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News

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Sheila Connelly, fashion executive with expertise in design, merchandising and brand management, named director of Philadelphia University's Fashion Design program

PHILADELPHIA, January 15, 2014 – Sheila Connelly, a senior fashion executive with broad experience in both the design and business aspects of the fashion industry, has been named director of Philadelphia University's fashion design program.

With vast knowledge in design, merchandising and brand development, Connelly's career encompasses global experience in managing design teams, creating products and building brands in creative, collaborative environments.

Her impressive background includes such top positions as CEO/chief merchant of *Hartstrings Childrenswear*; fashion director at *Shop NBC*; creative director of *Pampolina European Childrenswear*; and vice president of design and marketing at *The Eagle's Eye*. She oversaw the multi-media brand launch for fashion celebrity Carson Kressley, who in November was named a member of Philadelphia University's Board of Trustees. Since starting her career as a buyer at *Macy's*, Connelly has developed many enduring industry contacts both in the U.S. and internationally.

"Sheila Connelly brings invaluable industry experience and an active fashion design network to Philadelphia University's fashion design program," said Mike Leonard, academic dean, School of Design and Engineering at Philadelphia University. "With this broad background, she will serve as a catalyst for new collaborations between our internationally recognized programs in fashion design and fashion merchandising and management. She has the vision, drive, skills and knowledge to help promote Philadelphia University's outstanding fashion design program to an ever-widening global audience."

"I am thrilled to be part of the PhilaU team and support the University's innovative approach to teaching and learning," Connelly said. "During my 25-plus years in the fashion industry, I have had the privilege of hiring and mentoring young designers as they began their

careers. I am passionate about design and bring an energetic, inspirational and forward-thinking approach to complement PhilaU's highly regarded program."

Connelly added, "The fashion industry is changing at warp speed, and PhilaU fashion design students can be assured of getting an education that will put them ahead of the curve and give them a competitive edge in the work place."

Ranked as one of the top programs in the world by *Fashionista.com*, Philadelphia University's fashion design program prepares students to be successful and influence the global fashion industry. With a well-established network of industry partners, PhilaU fashion students gain coveted internships and post-graduate positions at such well-known firms as Urban Outfitters, Tommy Hilfiger, QVC, Donna Karan, Nanette Lepore, BCBG Maxazria and Lands' End, as well as international fashion magazines such as *Vogue*.

Philadelphia University offers many opportunities for students to gain valuable, real-world experience during their college careers.

On March 27, 2014, Philadelphia University will host a Style Summit for fashion students, coordinated by PhilaU Trustee Carson Kressley, who gained renown on Bravo's breakthrough hit *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy*. On April 27, the 2014 Philadelphia University Fashion Show will showcase the best of this year's creative and innovative student fashion designs at a professional runway show at Philadelphia's Kimmel Center.

Philadelphia University's prestigious Spirit of Design Award is presented annually at the Fashion Show to a prominent and influential designer, most recently Nicole Miller in 2013. Past awardees include John Varvatos, menswear designer and celebrity mentor on NBC's *Fashion Star*; Tommy Hilfiger; Geoffrey Beene; Francisco Costa, women's creative director of Calvin Klein Collection; Mary McFadden, known for her goddess-like couture gowns; and Philadelphia University alumni William Calvert, a couturier known for his exquisitely beautiful evening wear and wedding gowns, and Jay McCarroll, designer and first winner of Bravo's *Project Runway*.

For more information on Philadelphia University's Fashion Design program, [click here](#).

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 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.