



News

Contact:
Debbie Goldberg
Director of Media Relations
215.951.2718
goldbergd@PhilaU.edu

Philadelphia University Announces Groundbreaking New College of Design, Engineering and Commerce

Ronald G. Kander, Ph.D., Named Executive Dean

PHILADELPHIA, Nov. 22, 2010— In line with Philadelphia University’s Strategic Plan, President Stephen Spinelli Jr., Ph.D., formally announced today the creation of an innovative College of Design, Engineering and Commerce. At the same time, President Spinelli announced that Ronald G. Kander, Ph.D., director of the School of Engineering at James Madison University, has been named executive dean of the new College.

The College of Design, Engineering and Commerce, which will officially launch in fall 2011, will be home to a revolutionary, transdisciplinary curriculum that retains the core learning of each discipline while forging new collaborations between the fields of design, engineering and business.

As a model for professional university education in the 21st century, Philadelphia University is focused on providing graduates with the skills necessary to be leaders in their professions at every level of their careers. By bringing these three programs together, the new College will push students to think beyond the boundaries of existing disciplines and focus on market-driven innovation through teamwork, collaboration and connections with industry partners.

“The College of Design, Engineering and Commerce is unique,” Spinelli said. “Students will gain expertise in their disciplines and a fluency in the transdisciplinary ways of the 21st-century work world on a much larger scale than what we’ve seen in higher education to date. Dr. Kander’s appointment is yet another component of a world-class team delivering world-class education.”

“The College of Design, Engineering and Commerce is such a forward-thinking and timely concept because it combines the best aspects of the three disciplines at its core to focus on innovation and entrepreneurship,” said Kander. “This is happening exactly at a time when innovation is universally recognized as a critical element in our country’s current economic recovery and its future global competitiveness, as well as in solving today’s complex, world-scale human problems.”

As head of James Madison's engineering school, Kander integrated business and design elements and developed new collaborative relationships with other academic departments at the University. He has expertise in polymer processing, manufacturability and rapid prototyping and tooling technologies.

"Ron has extensive experience in integrative education," said Philadelphia University Provost Randy Swearer, Ph.D., noting the new executive dean was selected after an exhaustive 10-month search. "His experience, ability and passion to fuse those interdisciplinary elements are the perfect springboard from which to launch Philadelphia University's College of Design, Engineering and Commerce."

"Ron has a unique combination of background and experience, passion, drive and ambition to make our new College great," Swearer added. "He will be brilliant working with industry partners, potential donors and bringing those external relationships to the College that will drive its success."

Philadelphia University will break ground in spring 2011 on a new 39,000 square-foot building to house the College of Design, Engineering and Commerce and create the unique types of space needed to foster the active, collaborative spirit that is at its core.

"I am very excited to be part of this opportunity," added Kander. "I am intrigued by the bold and bright future for which Philadelphia University has positioned itself with the formation of the College of Design, Engineering and Commerce. One of the most exciting features of this new position is the opportunity to work with a talented team of outstanding students, faculty, staff and administrators that have been assembled here at Philadelphia University. We have exactly the right idea and exactly the right people coming together at exactly the right time. That doesn't happen very often."

Previously, Kander was department head of integrated science and technology at James Madison University and was a faculty member in materials science and engineering at Virginia Tech, where he was also director of the School of Engineering's interdisciplinary green engineering program.

Kander received his B.S. in chemical engineering from Carnegie Mellon University, and a Ph.D. in chemical engineering from the University of Delaware. He will join Philadelphia University full time in July.

Philadelphia University, founded in 1884, is developing the model for professional university education in the 21st century. With 3,500 students enrolled in more than 60 undergraduate and graduate programs, the University focuses on professional programs that prepare students to be leaders in their professions, in an active, collaborative and real-world learning environment with a strong foundation in the liberal arts. Philadelphia University includes Schools of Architecture, Business Administration, Design and Engineering, Liberal Arts and Science and Health.