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**FLORIDA VENTURE FORUM ADDS NEW VENTURE CAPITAL AND
PRIVATE EQUITY INVESTORS TO ITS BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Avance Investment Management, Florida Funders, Ocean Azul Partners, and Seedfunders join nearly 50 other firms guiding Florida's largest venture organization

MIAMI & TAMPA, Fla – July 1, 2021 – Florida Venture Forum, the leading statewide support and member organization for venture and private equity professionals and entrepreneurs, today announced four new appointments to its board of directors.

The new members join a group of nearly 50 board members who work together to promote and further the Forum's mission of helping entrepreneurs connect with the funding and services they need to grow and scale.

The new board members are:

- **Marc Blumenthal, General Partner, Florida Funders**
- **Dave Chitester, Founder and Managing Partner, Seedfunders**
- **Gretchen Perkins, Partner, Avance Investment Management**
- **David Zinn, Co-founder and Managing Director, Ocean Azul Partners**

"We are extremely excited to welcome Marc, Dave, Gretchen and David to an already strong board," said Travis Milks, managing partner of Topmark Partners and 2020-2021 Florida Venture Forum board chair. "The Forum's strength lies in its strong membership comprised of the most active players in venture capital and private equity. Adding these new investor members, who deploy capital at nearly every level, is a major win for our organization and a huge boost to the continuing growth of Florida's venture ecosystem."

More information about the Forum's newest board members:

Marc Blumenthal, General Partner, Florida Funders

Marc is a serial entrepreneur and active early-stage investor. Throughout his 38+ year career Marc has been committed to helping entrepreneurs succeed and making Florida one of the best places to build a company. He is a founding member of both Synapse Florida and Florida

Funders, and has dedicated his career to help transition Florida from “sunshine state to startup state.”

Florida Funders is an early-stage tech focused venture capital firm that blends the best of traditional venture capital with a curated network of angel investors who can invest side by side with our funds under the same terms. It has invested in over 60 companies since its inception and currently has over \$100M under management.

<https://www.floridafunders.com/>

Dave Chitester, Founder and Managing Partner, Seedfunders

Dave is the founder of the Tampa Bay investment firms Seedfunders and Florida Funders. He is also the recipient of the 2019 TiE Tampa Bay Angel Investor TiETAN Award for his efforts in pioneering changes in the Tampa Bay startup landscape. Additionally, Florida Trend named him one of the 500 Most Influential Business Leaders in the state.

Seedfunders is focused on identifying pre-revenue technical concepts in Florida and supplying mentoring and funding to assist founders in bringing their concepts to market. Seedfunders now has 56 partners in St Pete, Orlando and Miami, and has made 34 investments in the past three years totaling nearly \$5 million.

<https://www.seedfunders.com/>

Gretchen Perkins, Partner, Avance Investment Management

Gretchen is responsible for sourcing investment opportunities both for the firm and for portfolio companies. She brings over 20 years of sourcing and business development experience, having created and implemented successful business development organizations and programs at her two prior firms: Huron Capital and Long Point Capital, in addition to many prior years in a variety of financial services and consulting roles.

Gretchen has been an active member of the Association for Corporate Growth for over twenty years, having held multiple board and leadership positions in the ACG at the chapter and national levels. Gretchen will Chair the ACG Intergrowth national conference in 2022.

Avance Investment Management is a private equity firm that invests in established lower middle market companies. Avance works in partnership with management teams, industry executives, and functional experts with the goal of accelerating growth in revenue and profits.

<https://avanceinv.com/>

David Zinn, Co-founder and Managing Director, Ocean Azul Partners

David is a founder of Ocean Azul Partners and has been working with entrepreneurs and investing in startups and early-stage companies for over 15 years. David provides value to founders and investors through his tactical insights, strategic planning, critical thinking,

innovation, and operational experience. As a prior founder and operator, he excels at problem-solving, teamwork, and creating sustainable growth.

Ocean Azul is an early-stage venture capital firm primarily focusing on B2B software and deep tech companies that have early traction and clear differentiation. The firm was founded by operators who are determined to use their successes and lessons learned to provide significant value to the teams they work with and to support entrepreneurs building unique solutions that will shape the futures of their industries.

<https://oceanazulpartners.com>

About the Florida Venture Forum: The Florida Venture Forum is Florida's largest statewide support organization for investors and entrepreneurs, helping companies with headquarters, operations or supply chain in Florida connect with sources of capital from across the country. Since 1984 over 1400 companies have presented at Forum events and have gone on to raise upwards of \$10B in equity capital and contribute well over \$15B in total economic value to Florida. The Forum's 200+ members represent a "who's who" of venture capital and private equity dealmakers, including and equity and debt investors at all stages, as well as major law, accounting, and investment banking firms, and large corporates active in the innovation ecosystem. The Forum provides programs and programming statewide throughout the year in addition to hosting major annual conferences like the Florida Venture Capital Conference, the Statewide Collegiate Business Plan Competition, the Early Stage Capital Conference, and industry-focused events including aerospace and healthcare. For more information, visit: <http://www.flventure.org>.

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