Hampton University Professor Dr. Zhao Sun Part of Team to Receive $8 Million from NASA to Advance Aviation Technology

Hampton University assistant professor for the School of Engineering and Technology, Dr. Zhao (Joy) Sun, is part of a team at Stanford University that will receive $8 million from NASA to advance aviation technology.

The award is part of the University Leadership Initiative (ULI), a collaborative effort between NASA’s Aeronautics Research Mission Directorate (ARMD) and the U.S. university community, where universities take the lead, build their own teams, and set their own research paths.

“Congratulations to our own Dr. Zhao Sun for this amazing appointment,” said Hampton University President, Dr. William R. Harvey. “Dr. Sun is a great example of the excellent students, which has been awarded $8 million from NASA. The team will seek to develop tools involving machine learning in autonomous systems for unmanned aircrafts, over the next four years. The award is part of the University Leadership Initiative (ULI), a collaborative effort between NASA Aeronautics Research Mission Directorate (ARMD) and the U.S. university community, where universities take the lead, build their own teams, and set their own research paths.

There are five teams that were chosen for the ULI, with a total of $32.8 million that will support NASA’s aeronautics research goals.”

Dr. Sun is part of the Stanford University team, which also has representatives from MIT, UC Berkeley and Georgia Tech. During the collaboration, Dr. Sun will spend four 8-week summer sessions at Stanford University. Their team is seeking to develop tools that ensure machine learning in autonomous systems used by unmanned Advanced Air Mobility (AAM) aircraft work as expected in real-time, as well as to employ fault detection and recovery methods if they do not, particularly in situations involving taxiing, landing and collision avoidance. Dr. Sun will serve as co-lead for the adaptation and robust performance part of the project as well as helping with other aspects.

“I really appreciate all the support and help from our Department, School and University,” Dr. Sun said. “I am very excited about the upcoming opportunity to work with the experts in air transportation, robotics, decision making under uncertainty and probabilistic modeling with Stanford, MIT, UC Berkeley, and Georgia Tech. The tight interdisciplinary collaboration will definitely help break down barriers in ways that will benefit the U.S. aviation industry,” said John Cavolowsky, director of NASA’s Transformative Aeronautics Concepts Program in Washington, D.C.

Transformative Aeronautics Concepts Program (NIA), working on intelligent systems involving taxiing, landing and collision avoidance. Dr. Sun will serve as co-lead for the adaptation and robust performance part of the project as well as helping with other aspects.

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“In March 2019, Dr. Sun was selected by Hampton University as a Technical Assistance Scholar for the South Carolina State University Technical Assistance Workshops for HBCUs project, to learn more about competing for federal research and development support. This experience resulted in a summer research grant on quantum computing and quantum control at the National Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory, in which she was mentored by Dr. Bert de Jong of the Computational Chemistry, Materials & Climate Group in the Computational Research Division,” said Dr. Joyce Shirazi, Dean of the Hampton University School of Engineering and Technology. “Now she is part of a tight-knit interdisciplinary group of experts who will collaborate on a variety of projects, such as this NASA ULI. Hampton University will benefit greatly by leveraging these collaborations for upcoming projects led by the School of Engineering and Technology.”

Dr. Sun earned a Ph.D. in Electrical Engineering in 2006 from North Carolina A&T State University, where she was involved in the development of a series of robust and adaptive control algorithms for a group of unmanned aerial/ground vehicles. She worked as a research scientist at the National Institute of Aerospace (NIA), working on intelligent methods of path planning and formation control of unmanned aerial vehicles, and adaptive fault tolerant control strategies. She has also successfully developed reinforcement learning methods for power minimization and adaptive control of portable video devices to maximize their operational lifetime. Dr. Sun also has a Master of Science in Control Science and Engineering from Southeast University in Nanjing, China and a Bachelor of Science in system engineering from Nanjing University of Science and Technology in Nanjing, China.

Hampton University Partners with Virginia Peninsula Foodbank to Host Drive-Through Mobile Pantry

During this time of urgency and emergency, Hampton University has partnered with the Virginia Peninsula Foodbank to assist in an important role in meeting community needs. Hampton University is serving as a host for the Foodbank’s Drive-Through Mobile Pantry.

“Hampton University partnering with the Virginia Peninsula Foodbank is just the latest example of how we are continuing to follow our Founder Gen. Samuel Chapman Armstrong’s ideal that an education is encompassed by educating the head, the heart, and the hands,” said Hampton University President, Dr. William R. Harvey. “Hampton University is dedicated to impacting our larger community in and outside of the classroom. In keeping with Hampton University’s Mission Statement, our ultimate goal is to promote character building, community service, and cultural awareness – key qualities for students’ success at Hampton University and beyond.”

The most recent mobile pantry distribution in the city of Hampton took place April 8 between 10:00 a.m. and noon in Lot 11 near the Hampton University Convocation Center and the VA Medical Center, serving the first 400 households. The Mobile Pantry will make additional stops in Newport News, York County and Williamsburg.

“This is the perfect location for drive-through distribution,” said Karen L. Joyner, Chief Executive Officer of the Virginia Peninsula Foodbank. “We can move so many people in and out in a quick period of time, unlike some of our other locations. This is the second time we have been at this location for a mobile pantry. We did it three weeks ago here and then we came back because we love the setup and the great parking facilities, and as long as we are allowed, we plan to come back.”

“We enjoy a great relationship with Hampton University. Several of our board members work at HU and we have a lot of campus student groups that volunteer with us as well. The university so graciously allows us to use this space when we do our regular V.A. mobile pantry, which is on the fourth Thursday of the month,” added Joyner.

Established in 1986, the Virginia Peninsula Foodbank has been the leading hunger relief organization across the greater Peninsula region, serving the 1 in 7 Virginians who struggle with hunger in the cities of Hampton, Newport News, Poquoson, and Williamsburg, and the counties of Gloucester, James City, Mathews, Surry, and York.

For more information about the Virginia Peninsula Foodbank, call (757) 596-7188, visit http://www.hpfoodbank.org/ or VAPenFoodbank on Facebook.
Hampton University has announced the creation of the Hampton Cares Student Emergency Fund, which is designed to relieve barriers for students to continue their attendance at Hampton University. Because many Hampton University students are facing severe financial hardship as a result of the COVID-19 crisis, they need emergency aid now more than ever.

“As we work to get through these tough times together, everyone in the country has been affected by this crisis. This fund is an example of how we are continuing to follow our Founder Gen. Samuel Chapman Armstrong’s ideal that an education is encompassed by educating ‘the head, the heart, and the hands.’ By setting up this emergency fund, we want to ensure our students are able to get the financial support they need, so their only concern will be excelling in the classroom,” said Hampton University President, Dr. William R. Harvey.

Gifts to the fund will help students who are facing financial hardships in light of the widespread impact of COVID-19, including transportation, technology for remote learning and basic care needs. Hampton University needs help from the community, alumni and the public to contribute to the Hampton Cares Student Emergency Fund.

Join us in making a positive difference in the lives of Hampton University students. All donations to this fund are tax-deductible, and 100% of contributions will be devoted to student need.

“We are so pleased to launch this fund to help our students. We know that our students are hurting, along with so many others. And we are launching this fund now as we want to do all that we can to help them,” said Hampton University Vice President for Development, Evelyn Graham. “We are calling on our friends of Hampton, our alum, our corporate and foundation partners to give. The benefit will go so far.”

Students who meet the following are eligible to apply:

- Be enrolled at Hampton University at the time of application for emergency funds
- Have an immediate financial hardship resulting from the coronavirus pandemic (documentation is required)
- Students must have at least a 2.0 GPA or higher

In addition to the Hampton Cares Student Emergency Fund, Hampton also has launched two new Hampton Cares scholarship funds. The first is the Hampton Cares Endowed Scholarship Fund, a permanent, self-sustaining source of funding. Once the funding reaches $25,000, the fund can permanently provide funding for the scholarship. In addition, Hampton University has developed the Hampton Cares Current Use Scholarship Fund, which is intended for students to receive funds near immediately. Criteria for both funds include: only currently enrolled undergraduate students are eligible; students who apply must have a financial hardship resulting from the 2020 pandemic or another natural/man-made disaster occurring since 2020; and each student must have a minimum 2.0 GPA.

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Hampton University in the
Hampton Life (Vol. 12 Issue 5) is published monthly by Hampton University in the Office of University Relations.

Contributors:
Matthew White, Glenn Knight, B. Da’Vida Plummer, Jessica Zimmerman, Alexis Brower

Hampton University student Sara Avery has won a Pulitzer Center Fellowship. As a Fellow, Avery will undertake an international reporting project that she proposed, which involves traveling to Haiti to talk to locals about their 3D printed homes. Pulitzer Center staff and journalists will advise her throughout the process and act as mentors. Her final project will be featured on the Center website, with publication in other news media outlets such as The Washington Post and The Atlantic.

“We are incredibly proud of Ms. Sara Avery for winning this prestigious Fellowship from the Pulitzer Center. Her proposal to report on the 3D printed homes for Haitians was insightful and will bring to light the technological advances that are helping people all over the world. We know that Ms. Avery will continue to Dream no Small Dreams as she continues to pursue academic excellence,” said Hampton University President, Dr. William R. Harvey.

Avery is a sophomore journalism student in the Scripps Howard School of Journalism and Communications from Raleigh, North Carolina. For the Pulitzer Center Fellowship, Avery proposed reporting on the problem of the homeless in Haiti after the 2010 earthquake. In her proposal, Avery said: “One company, Icon, is working to combat the problem by providing 3D printed homes to those communities that are still adversely affected. I want to shadow the company as they build one of these homes. Afterwards, I want to speak with families who live in the homes and ask them about upkeep of the houses in the long run.”

The fellowship is through the Campus Consortium, which is a network of partnerships between the Pulitzer Center and universities and colleges to engage with students and faculty on the critical global issues of our time. Their aim is to connect international reporting supported by the Pulitzer Center directly with communities across the U.S., to expand knowledge of the world, spark conversations across disciplines and inspire individuals to expand their horizons. Hampton University recently became a Campus Consortium partner.

Scripps Howard School of Journalism and Communications Assistant Professor Lynn Waltz helped guide Avery to apply for the Fellowship. “Professor Waltz sought me out and asked me to apply,” Avery said. “I would never have applied for it without her pushing me and I’m glad she did.”

Professor Waltz said: “Sara is a top-notch student and excellent reporter and writer. I’m very excited that she has earned this amazing opportunity.”

The Dean of the Scripps Howard School of Journalism and Communications, Ms. B. Da’Vida Plummer, is excited about Avery paving the way for future journalism students. “We are very grateful to the Pulitzer Center for availing this international reporting opportunity to the Scripps Howard School of Journalism and Communications. Sara is a top performer who will shine as the first SHSJC Pulitzer ‘fellow’ charting the global waters for the other ‘scrippas’ who will follow in her very worthy footsteps,” Dean Plummer said.

Currently, due to the world pandemic, travel has been put on hold, but Avery will be paired with a professional journalist and editor and will begin preparing for the time when she is able to travel to Haiti. “Once I can travel, I will stay in Haiti for up to three weeks,” Avery said. “While I’m there, I will visit with families and interview them about taking care of the 3D printed homes, what problems may arise in the long run and asking about resources that will be needed to sustain these homes. When I return to Hampton, I will write the story and once it goes through a rigorous editing process, it will be posted on the Pulitzer website.”

Kem Sawyer, Contributing Editor at the Pulitzer Center and Director of its Campus Consortium reporting fellow program, said: “We are very much looking forward to working with Sara. She chose an important subject—using 3D technology to provide housing for the displaced in Haiti—and she submitted an excellent proposal—fresh, original, and well-written.”

Avery is very excited about this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. “I am looking forward to working with the Pulitzer Center to bring this idea to life,” Avery said. “Initially, when I got the email saying I won, I was shocked. I was at a loss for words, which I rarely am. I’m just excited to get the process started.”

After Avery graduates from Hampton University, she wants to pursue a dual master’s in journalism and J.D. program, with the end goal of working as a producer or investigative journalist. She also might attend law school, which is something she has wanted to do since she was very young.

Hampton University Journalism Student Sara Avery Wins Pulitzer Center Fellowship; Will Travel to Haiti to Report on 3D Printed Homes

Hampton University Student Sara Avery Wins Pulitzer Center Fellowship; Will Travel to Haiti to Report on 3D Printed Homes

To donate, or for students to apply, visit https://givetohamptonu.org/.

For more information about the Hampton University Student Emergency Fund, or the scholarship funds, email the Office of Development at hamptoncares@hamptonu.edu.
Hampton University Alumni Jaylian Williamson Hired as Player Engagement Fellow for the Los Angeles Rams

Jaylian Williamson has been hired by the Los Angeles Rams as the Player Engagement Fellow. He just served as a Compliance and Championships Intern with the conference office.

“Congratulations to Mr. Jaylian Williamson on his new career opportunity that recognizes his hard work and determination. J.J. is the type of student-athlete that we strive to produce here at Hampton University. Our student athletes first excel in the classroom, then they excel in their respective sports and are ultimately successful post graduation. At Hampton University, we truly develop leaders and champions,” said Hampton University President, Dr. William R. Harvey.

Williamson began his Hampton career in 2012 as a sports management major. He was a three-year starter as quarterback and then during his senior year, an injury to his hip caused him to miss the season. He returned to finish his career and earned ALL-MEAC honors to cap a career that included records for most passing attempts, most passing completions, most career passing attempts, and earned ALL-MEAC honors to cap a record-breaking career and earned ALL-MEAC honors. He was a three-year starter as quarterback and during his senior year, an injury to his hip caused him to miss the season. He returned to finish his career and earned ALL-MEAC honors to cap a career that included records for most passing attempts, most passing completions, most career passing attempts, and earned ALL-MEAC honors. He was a three-year starter as quarterback and during his senior year, an injury to his hip caused him to miss the season. He returned to finish his career and earned ALL-MEAC honors to cap a career that included records for most passing attempts, most passing completions, most career passing attempts, and earned ALL-MEAC honors.

In his new role as Player Engagement Fellow for the Los Angeles Rams, Williamson will be “helping develop players, rookies, and transitioning them from draft to NFL lifestyle, adjusting to NFL in general and for their families too. I’ll be helping implement programs, finances, and just transition in general,” Williamson said. “I’m really looking forward to this position. It’s been tough transitioning with COVID-19, but I’m just trying to make the best of it.”

Williamson just finished interning in the MEAC office in the department of compliance and championships. “We are excited for Jaylian,” MEAC Commissioner Dr. Dennis E. Thomas said. “One of the goals of our internship program is to provide the interns real-world experience and improve their skill set so they will be more attractive to the workforce. Jaylian continues a long line of interns who have moved on to gain meaningful employment. We wish him well.”

Hampton University graduating senior Anthony Burley is helping to give back to seniors through his job at Anna’s Pizza in Buckroe during the COVID-19 pandemic. Anna’s has teamed up with Hampton Councilwoman Chris Sneed to help provide meals for seniors and they are encouraging others to do the same.

“These are very challenging times, especially for senior citizens. Thank you to Mr. Anthony Burley for doing what he can to ensure this population continues to receive meals during this crisis,” said Hampton University President, Dr. William R. Harvey.

Burley is an international studies major from California. He takes orders and works as a delivery driver at Anna’s Pizza in Buckroe. When Councilwoman Sneed launched the “Meal Share for Seniors” Challenge, Burley was happy to get involved.

“The woman who owns Anna’s, she was seeing how the crisis is hitting small businesses hard, and so she teamed up with Councilwoman Chris Sneed, who is running for re-election. She got her friends together and came up with this idea that people in the community can call in and sponsor a lunch for a senior citizen in the community,” Burley said.

To participate in the “Meal Share for Seniors” Challenge, people can select an adult 65 or older, pick a local restaurant to support that can deliver the meal to the person of their choice and because of the health care burden and failure of our society on elder folk and many African Americans, it’s been good to see these folks getting some help. If we can help lift the burden just a little bit, then it’s worth it.”

To help sponsor a meal, people just need to call the restaurant and they can choose between different pre-fixed options. The restaurant will then deliver the meal to the person of their choice or someone who needs a sponsor.

“I want people to know that at the end of the day, the biggest thing is serving the community and building a culture for service, establishing a pipeline where people can get fed, spiritually, mentally, and try to make sure the black community is doing okay. Get out there and serve,” Burley added.

Hampton University Students Helping to Give Back to Seniors During Pandemic

Burley has really seen the impact this pandemic has had on seniors and the meal sponsorship is a great way to give back. “I think it’s really easy for people when anything major happens, to focus inwardly, and to only make sure that they’re okay and everything is about them. I think there’s this idea that people think if I’m okay, then everything is fine, but I want someone else to be doing good as well,” Burley said. “Senior citizens are really getting impacted by this. A lot of the ones I’m seeing are African American and because of the health care burden and failure of our society on elder folk and many African Americans, it’s been good to see these folks getting some help. If we can help lift the burden just a little bit, then it’s worth it.”

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Another Hampton University student, Khadijatou Camara, is also giving back to seniors during this pandemic. Camara is a 5-year MBA student from Raleigh, North Carolina.

“I volunteer with the Peninsula Agency on Aging by driving various routes throughout the Hampton Roads area and delivering meals to elderly members of the community,” Camara said. “I usually do this around two or three times a week depending on how busy I am with classes. I’ve been volunteering with them for a little over five weeks now, so it’s been really fun. I’ve really enjoyed being able have an impact on the community, especially with all that’s going on right now.”

Camara wants to remind folks of the importance of reaching out and checking up on the older population. “A lot of the people that I deliver to don’t really have any visitors and sometimes don’t even get any phone calls so I’m the only person who they’ll see or talk to the whole day. That takes a huge toll on people mentally and emotionally. Even if you can’t get out to volunteer, something as simple as a phone call, goes a long way,” Camara said.
Hampton University Partners with the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, Virginia Secretary of Education and the Council of Independent Colleges in Virginia in the statewide VA Higher Education Together Campaign

Hampton University, The State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV), the Virginia Secretary of Education’s Office, and the Council of Independent Colleges in Virginia (CICV) teamed up with Virginia’s 43 public and private colleges and universities to create a message of solidarity for Virginia high school and college students and their families. The statewide #VAHigherEducationTogether campaign launched April 24 to express support and hope to those who are anxious about the status of higher education during and after the COVID-19 crisis.

“We miss our students and look forward to their safe return to our ‘Home by the Sea’ once it’s deemed safe,” said Dr. William R. Harvey, Hampton University President. “We encourage everyone to be diligent, stay strong, and to follow the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendations to help decrease the spread of the virus. We are in this together.”

The first phase of the campaign features a video collage of college and university presidents holding signs with an overarching message: “To our current and future students: These days aren’t easy. But our hearts are with you, and we send you these messages of support. We know we’ll be back together again. We know we’ll be stronger than ever. Be safe. Be informed. Be well. Sincerely, Virginia’s College and University Presidents.”

“We are excited to partner with SCHEV and 44 of Virginia’s phenomenal institutions of higher education to remind Virginia students and their families that we are here for them during this difficult time,” said Virginia Secretary of Education, Atif Qarni. “We are listening, and we will continue working around the clock to provide students the support they need to secure the degree or credential they need to pursue their goals.”

To learn more about this campaign, go to: https://vimeo.com/410271651

Hampton University Unites Virtually to Fight Against Sexual Assault in 8th Annual Denim Day

For the 8th consecutive year, Hampton University faculty and staff participated in the national observance of Denim Day on Wednesday, April 29, calling attention to Sexual Assault Awareness. Sponsored by the HU Title IX Office, the HU Community wore jeans in support of sexual assault survivors everywhere. As the campus is practicing social distancing due to COVID-19, the decision was made to hold the annual campaign virtually.

“Hampton University is proud to be part of Denim Day annually. Every year we show our support for sexual awareness by wearing a teal ribbon, which is a visible sign of protest against the destructive attitudes towards sexual assault. Attorney Kelly Harvey-Viney had the vision to adjust how we observe Denim Day this year because of COVID-19 by having departments submit group photos that we made into a campus wide collage,” said Dr. William R. Harvey, Hampton University President.

For 21 years, the California organization called Peace Over Violence (POV) has run its Denim Day campaign on a Wednesday in April to raise awareness about sexual assault. The campaign was originally triggered by a ruling by the Italian Supreme Court where a rape conviction was overturned because the justices felt that since the victim was wearing tight jeans, she must have helped her rapist remove her jeans, therefore implying consent. The following day, the women in the Italian Parliament came to work wearing jeans in solidarity with the victim. Peace Over Violence developed the Denim Day campaign in response to this case and the activism it generated. Since then, wearing jeans on Denim Day has become a symbol of protest against erroneous attitudes and misconceptions about sexual assault.

At Hampton University, this ongoing education, awareness and prevention campaign is sponsored in the spring by the Title IX Office. This year’s virtual campaign had the highest participation to date.

“I am so proud of the virtual engagement we received from our committed faculty and staff,” said Harvey-Viney. “Each year the Hampton University community shows up to support the ongoing educational efforts of the Title IX Office. This year was especially unique with the campus practicing proper social distancing techniques, however that did not stop our momentum, or prevent us from having a large number of participants.”

The Hampton University Office of Admission Invites You To Take a Virtual Campus Tour of ‘Our Home by the Sea’

In an effort to ensure the health and safety of prospective students, staff and other members of the Hampton family, the Hampton University Office of Admission has created a new virtual campus tour video for students who have not been granted the opportunity to visit campus.

“We aim to give prospective students an up close and personal experience that showcases the University’s excellent programs, service units, and students who possess THE Standard of Excellence,” said Hampton University President, Dr. William R. Harvey. “This new virtual tour will allow others to see our beautiful ‘Home by the Sea,’ from near and far. I want to especially thank Dean of Admission Angela Nixon Boyd and her team for their efforts to make this video a reality.”

The tour, led by members of the HU Student Recruitment Team, highlights some of Hampton University’s academic offerings, residential campus living, social opportunities, athletic programs and historical landmarks.

“The virtual campus video was born out of those times, we needed an alternative plan. How can we showcase our campus to people? We recruited a couple of students who were still around and are part of the Student Recruitment Team, and worked with them to make this virtual tour,” said Dean Boyd.

The Hampton University Office of Admission hosted its 8th Annual Admitted Student Day in late February where over 3,000 students and their families gathered on campus for a special visit opportunity for students who have been accepted for the 2020 fall semester. This was a chance for students to visit the campus in an intimate setting designed specifically for them. This video will also give admitted students who were not able to attend Admitted Student Day, the opportunity to have a virtual experience.

Hampton University is ranked at the top of several prestigious college listings, distancing many institutions of its size across many noteworthy categories. U.S. News & World Report continues to rank Hampton University as one of the top three Best Historically Black Colleges and Universities. Hampton is also a top pick according to The Princeton Review and The Wall Street Journal.

To see the virtual tour video, see this link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WXw6x9iViac.