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News

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Philadelphia University Fashion Student Awarded Top National YMA Geoffrey Beene Scholarship

PHILADELPHIA, Jan. 16, 2017– Philadelphia University fashion design senior Vivian Cooper was awarded the first-ever \$35,000 top award from a national pool of 600 student designers at the prestigious YMA Geoffrey Beene National Scholarship Awards Dinner Jan. 12 in New York.

Marc Mastronardi, executive vice president of business development at Macy's, announced the unprecedented scholarship award for Cooper in front of a packed ballroom of 1,500 fashion industry leaders, educators and students.



Vivian Cooper accepts award from actor Kellan Lutz (l) and Macy's EVP Marc Mastronardi.

“To see the YMA present its first-ever grand prize \$35,000 scholarship award to Vivian was an enormously proud moment for Philadelphia University,” said Sheila Connelly, the University’s fashion design program director. “Vivian is the real deal—talented, smart, genuine and kind. She put countless hours into this project, and this extraordinary honor is well deserved.”

Cooper and seven other YMA top finalists had to present to judges a project focused on the future of sustainability in the fashion industry. For her case study, Cooper created a private-label junior’s swim and beachwear line made from recycled plastic bottles that could be used to create unique fabrics. The fashion line also would engage communities to support sustainability.

In addition to Cooper, seven additional PhilaU students won YMA Fashion Scholarships of \$5,000 each in this year's competition: fashion design students Colton Snavely, Keren Espina, Maria Balestino and Emily DeBernardo and fashion merchandising students Nicole Braun, Zoe Wilson and Maddie Bill, who received the award for the third straight year.

This year, some 600 YMA competitors represented leading collegiate programs in fashion, merchandising and business nationwide. PhilaU students historically have performed well in the YMA scholarship program. Fashion alumni Casey Saccomanno '08 and Jessica Steele '09 each won top honors, and Tia Pion '15 was a finalist. In addition, dozens of PhilaU students have received \$5,000 and \$10,000 scholarships in recent years.

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; the College of Science, Health and the Liberal Arts and the School of Continuing and Professional Studies. For more information, go to www.PhilaU.edu.