



PHILADELPHIA
UNIVERSITY

News

Contact:
Debbie Goldberg
Director of Media Relations
GoldbergD@philau.edu
215.951.2851

Design education must move from casual greening to deeper ideals of sustainability, Philadelphia University professor says in new book, *Design Education for a Sustainable Future*

Rob Fleming, director of PhilaU's M.S. in Sustainable Design Program, says sustainability is driving profound change in design education and related professions.

PHILADELPHIA, May 8, 2013—Sustainability is a powerful force that is fundamentally reshaping humanity's relationship to the natural world, and design education must rise to the challenge of moving from well-intentioned but lightweight "greening" to the deeper and more impactful ideals of sustainability and resilience, says Rob Fleming, whose new book, *Design Education for a Sustainable Future*, offers a blueprint for overhauling the education and training of design professionals.

"The move from environmental friendliness to the higher bar of integral sustainability and regenerative design demands a new type of design professional, one who is deeply collaborative, ethically grounded, empathically connected and technologically empowered," said Fleming, a LEED-certified architect and director of Philadelphia University's M.S. in Sustainable Design Program.

Fleming will talk about his book and recommendations for a new model of design education at two upcoming events in Philadelphia:

- On Thursday, May 10, Fleming will speak at Grid Alive, an event sponsored by Grid magazine, the Philadelphia Mayor's Office of Sustainability and Sustainable 19103, on a panel with Judy Wicks, founder of White Dog Café, Sustainable Business Network and Fair Food; and William Woys Weaver, of The Keystone Center of the Study of Regional Foods and Food Tourism.
- On Thursday, May 30, Fleming will speak on the topic "Beyond Green: How can sustainable design transform our lives?" at The Center for Environmental Policy of The Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University at 6 p.m.

In *Design Education for a Sustainable Future*, Fleming argues for a great leap forward in design education, moving from an individualistic and competitive model casually focused on greening to a new approach defined by an integral consciousness, shaped by the values of inclusivity and cooperation, and implemented by a series of integrative behaviors including:

- § an ethically infused design brief
- § a co-creative design process
- § on-going value engineering
- § pre-emptive engineering
- § design validation through simulation
- § on-line enabled integrated learning
- § the use of well-vetted rating systems

The book details the integral frameworks, whole-system change methodologies and intrinsic values that will assist professors and their students in an authentic and effective pursuit of design education for a sustainable future. The recommendations encompass a wide range of design fields for the built environment, including architects, interior designers, landscape architects, and also deeply impacts related fields such as engineering and construction.

“The principles of sustainability, which emphasize ecological regeneration and co-creative processes, comprise a new and powerful ideal that is reshaping technologically driven initiatives, especially those associated with the design and construction of the built environment. Societal conceptions of money and profit, consumerism, design and technology are radically shifting to address the superficial but useful demands of “greening,” and are leading to finding deeper and more impactful processes to meet the much higher bar of sustainability,” Fleming wrote in the introduction to his book, which was reprinted in *Metropolis* magazine and which can be read [here](#).

Philadelphia University’s Master’s in Sustainable Design program, of which Fleming was founding director, was one of the first of its kind and features an award-winning transdisciplinary, projects-based curriculum that helps students to develop market-driven innovations and to be 21st century global leaders in design, economic and environmental sustainability. For more information, go to <http://www.philau.edu/green/index.html>.

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.