

Colburn School Appoints Maeesha Merchant as Chief Financial Officer and Vice President of Business Development

(Wednesday, July 22, Los Angeles) - Sel Kardan, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Colburn School, is pleased to announce the appointment of Maeesha Merchant as Chief Financial Officer and Vice President of Business Development. As a member of the Senior Leadership Team, she will play a critical role in ensuring the financial health of the institution, developing and implementing fiscal management and reporting strategies across the School. Merchant will also lead the effort to identify and develop new business and revenue opportunities for the School, working cross-departmentally and in close coordination with the President and CEO and board of directors. She will join the Colburn leadership team in the Fall.

"Maeesha Merchant brings tremendous experience in both the nonprofit and for profit sectors, including expertise in strategic planning and the development of new business models," said Colburn President and CEO Sel Kardan. "This background, along with her passion for innovation and education, will be invaluable as the Colburn School continues its commitment to accessible excellence in performing arts education and pursues strategic investments that will create additional resilience for the institution in the years ahead."

Merchant comes to the Colburn School from California Institute of the Arts (CalArts) where she served as SVP of Finance and Operations, Chief Financial Officer, Chief Innovation Officer. In this role, she oversaw global initiatives, finance and accounting, analytics and IT, operations and facilities, and human resources. In addition, she was responsible for strategic planning and innovating new business models. She was instrumental in steering CalArts' Strategic Visioning project, laying the framework to guide CalArts through the next 50 years; and strengthening CalArts' financial position through the creation of new revenue streams.

An active member of the National Association of College and University Business Officers (NACUBO), Merchant was recently honored with the 2020 Service to NACUBO Award for her outstanding contributions to the association's professional development programs. Merchant has served on NACUBO's New Business Officers Alumni Panel, mentoring program, Advisory Group on Leadership Diversity, and several program committees.

Prior to CalArts, Merchant spent twelve years as a management consultant working for Deloitte Consulting and (Mercer) Oliver Wyman and as an education technology entrepreneur. Merchant has experience across multiple states, countries, and industries (public sector, higher education, financial services, automotive). Her experience includes large-scale business transformations, strategic and financial planning, business process optimization, and analytics. In her consulting career, Merchant worked with several CXO clients to identify strategic imperatives and implement recommendations. She led successful operational transformation efforts for the Human Services department in the State of

Michigan and in New Mexico by leveraging both process and technology while emphasizing the importance of change management.

Merchant is passionate about innovation and entrepreneurship and founded her own education technology startup that served K-12 schools in Asia. She has worked with the XPRIZE Foundation to solve the world's grandest challenges using exponential technologies and enablers. She has developed offerings around the future of various industries and their respective evolving innovator ecosystem. Moreover, she is greatly involved with the local community and has designed and implemented a high school curriculum for LAUSD to equip students with the knowledge and skills to leverage disruptive technologies.

Merchant graduated Magna Cum Laude from the prestigious Jerome Fisher Management and Technology Program at the University of Pennsylvania with three degrees in Finance, Biomedical Science, and International Relations.

"When reflecting upon the future of education, I imagine a future that breaks barriers: socioeconomic and racial barriers to a world-class education, as well as, structural barriers between K-12, higher education, and adult learning," said Merchant. "The Colburn School portrays this future by embracing both access and lifelong learning. I am honored to join the Colburn community and am extremely grateful to be a part of an organization that has pivoted during these extraordinary times while focusing on its purpose and the way forward."

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-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

Facebook.com/colburnschool

Instagram and Twitter: @ColburnSchool

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