Philadelphia University to launch M.S. in Geodesign, using latest technologies for planning built and natural environments

The program, designed to promote sustainable urban planning and design, will be one of the first of its kind in the U.S.

PHILADELPHIA, Oct. 24, 2012 – Philadelphia University is launching a new M.S. in Geodesign, an innovative program that utilizes a sophisticated design framework and advanced technology for professionals to use in planning and designing sustainable built and natural environments.

The M.S. in Geodesign is one of the first full-degree programs in the U.S. dedicated to this emerging and increasingly important field. Students, many of them landscape architects, architects and urban planners, will develop a valuable new set of skills that will enable them to perform at the top levels in their professions.

Geodesign is an innovative design concept that incorporates the latest technologies, such as geographic information systems (GIS), Model Builder, building information modeling (BIM), robotics and gaming, to capture, manage, analyze and display detailed geographic information.

These applications and technologies allow professionals to come up with master plans and designs that more closely adhere to sustainable principles. Students in the program also will develop and test new tools and technologies that will help define future industry software needs.

“Our graduates will be proficient in a geodesign approach to assessment, planning, design and management processes that are critical to solving 21st century urban problems,” said Claudia Phillips, director of Philadelphia University’s geodesign and landscape architecture programs. “Students in the program will work on collaborative, interdisciplinary teams and will be actively engaged in applied research projects supported by industry, federal and state governments and community partnerships.”

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The M.S. in Geodesign is in the University’s College of Architecture and the Built Environment, and adds to University’s already prominent role in advancing interdisciplinary collaboration, sustainability and immersion in real-world projects in its design programs.

“PhilaU geodesign students will be leaders in applying exciting and rapidly-emerging geospatial technologies to define and solve contemporary design and planning challenges with highly informed sustainable design solutions,” said James Querry, Philadelphia’s director of enterprise GIS, and an adjunct lecturer in the program. “Geodesign is smart design.”

Barbara Klinkhammer, dean of PhilaU’s College of Architecture and the Built Environment, said, “With one of the first academic programs in geodesign, Philadelphia University is positioned to become a national educational leader in this new field of study. Graduates will be able to assess multi-dimensional impacts and implications of design alternatives using the rich mapping and data of geographic information systems and the three-dimensional imaging and modeling of building information modeling.”

The M.S. in Geodesign is a 36-credit, full- or part-time graduate program with classes offered evenings and Saturdays. Students in PhilaU’s Landscape Architecture program can complete both their bachelor’s degree and M.S. in Geodesign in five years.

The M.S. in Geodesign is designed primarily for professionals in the fields of landscape architecture, architecture and urban planning, although applicants with degrees in other fields will be considered for admission on an individual basis. All students must take an accelerated introductory course in ArcView GIS training, which will be offered in summer 2013.

For more information, go to http://www.philau.edu/MSGeodesign.

For more information on the M.S. in Geodesign and PhilaU graduate programs in Interior Architecture, Construction Management and Sustainable Design, attend the College of Architecture and the Built Environment Open House on Saturday, Oct. 27, from 1 to 3 p.m., in the Center for Sustainability, Energy Efficiency and Design, Philadelphia University, 4201 Henry Ave., Philadelphia, PA, 19144. For more information, contact John Witherington at witheringtonj@philau.edu.

Philadelphia University, founded in 1884, is a private university with 3,600 students enrolled in more than 60 undergraduate and graduate programs. As a 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.