

Kush M. Parmar '02

Newton Center, MA

At-Large Alumni Trustee Candidate

Managing partner of 5AM Ventures, Kush Parmar was born in New Jersey and raised in the small Mexican village of El Farallon, a community without a high school. He went to boarding school in Florida and spent summers in India. This childhood gave him an early appreciation for the value of multi-layered diverse experiences.

He carried this affinity for thriving in multiple spheres at the same time to Princeton, where he majored in molecular biology. While conducting genetics research, he was also pursuing his passion for architectural history, studying early medieval Spanish architecture, and earning a certificate in medieval studies. In his junior year, he and his sister co-founded the Cruz Blanca Initiative. Born from his firsthand experience of educational limitations in his hometown, this nonprofit organization focused on constructing schools and clinics in rural eastern Mexico and became a service-learning program, engaging Princeton students in construction projects during spring break for a decade. In addition, for three years he was an EMT for West Windsor, New Jersey.

Following Princeton, he entered the Harvard/MIT MD-PhD program as a National Institutes of Health-sponsored physician-scientist trainee, doing his dissertation research on vascular biology, maintaining his leadership of the Cruz Blanca Initiative and taking courses at Harvard Business School throughout the eight years of his medical training. Parmar says he was lucky to be in Cambridge, as it had placed him in a community where the worlds of medical research, academic research and entrepreneurial pursuits intersected. During his Ph.D. studies, exposure to

entrepreneurship ignited a passion for the creative, interdisciplinary world of transforming scientific breakthroughs into tangible impact.

In 2010, he made the decision to pivot entirely toward venture capital and entrepreneurship by joining 5AM Ventures, an investment firm co-founded by John Diekman '65 and focused on funding and building next-generation life sciences companies. Parmar states, “the firm’s Princeton roots played a significant role in this career transition, offering a familiar foundation as I embraced a new direction.”

Parmar rose to managing partner in 2015. He has played a central role in translating groundbreaking academic research into transformative medical treatments, including his work in building a company that achieved a historic milestone when its patient gained hearing for the first time in their life. (New York Times, Feb. 23, 2024.) His commitment to global healthcare accessibility led him to co-found Immuneel. This company developed and commercialized CAR-T cell therapy for pediatric leukemias in India at approximately one-eighth of U.S./EU prices.

In his career, Parmar has led companies through acquisitions, initial public offerings and multiple rounds of financing. He has also served on the board of directors or observers for over a dozen public and private companies in the biopharmaceutical, drug delivery technology and research instrument sectors. His contributions on boards range from advising and guiding CEOs and other C-suite executives to chairing nominating and governance committees. He brings a principled approach to governance, taking care to manage the distinct roles of board member and shareholder in companies where 5AM is an investor. He believes that his ability to navigate and

connect seemingly disparate worlds — from Boston’s biotech ecosystem to global health initiatives, from industrial applied research to academic basic science — reflects back to his core belief in the power of diverse exposures to foster innovation and meaningful change.

Parmar sits on Harvard Medical School’s Discovery Council and Penn Medicine’s Dean’s Council. He has been a member of the advisory councils for the University’s Department of Molecular Biology and the M.S. Chadha Center for a Global India, and has shared his expertise through guest lectures at the Keller Center for Entrepreneurship.