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Colburn School Names Nate Zeisler Dean for Community Initiatives; Creates Center for Innovation and Community Impact

(Tuesday, October 16, Los Angeles) – Sel Kardan, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Colburn School, announced the appointment of Nate Zeisler to the position of Dean for Community Initiatives. Zeisler, who has held the position Director of Community Engagement at Colburn School since 2010, will continue to direct the school’s community engagement and career development initiatives under the umbrella of a newly formed Center for Innovation and Community Impact.

In conjunction with the promotion of Zeisler, Kardan announced a major gift by Gaylord (Nick) Nichols that will endow the new Dean position. Nichols’s collaboration with Zeisler began in 2013 when he supported the launch of the New Venture Competition, a mentorship program designed to promote entrepreneurial thinking among the School’s Conservatory students and graduates and provide financial support for unique ideas and development of new enterprises. Now in its fifth year, the competition has awarded start-up funding to 23 enterprising Colburn students and alumni.

Sel Kardan said “Nick Nichols’s gift reflects his deep commitment to the Colburn School’s vital role in connecting with our community and empowering students as citizen artists. Nick also recognizes the creativity and self-discipline of Colburn School students, and how these very qualities drive the entrepreneurial spirit. His philanthropy will empower students to explore new opportunities and expand their horizons, under the mentorship of Nate Zeisler.”

The new Center is designed to promote creative thinking among musicians and dancers in a supportive environment that embraces the development of new ideas. The Center will serve all units of the institution - the Community School of the Performing Arts, Music Academy, Trudl Zipper Dance Institute and Conservatory of Music – and solidifies the School’s commitment to developing performers with the passion and skills to connect to their communities while building sustainable careers. Zeisler will continue to oversee the pipeline of community engagement programs that he developed as Director of Community Engagement and Career Development. During his tenure, he developed impactful

community-based programs that now reach more than 5,000 underserved youth annually in 14 schools throughout the Los Angeles Unified School District.

Nate Zeisler said, “Nick Nichols’ transformative gift will enable the Colburn School community to expand learning opportunities and break through traditional programmatic boundaries. Nick’s generosity and commitment to the Colburn School has been evident throughout our friendship. He truly believes in the limitless potential of our students, and I am deeply grateful for his support and guidance.”

Nick Nichols said “From my earliest exposure to Colburn School music performances, I was struck by the dedication, artistry, and shared joy in the accomplishments of the school’s many talented students and its world-class faculty. I could see that Colburn was also totally devoted to preparing their students for a preeminent professional career with exciting, expanded opportunities. Nate Zeisler has played a major role here, and it is with great foresight and commitment that Colburn has created the new Center. It is a privilege to support the work of the school by endowing Nate’s position, and I look forward to our continued collaborations.”

Nick Nichols’s background with innovative technical organizations, as well as his recent experience with the Colburn School, has given him an appreciation of the similarities in focus, discipline, and determination to excel, as exhibited both by students of music and science when encouraged by creative and passionate faculty. He graduated from Yale University and soon joined the California Institute Technology (Caltech) at its Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL), where he served in positions related to the planning and management of pioneering space flight missions. On leave from Caltech, he was resident Visiting Professor of Business Management at the Indian Institute of Technology, now a leading international center of technical education and research. After that assignment, he returned to Caltech in 1983, where he was appointed Director of the Industrial Relations Center. In this capacity he directed an extensive executive education program encompassing technology management, innovation, leadership development, global strategy and operations, and new venture formation. He founded Caltech’s Entrepreneurs Forum that is continuing to address needs of emerging innovative organizations in southern California.

About Nate Zeisler

Nate Zeisler envisions a world where students majoring in the arts have a clear path to a sustainable career, where creative minds are empowered and inspired to thrive in the workforce, and where access to the arts is not just for the privileged few, but for all. Nate previously held the position of Assistant Professor of Bassoon and Entrepreneurship at Bowling Green State University in Ohio; was Founder and Executive Director of the Envision Chamber Consort, a chamber music ensemble that was dedicated to presenting intimate concerts as a form of contemporary communication. Nate was also the co-founder and Executive Director of Arts Enterprise, a chapter based organization that helped students find sustainable careers in their chosen field; principal bassoonist of the Ann Arbor Symphony; and second bassoonist with the Michigan Opera Theatre in Detroit. Zeisler earned his doctorate of musical arts and master’s degree from the University of Michigan and bachelor’s degree in choral and instrumental education from Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Virginia.

Community Engagement at Colburn School

The Colburn School has long been committed to lasting and impactful service to the community, which embodies the school's mission of providing access to excellence for all. The Community Engagement programs draw inspiration from three important figures who were instrumental in providing access to arts training for students in the community. Honorary Life Director Iona Benson ran the Musical Encounters program in the 1980's and launched the Summer Encounters program at the institution in 2002. Not only was Iona's deep commitment to Colburn realized through her tireless work at the school, she is also responsible for making a large bequest to the institution to continue the work in the community; Barbara Vyden, former Director of External Affairs at Colburn, successfully launched Summer Encounter in July of 2002 in collaboration with Iona Benson; Finally, Herbert Zipper continues to be an individual whose values are deeply embedded in the institution. The Herbert Zipper scholarship program provides full-tuition scholarships for lessons, classes, and ensembles to students in the Community School who demonstrate high potential and financial need. Overall, Colburn School offers over \$1 million annually in need-based scholarships, serving over 5,000 young children through public performances and over 200 students through tuition-free programs.

About the Colburn School

The Colburn School comprises four academic units united by a single philosophy: that all who desire to study music and dance should have access to top-level instruction.

Units of the School are:

- the degree- and diploma-granting Conservatory of Music, a preeminent training ground for professional musicians
- The Music Academy, a pre-college program preparing musicians to study at top conservatories
- The Trudl Zipper Dance Institute, a comprehensive dance program including the elite pre-professional Dance Academy
- The Community School of Performing Arts, offering a graded curriculum of private lessons and group instruction in music performance, appreciation, and theory for everyone, from the youngest children to adults

Together, these units provide performing arts instruction to more than 2,000 students from around the world, with a renowned artist faculty who serve as invaluable mentors guiding the students' artistic development.

Social Media

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