could have gotten pretty far off the rails.

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