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News

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Philadelphia University industrial design program receives enthusiastic reaccreditation from National Association of Schools of Art and Design

PHILADELPHIA, Nov. 18, 2011—Philadelphia University’s industrial design program has been reaccredited by the National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD), which voted in October to continue PhilaU’s bachelor’s and master’s level programs in good standing for 10 years, through 2021.

In evaluating the industrial design program, NASAD praised the high caliber of student work and innovative collaborative programs. “The student work reviewed was impressive in its intelligence, creativity, focus on user-centered criteria and communication,” the NASAD report said. “Of special note is the quality of models and prototypes produced.”

NASAD also praised the program for its “effective and creative curricular innovations,” including the longstanding partnership between industrial design and occupational therapy program, for which teams of students design individual products each year to enhance the quality of life of clients with disabilities. Industrial design students have also worked with marketing, physician assistant, engineering, fashion and textile students, among others, on projects ranging from shared capstone courses to industry-sponsored competitions.

The industrial design program’s global design collaboration, initiated last year with partners at San Jose State University and Lincoln University in England, and the annual “sprint” – a quick-paced one-week design challenge— also were lauded.

“There is a strong, positive perception of the university and program by the industrial design students. Seldom has the team witnessed such a highly positive attitude among students. Additionally, the team witnessed an extraordinary high level of collegiality and esprit de corps among faculty, staff and administrators,” the report also said.

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“This is a good milestone for the industrial design department,” said Michael Leonard, interim academic dean of the School of Design and Engineering and associate professor of industrial design. “NASAD was delighted to see how industrial design at PhilaU took a leadership role in partnering with those other programs and offering students unique opportunities. “That is definitely something that is unusual among industrial design programs.”

The reaccreditation process began with a rigorous self-study led by Gotz Unger, director of industrial design. Unger said PhilaU’s program has consistently worked to enhance the quality of education offered to its students, seeking out valuable partnerships to enrich student learning.

“Many industrial design programs are housed within schools of art and design, but our program is situated at a University whose mission is to educate professionals,” Unger said. “Our program gives students the opportunity to work closely with business students and engineers, which we have always felt is very important to their education.”

“Even schools that have engineering and business programs tend to be large universities where collaboration is not possible,” he said. “That is something valuable and unique to our program.”

Philadelphia University, founded in 1884, is a private university with 3,600 students enrolled in more than 60 undergraduate and graduate programs. As the model for professional university education, the University prepares students to be leaders in their professions in an active, collaborative and real-world learning environment infused with the liberal arts. Philadelphia University includes the innovative College of Design, Engineering and Commerce; the College of Architecture and the Built Environment; and the College of Science, Health and the Liberal Arts. For more information, go to www.PhilaU.edu.