



## Foot Locker, New Balance and PENSOLE Announce ‘Designing with Sole,’ a Global Intensive Design Program Creating Opportunity for Underrepresented Voices in the Footwear Industry

*Top Designers in North America Will Be Offered Internships with Foot Locker and New Balance*

**NEW YORK (April 30, 2021)** — Foot Locker, New Balance and [PENSOLE Footwear Design Academy](#) today announced “Designing with Sole,” a hands-on, global intensive design program that creates opportunity for aspiring footwear and apparel designers and marketers who have been traditionally underrepresented in the industry. The program creates a path for the underrepresented voices in the industry, including outreach and support of the Black community and its supporters.

“Foot Locker and New Balance have both worked with with PENSOLE on very successful programs,” PENSOLE founder D’Wayne Edwards said. “This year, we’re focusing on aspiring designers in communities that have long supported sneaker culture but sadly have been uninformed in its product creation. Designing with Sole will be a significant step in correcting that inequity.”

“Inspiring and empowering youth culture includes investing in their future and uplifting the voices of those who haven’t been heard,” said Richard Johnson, chairman and CEO of Foot Locker, Inc. “As part of our \$200 million commitment to support the Black community, we’re proud to work with great brands like New Balance and Pensole on the creation of programs like these, which create opportunity and open doors within our industry that have been closed for too many.”

“New Balance is committed to on-going mentorship and support of underrepresented communities,” says Jared Goldman, Senior Director of Design at New Balance. “The Designing with Sole program with PENSOLE and Foot Locker is a unique opportunity for designers who want a career in the footwear industry to get hands-on experience and feedback to help them reach their professional goals. New Balance is proud and excited to be part of their journey.”

Registration for the program opens May 3 and prospective student designers will apply and submit designs online at <https://pensole.com/master-class/designing-with-sole/>. After submissions close on June 7, PENSOLE, Foot Locker and New Balance will select the top 160 submissions among designers in footwear, color and materials, functional apparel and students in brand and product marketing. Finalists will be announced on June 21.

The first online class of the program will take place between July 4 and July 23, after which 60 students will be selected to partake in a 12-week “learn by doing” program in which students will form teams and will be introduced to curriculum on the product creation process. This program will feature industry professionals from New Balance, ranging from design directors, designers, design recruiters, technicians, and developers - all willing to share knowledge to help inspire, guide and challenge students to reach their creative potential.

The top 10 from this class will attend an in-person course at New Balance at the end of the class and North American participants will have the opportunity to receive a paid internship with Foot Locker and New Balance.

**CURRICULUM:** In addition to the LIVE PENSOLE daily instruction, homework assignments, coaching, and mentoring. **Foot Locker and New Balance** also will be given access to the platform, so you have the option to pop into the LIVE sessions at any point during the 12-weeks.

**About Foot Locker:**

Foot Locker, Inc. leads the celebration of sneaker and youth culture around the globe through a portfolio of brands including Foot Locker, Lady Foot Locker, Kids Foot Locker, Champs Sports, Eastbay, Footaction, and Sidestep. With approximately 3,000 retail stores in 27 countries across North America, Europe, Asia, Australia, and New Zealand, as well as websites and mobile apps, the Company's purpose is to inspire and empower youth culture around the world, by fueling a shared passion for self-expression and creating unrivaled experiences at the heart of the global sneaker community. Foot Locker, Inc. has its corporate headquarters in New York. For additional information please visit <https://www.footlocker-inc.com>.

**About New Balance:**

New Balance Athletics, headquartered in Boston, MA has the following mission: Demonstrating responsible leadership, we build global brands that athletes are proud to wear, associates are proud to create and communities are proud to host. Manufactured in the U.S. for more than 75 years and representing a limited portion of our U.S. sales, New Balance MADE U.S. is a premium collection that contains a domestic value of 70% or greater. New Balance owns and operates four factories in NewEngland and one in Flimby, U.K. New Balance employs more than 7,000 associates around the globe and in 2020 reported worldwide sales of \$3.3 billion. To learn more about New Balance, please visit [www.newbalance.com](http://www.newbalance.com) [[newbalance.com](http://newbalance.com)] and for the latest press information please

**About PENSOLE:**

[D'Wayne Edwards](#), a celebrated member of the global footwear community for the last 30 years, founded PENSOLE in 2010 to give talented young design students—regardless of socioeconomic background—an opportunity to learn from the industry's best, without financial barriers, and to provide the industry with a farm system for the next generation of footwear designers.

PENSOLE's "learn by doing" curriculum teaches students the entire footwear design process: inspiration, concept development, design process, problem-solving, materials, business, networking, marketing, and branding. PENSOLE features the most sought-after faculty in footwear, comprising both young professional designers and established footwear design leaders from the top brands, with more than 100 years combined experience to help its students with professional development. Suzette Henry created MLab at PENSOLE in 2014 as a dedicated resource, providing color technology and material innovation in customized educational programs. And in 2017, Angela Medlin joined PENSOLE as founder and director of the educational product creation resource The Functional Apparel and Accessories Studio (FAAS) at PENSOLE, where students are instructed in "true to industry" processes and sustainable practices.

Since the first PENSOLE class in 2010, more than 475 Academy graduates have been placed professionally, full-time or as interns, for footwear companies worldwide, including Columbia Sportswear, Timberland,

Converse, AND1, New Balance, Wolverine, Cole Haan, Under Armour, Keen, Ariat, Stride Rite, adidas, JORDAN, Kenneth Cole, Reebok and Nike.

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