Hampton University officially welcomed the senior class of 2020, Onyx 11, at the 77th Annual Opening Convocation in Ogden Hall. Attendees were regaled with inspirational musical sounds of the Hampton University Symphonic Choir. Hampton University President Dr. William R. Harvey provided encouraging words to the audience, and Keynote Speaker and alumna Dr. Desiree Williams provided encouragement for a great academic year.

President Harvey welcomed attendees to the 77th Convocation and the official beginning of the 152nd year of Hampton University’s history. “Our values, our standards, our history, our traditions make Hampton special and these things are the foundations of our success and achievement. Hampton University’s record achievement is the evidence of the quality of our leadership, our esteemed faculty, alumni, programs and most importantly, our students. Students who continue to distinguish themselves as tomorrow’s leaders,” Dr. Harvey said. “As we embark on the academic year of 2019-20, let us diligently strive to reach new heights in academics, research and service, guided by our commitment to being THE Standard of Excellence. As your President, I shall continue to dream no small dreams and to ensure that Hampton’s history is preserved, and that its future is bright.”

Dr. Harvey also had the privilege of honoring Dr. Karen Denise Maxwell and Dr. Otsebele E. Nare with Hampton University’s 2018-19 Edward L. Hamm, Sr. Distinguished Teaching Awards.

Dr. Maxwell is an Associate Professor of Management in the James T. George School of Business. Her passion for teaching has been evidenced in the achievements of her students. According to her students, Dr. Maxwell “is thoughtful and always willing to take time to assist.” Dr. Maxwell is a member of several professional organizations: the Virginia Society for Technology in Education, the American Public Health Association and the Golden Key Honor Society.

Dr. Nare is an Associate Professor in the Hampton University School of Engineering. Students have reported that he “takes a very no-nonsense approach to teaching” and is one of the “most supportive” professors. He is known for being passionate about the “advancement of the field of engineering.” Dr. Nare has written and published dozens of articles and served as lead investigator on numerous grants and contracts and has held leadership positions in several organizations.

Hampton University was excited to have alumna Dr. Desiree Williams give this year’s Convocation Address. Dr. Williams is the former Director of the William R. Harvey Leadership Institute and former assistant professor of physical therapy at Hampton University. She gave the graduating seniors three key points to be successful this year. “First, remember why you are here, secondly, life is about choices, and last but not least, if you are called, you are worthy,” Dr. Williams said. “Choose to get rid of the people, habits and positions that don’t serve you. Life is about choices and only you have the power to choose your own path.”

A two-time Hampton University alumna, Williams received her Doctor of Physical Therapy degree from HU and she also earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Health and Physical Education and a minor in Leadership Studies. Currently, Williams is a practicing physical therapist in the greater Los Angeles area while also pursuing her dream as an on-camera talent. Williams’ pageantry wins include Miss National Sweetheart, Miss Virginia 2013, and Miss Virginia USA 2017. Williams was only the fourth African-American to serve as Miss Virginia in the Miss America Pageant system, and Williams placed in the top ten of the 2016 Miss USA Beauty Pageant. Williams was also a contestant on the long running CBS reality show “Survivor: Heroes v Healers v Hustlers.”
The Walt Disney Company visited Hampton University’s Scripps Howard School of Journalism and Communications, October 2-3, to inform and invite students to apply for their professional internship programs. Disney offers three-month and six-month term paid internships in different fields. The campus-wide presentation was given by Disney’s campus recruiters, Kim Surabian and Khalifa Nailor, along with former and current Hampton University students. Disney gives campus recruiting presentations throughout the year and they are currently recruiting for spring 2020 internships.

Although Surabian and Nailor held their presentation in the Scripps Howard School of Journalism and Communications Auditorium, Disney internships are offered to all student majors, Corey Williams, senior, marketing major, landed his internship with Disney as a marketing intern. Williams assisted in the production of a digital campaign that empowers women. “I wasn’t just limited to business; they gave me a well-rounded experience. I got some production experience, I edited, and managed the ads on the website. I also got to participate in a casting call for ‘The Bachelor. I was able to do very cool things that I don’t feel I would have received anywhere else,” Williams said.

Recruiters also visited the James T. George School of Business, several Scripps classrooms, and were able to meet one-on-one with students and review their resumes. “The students appeared to be incredibly talented and everyone seemed to have a sense of pride that is unparalleled to anything I’ve ever witnessed on a campus visit,” said Nailor.

Students interested in internships asked the recruiters what exactly does Disney look for in an intern, as well as what steps they should take to increase their chances of securing a position. “Be concise and apply to positions you actually have interest in because I can tell right away when someone doesn’t really know what they want to do, when they apply to every open position,” said Surabian.

For more information on Disney internships, visit https://jobs.disneycareers.com/.

The Hampton University William R. Harvey Leadership Institute Kicks Off 2019-2020

Meet the Leaders Series


“We are honored and excited to have Ms. Marisa Porto as an Executive-in-Residence here at Hampton University this year. Her knowledge and experience in journalism and business will surely help our students continue to excel above the rest,” said Hampton University President, Dr. William R. Harvey.

During her lecture, Porto spoke about five simple rules for leadership and life:

1. Know your who. Know what is at the heart of everything you do – your why. Why do you want to do what you want to do in life? “I have always wanted to make a difference in the world. I chose to do that as a journalist. Today, I’m doing it in a different way at Hampton University, but the heart of what I want to do hasn’t changed. Leaders should know their ‘why,’” Porto said.

2. Think like Disney. Once you understand your ‘why,’ put a vision to it. What do you want to do with your why? Walt Disney said, “If you can dream it, there’s some way to do it.”

3. Be your own hero. “In your career and in your life, be the best ‘you’ you can be. Take care of you. Support you. Respect you. Being your own hero is its own kind of leadership, it’s about leading you,” Porto said.

4. Act like Mom. “My mother loved to serve. Whether it was the family dinner table, as a cafeteria worker in an elementary school or the church we attended every week, she was always ready to serve others. People still remember that about her. Part of leadership is service. Listen to others, build a community, and share your commitment. That’s a big part of leadership,” Porto said.

5. Keep the Faith. You will have successes, and you will have failures. You can learn from both, but Porto believes that failures teach you more about yourself as a person and a leader. When bad things happen, real leaders keep moving, keep the faith and focus on their why.

Lastly, Porto told the WRHLI students that they need to talk to others about respect, make their own leadership rules to live by and that is how to live their truth.

“Our theme this academic year is Service and Character, and Ms. Porto established a firm foundation for the WRHLI by sharing her vignettes on leadership, being a role model and mentor. She inspired the Leadership Fellows and challenged them to critically analyze their why and purpose, not just while here at HU, but once they leave and contribute as a leader and productive member of society,” said Dr. Jarris Louis Taylor, Jr., Director of the William R. Harvey Leadership Institute.

Porto is an alumnus of the University of South Carolina and has held leadership positions with news organizations in Florida, Delaware and Ohio. She is the former president of the Virginia Press Association and was a citizen member of Virginia’s Freedom of Information Advisory Council. She has served on the boards of several community organizations, including the Girl Scouts of the Colonial Coast. She currently lives in Hampton.

Hampton University Career Center Hosts Annual Career Fair

On Thursday, September 26, the Hampton University Career Center hosted its annual career fair for current students and recent graduates at the Convocation Center. Hamptonians filled the building dressed in business professional attire, ready and eager to speak with various companies.

“Each year the staff of the Hampton University Career Center works diligently to provide our students and recent graduates with the wonderful opportunity to be exposed to a diverse group of potential employers. Fortune 500 companies from all over the country attend our career fair because of the high quality education Hampton University students receive here,” said Hampton University President, Dr. William R. Harvey.

Recognizing the talent and academic excellence that Hampton University students offer, 117 employers attended the fair, soliciting internships and direct hire positions. Government agencies, corporations, and education institutions from all over the country had the opportunity to acquaint students with their organizations.

“The 2019 Fall Career Fair was open to all Hampton University students and alumni. Based on comments received from employers after the fair, it was a success,” said Bessie Willis, Career Center Director. “The career fair provided an opportunity for alumni and students to network with employers for internship and full-time job opportunities. More than 1600 students attended the fair.”

Each academic year, the Career Center hosts two career fairs – one in September and one in February. Following this fair, the Career Center will start preparing for the next event, reaching out to employers to recruit all majors and alumni.
Hampton University Welcomes Congressman Bobby Scott for Student Roundtable Discussion on Higher Education Act

Hampton University welcomed Congressman Bobby Scott, along with representatives from Old Dominion University, Christopher Newport University, Norfolk State University, Thomas Nelson Community College, Paul D. Camp Community College, and Virginia State University, to sit down for a roundtable discussion about the cost of college.

Hampton University’s President, Dr. William R. Harvey officially welcomed the guests for the discussion. “To Congressman Scott, the student panel and guests, I do welcome you officially to Hampton University. The topic that you have today is so important to all of us. The student debt right now is about $1.6 trillion, and it keeps escalating. We have to try to find some ways to try to descale it. I’m so happy that we have come together today to talk specifically about ways which we might be able to reduce that debt,” said Dr. Harvey.

Congressman Scott addressed concerns about paying for college and offered possible solutions. One solution is introducing a comprehensive higher education bill this month that will lower the cost of college, lift the burden of student loan debt and help all students complete their degree or credential on time.

“A lot of students don’t have a clue how much debt they’ve taken out and find out the end of their senior year that they have all this debt. We need to make sure that people are making rational decisions, but we also have to make sure that everyone can afford to go to college. That’s the promise that President Johnson made when he signed the Higher Education Act of 1965, he said that all students would be able to go to any college or university in any state and ‘not be turned away because the family is poor.‘ We need to get back to that because when he signed that bill, the Pell Grant covered 75% of the cost of going to college. Now, it’s only covering less than 30% and people have to incur huge debt in order to go to college,” said Congressman Scott.

Panel members voiced their concerns about the lack of student and parent financial literacy. “I do feel we need more education on how loans really affect the students in the long run. We try to educate students with workshops, but there is low attendance, so the challenge is how do we get the word out, how do we get them to understand that just because the money is there, that they have to take it. One of the things we see is students that take out loans who really don’t need it,” said Vera Riddick, Director of Student Financial Aid for Old Dominion University.

“I feel like students do want to be financially literate or have this sense that it’s important to understand finances. I think the lack of financial literacy has a lot to do with the lack of resources starting at middle school through high school. I think it depends on where you’re schooling is, who your parents are, and where you’re living, because that will define what kind of resources you’re given at a young age. I think that education about finances for college should start at that young age and continue through college,” said Aman Tume, Hampton University senior.

The reauthorized bill that Congressman Scott plans to introduce to Congress this month would simplify the Free Application for Federal Student Aid and payment plans for student debt. It will also propose a significant rise in Pell Grants. Congressman Scott is optimistic that the bill will pass in the House. If it does pass in the House, it would then go to the Senate.

The Hampton University Severe Weather Research Center held a meeting with Hampton City officials to discuss the center’s capabilities.

The Hampton University Severe Weather Research Center is introducing a comprehensive higher education bill this month that will lower the cost of college, lift the burden of student loan debt and help all students complete their degree or credential on time.

“Forecasters can look at these images and get an idea of what is going on, but what goes into numerical prediction models, which are computer driven, has to be quantitative numerical data, not imagery. Those come from the sounding instruments. That’s where you have measurements of temperature and water vapor and other things that affect the weather, like cloud height, and that’s what we focus on here in this Severe Weather Research Center,” said Dr. Bill Smith, Director of the HU Severe Weather Research Center.

Then each attendee was taken to the rooftop to see the actual receiving antenna and cluster condensing units on the 14th floor. Hampton Mayor Donnie Tuck had visited the facility about three years ago to see the weather antenna, but he believes people at the time real had no idea about the functionality of the antenna. “I’ve heard Dr. Harvey on different occasions speak about the number of satellites that Hampton University receives data from and how the Governor ordered an evacuation because of Hurricane Florence, but because of the ability of the antenna to track the weather, Hampton University was very confident that we were going to be okay here. I think as a Council, it was very beneficial for us to come up here and get an idea of what is going on, and what kind of research is being done in this facility,” Mayor Tuck said.

Graduate student Elliott Shibuen showcased a poster about the research he is doing in the Department of Atmospheric and Planetary Sciences. “We are applying artificial intelligence to forecast severe weather. We want to train computers to pick up on weather trends that we as human beings might not recognize and to forecast severe weather better,” said Shibuen, third year PhD, Atmospheric Sciences. Shibuen uses the Center’s supercomputer to help increase the size and computation power for his research.

“What’s next for the Hampton University Severe Weather Research Center? “The next step for the Center is to bring in a Postdoctoral Fellow, at least one, hopefully two, to work with Bill Smith, and to expand the Center’s capabilities. He especially needs researchers that have worked in this specific area before,” said Dr. M. Patrick McCormick, Co-Director for the Center for Atmospheric Sciences.
Hampton University’s School of Nursing and Cancer Research Center Start Barbershop Outreach Project

On Saturday, October 19th, the Hampton University School of Nursing, in conjunction with the Hampton University Cancer Research Center, held the very first Hampton University Barbershop Outreach Project at BK’s Barbershop in Hampton, VA.

The aim of the project is to educate, assess and screen African-American males by performing health-related services in a comfortable and familiar setting. Across several Saturdays, the Hampton University Barbershop Outreach Project researchers will screen and educate patrons while providing vouchers for free haircuts as incentives. During the screening, researchers will collect qualitative and quantitative data to assess for effectiveness of the outreach efforts.

“It is wonderful that our School of Nursing and Cancer Research Center have come together to provide health care services to this population,” said Hampton University President, Dr. William R. Harvey.

15 trained African-American male healthcare providers and Registered Nursing students will perform the outreach and data collection. In this setting, they will provide culturally-appropriate assessments and tailored education to African-American men. The free haircut vouchers can be redeemed at the participating barbershops.

“The Hampton University School of Nursing wanted to find a way to reach out and spur the conversation with Black men and their health. Black men don’t seek out health care; there’s a health disparity there. We need to be more active and more involved in bringing them to the conversation,” said Hampton University Instructor, Jonathan Romero, MSN, RN, RSA.

Those who attend the outreach program receive pamphlets on treating prostate problems, screening for colon cancer, cancer facts for men, and more. For more information, contact Jonathan Romero at jonathan.romero@hamptonu.edu.

Hampton Pirates

The Hampton Pirates came away with some honors at the annual Big South Conference Basketball Media Day.

The Hampton men’s basketball team was picked fourth in the preseason basketball poll announced at the Big South Media Day and Jermaine Marrow was named to the preseason first team All-Conference squad.

Senior Ashley Bates, the 2018-19 Big South Conference Player and Defensive Player of the Year, was picked as the Preseason Player of the Year and a first-team All-Conference selection.

Sophomore Laren VanArsdale, the 2018-19 Big South Rookie of the Year, was selected to the preseason second team.

Hampton University’s William R. & Norma B. Harvey Library Host Annual ‘Think Pink’ Breast Cancer Awareness Event

The William R. and Norma B. Harvey Library hosted their annual ‘Think Pink’ Breast Cancer Awareness Event on Friday, Oct. 11. The annual event is held to educate the public about the risk of breast cancer as well as ways to prevent, screen and treat this disease; as well as an opportunity to recognize survivors.

"Each year the library seeks to inform our university community about breast cancer through this presentation. This information is timely and important in helping to spread awareness of this disease, as well as share advances in research and treatment and spread hope through the narratives of survivors," said Tina Rollins, Library Director of The William R. and Norma B. Harvey Library.

The panelists for the event included Dr. Luisel Ricks-Santi, Director of the Hampton University Cancer Research Center; Dona Sternberg, Nursing Operations Manager of the Hampton University Proton Therapy Institute; and Gloria Cox, a breast cancer survivor.

The topics of discussion ranged from early detection, types of treatment, as well as the importance of knowing one’s family health history and why it needs to be shared with loved ones.

“We all have a family history in something, and some families are open and share this information, and some families are not so open,” said Ricks-Santi. “This information is so crucial because it can tell you about your personal health, and that information can help you make the appropriate decision. With respect to cancer, this information can be a guide for screening, prevention and treatment.”