



Guitar Center Appoints Paul Gimenez Director of Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging

Gimenez brings a wealth of experience specific to this position, having developed and deployed evidence-based initiatives that drive diversity, equity and inclusion across dynamic, global environments

Westlake Village, CA (February 16, 2021) – Guitar Center, the world’s largest musical instrument retailer, has appointed Paul Gimenez to the position Director of Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging. This appointment comes as the result of a months-long search that began last year when the company’s executive team made a commitment to improve its diversity and inclusion efforts both internal and externally within the musical instrument industry .

In his new role, Gimenez will partner with key stakeholders across the Guitar Center enterprise in order to design, develop and lead the company’s Diversity and Inclusion initiative and related programs. He will also provide strategic advice and counsel to the organization’s senior leadership on diversity-related issues. Gimenez will contribute thought leadership, perspective and vision to create and implement programs that champion Guitar Center’s core Diversity and Inclusion mission: to cultivate an inclusive organization composed of individuals with diverse backgrounds at all levels, while simultaneously prioritizing diversity of thought and action.

Ron Japinga, Guitar Center President & CEO, remarks, “I am happy to announce that through much care and deliberation, the position has been filled by Paul Gimenez. Paul brings a wealth of knowledge and proven experience in developing and executing strategies that drive diversity, equity, and inclusion across an ever-evolving landscape. While evaluating the course of action for the position, we discovered that it is just as important for Guitar Center to be a place of belonging for all as it is a workplace that strives to promote and practice diversity and inclusivity. As such, ‘belonging’ was added to the responsibilities of the position and will be another vital component of our diversity and inclusion mission. On behalf of the Management Committee, we are ready to work alongside Paul to launch diversity, inclusion and belonging initiatives that support a positive workspace and workplace for all.”

Previously, Gimenez worked as Director at New York-based firm Mentora Labs, where he provided executive-level support to develop innovative programs, streamline training initiatives and create learning tools to deepen the understanding of leadership, culture building, peer-to-peer collaboration and diversity and inclusion. Prior to that, he worked as Research & Solutions Consultant at NeuroLeadership Institute, also based in NYC, where he spearheaded the development of diversity and inclusion, corporate solutions using a solid background and expertise in foundational research, the science of learning, and knowledge of how it applies to human capital. Additionally, since 2016, he has

served as Cofounder and Director of 100 for All, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to addressing the global water crisis. He also has experience as a suicide helpline volunteer, activist and social worker.

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About Guitar Center:

Guitar Center is a leading retailer of musical instruments, lessons, repairs and rentals in the U.S. With nearly 300 stores across the U.S. and one of the top direct sales websites in the industry, Guitar Center has helped people make music for more than 50 years. Guitar Center also provides customers with various musician-based services, including Guitar Center Lessons, where musicians of all ages and skill levels can learn to play a variety of instruments in many music genres; GC Repairs, an on-site maintenance and repairs service; and GC Rentals, a program offering easy rentals of instruments and other sound reinforcement gear. Additionally, Guitar Center's sister brands include Music & Arts, which operates more than 200 stores specializing in band & orchestral instruments for sale and rental, serving teachers, band directors, college professors and students, and Musician's Friend, a leading direct marketer of musical instruments in the United States. For more information about Guitar Center, please visit www.guitarcenter.com.

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