



PHILADELPHIA
UNIVERSITY

News

Contact:

Debbie Goldberg

Director of Public Relations

GoldbergD@PhilaU.edu

215.951.2718

Philadelphia University Receives \$1 Million Grant to Support Entrepreneurship Education

Philadelphia, Aug. 11, 2016— Philadelphia University has received a \$1 million grant from the Diana Davis Spencer Foundation to establish a fellowship for entrepreneurship education as part of the PhilaU Center for Entrepreneurship, which will elevate and expand the University's already strong capabilities in this field.

"This generous grant is an important step in advancing Philadelphia University's leadership in innovation and entrepreneurship," said Philadelphia University President Stephen Spinelli Jr., a leading educator and authority on entrepreneurship. "As the model for professional university education, we consider the entrepreneurial skill set to be critical for our students and graduates in the rapidly changing global work environment. This partnership, coupled with our planned integration with Thomas Jefferson University, will provide students and alumni with unprecedented opportunities to work across disciplines to identify and develop unique solutions to some of today's most complex problems."

"The support from the Diana Davis Spencer Foundation will expand our ability to develop new research and educational initiatives, particularly into how entrepreneurship influences, and is influenced by, macro-societal factors," said D.R. Widder, the University's vice president for innovation. "It is a transdisciplinary intersection of business, technology and the liberal arts that is at the heart of PhilaU's Nexus Learning approach to education, which has resulted in an impressive 95 percent job and graduate school placement rate."

Steve Mariotti, a global thought leader in entrepreneurship education and advocacy, has been named the Fellow for Entrepreneurship Education for the PhilaU Center for Entrepreneurship, which provides coaching, technical support and other resources for students, alumni and faculty members who are interested in pursuing entrepreneurial opportunities.

Mariotti founded the Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship (NFTE) in 1987 to teach low-income youth how to start their own businesses and empower them to create pathways out of poverty. Since then, more than 700,000 students in 22 states and 12 countries have graduated from NFTE programs.

Diana Spencer, president of the Diana Davis Spencer Foundation, has Philadelphia roots as well as a long association with both Spinelli and Mariotti.

“We immediately saw the synergy of them working together,” she said. “Steve Mariotti is a visionary who takes the road less traveled, encouraging others to think big and create their own entrepreneurial journeys. The Diana Davis Spencer Foundation is confident that Steve Mariotti will enhance Philadelphia University's entrepreneurial edge.”

In his role as fellow, Mariotti will focus on a number of initiatives, including research and dissemination of information on entrepreneurs who have overcome such social challenges as extreme poverty, war and incarceration; creating multimedia educational materials to encourage and assist PhilaU students, faculty and alumni, as well as those outside the University, in starting businesses; and disseminating the research he conducts at PhilaU in scholarly and popular journals, books and a variety of other outlets.

“I am very excited about becoming the first fellow for entrepreneurship at Philadelphia University,” Mariotti said. “This is a unique opportunity to work with PhilaU—our nation’s leading school in experiential, professional education—as it becomes a major force in innovative entrepreneurship education.”

Philadelphia University’s strength in entrepreneurship and driving innovation are fueled by its Nexus Learning approach—active, collaborative, connected to the real world and infused with the liberal arts—which is foundational to teaching and learning across all majors and programs at the University.

“Entrepreneurship embodies PhilaU’s Nexus Learning – it doesn’t get more active, collaborative and connected to the real world than entrepreneurship,” Widder said. “This grant will further enable us to provide our students with an education that prepares them to be more entrepreneurial in their career paths and, for some, start their own ventures.”

PhilaU’s Center for Entrepreneurship provides resources and support for students, faculty and alumni across all academic disciplines. The Entrepreneurship Center also includes the PhilaU Blackstone LaunchPad, part of the national initiative supported by the Blackstone Charitable Foundation to provide co-curricular support for entrepreneurship and innovation on campus; Nexus Maximus, a global educational immersion experience that takes place on campus each fall; and the Top Ram Business Model competition.

Since 2014, the PhilaU Entrepreneurship Center and Blackstone LaunchPad have provided coaching, mentorship, workshops and connections to the local and national startup community for more than 500 students, alumni and faculty members, and supported the launch of numerous businesses ranging from sustainable living and toys to sports and healthcare.

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.