



**PHILADELPHIA**  
UNIVERSITY

## News

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### Philadelphia University Fashion Students Gain Industry Experience in New York Immersion Program

**PHILADELPHIA, Feb. 12, 2015** – Two dozen students in Philadelphia University’s renowned fashion programs are spending this semester in an innovative new course that provides hands-on experience in the New York fashion industry, including participation in the famed New York Fashion Week.

Students in the New York Immersion course also are working on a semester-long project with designer Isaac Mizrahi to develop a design concept or product in the home furnishings or home improvement category.

“This course allows our students to have the best of both worlds,” said Sheila Connelly, fashion design program director, who co-teaches the course. “To be able to study at PhilaU, which has some of the best fashion programs in the world, and also gain relevant experience working in New York’s world-class fashion industry, is an incredible opportunity.”

The 24 students in the New York Immersion course, all sophomores in the fashion design and fashion merchandising and management programs, are spending most Fridays this semester traveling to New York to meet with top industry professionals, visit fashion houses, assist at New York Fashion Week runway shows and collaborate on possible new product designs.

The class so far has visited global textiles innovator Material ConneXion, trend-intelligence leader The Doneger Group and award-winning apparel manufacturer Tiger J. Early next month, students will experience retail powerhouses Macy’s and Ross Stores, meeting with prominent PhilaU alumni Ed Goldberg ’65, senior vice president of external affairs for Macy’s, and Anthony DiElsi ’79, group senior vice president and general merchandise manager for Ross Stores Inc.

“The companies have been strategically chosen to expose students to the entire supply chain in the fashion industry,” said Elizabeth Mariotz, fashion merchandising and management program director, who co-teaches the course. “Through a series of industry visits and

experiential activities, students are immersed in the design process, product development, production, merchandising and customer relationship management.”

Despite having to meet at Philadelphia’s 30th Street Station by 6:30 a.m. on Friday mornings for the bus trip to New York, students say they are excited and energized by the opportunity to experience the city’s fashion industry.

“With this course on my resume I will have a large competitive advantage when applying for jobs after college,” said Alyssa Tomaseck, a fashion merchandising and management major. “Not only am I experiencing the industry firsthand by visiting powerful companies, but I have the privilege of working for a well-known designer, Isaac Mizrahi, at such a young age. I feel ready to enter the job market and put my skills to the test.”

Those skills will be tested on May 6, when students will make their final trip to New York to present their home improvement proposals directly to designer Mizrahi and officials at Xcel Brands Inc., which owns and manages his brand. For the semester-long project, students have been challenged to develop a new home improvement product for Mizrahi to be sold in big-box home improvement stores.

With New York a top global headquarters for the fashion industry, the PhilaU students take learning to a new level as they enhance their knowledge and skills, meet top industry leaders and make valuable connections for future internships and jobs. “We’re trying to get them familiar with New York,” Connelly said. “Their eyes are being opened to all the different opportunities in the industry.”

Maria Palantino, a fashion design major, agreed, saying, “The time I have spent in New York has exposed me to knowledge and helped me develop a new perspective I could only attain beyond classroom walls.”

One highlight of the course is a five-day extended trip to New York Fashion Week, where PhilaU students will attend and assist with behind-the-scenes production at several runway shows. During the Feb. 13 to 17 trip, students also will meet designers and merchandisers, and visit museums and fashion exhibitions.

Also during Fashion Week, PhilaU fashion design senior Tia Pion and recent graduate Dana Jackson will show work from their senior capstone collections in the Emerging Designer’s Collective runway show Feb. 14. It is the first time PhilaU student designers are showing their work on the New York Fashion Week runway.

The New York Immersion course will be offered again in fall 2015 for sophomore fashion students. The course, which was filled this semester, is expected to be offered at least annually in the future.

PhilaU’s fashion programs, which include **fashion design** and **fashion merchandising and management**, were ranked among the “Top 50 Fashion Schools in the World” for the second time this December by *Fashionista*, a leading international web site for fashion news and trends.

This semester, six fashion students have won prestigious national YMA FSF Geoffrey Beene scholarships, and one went on to win a National Retail Federation Foundation scholarship, as well. For more information, go to PhilaU [fashion design](#) or [fashion merchandising and management](#).

*Philadelphia University, founded in 1884, is a private university with 3,700 students enrolled in more than 70 undergraduate and graduate programs. As the model for professional university education, the University, through its award-winning Nexus Learning approach, 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 Kanbar 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](http://www.PhilaU.edu).*