

Limb regeneration doctor inspires students at Hampton U. confab

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By Montana S. Crider

Hampton University is hosting its 39th annual **Conference on the Black Family** from Wednesday, March 15 to Friday, March 17. This year's conference seeks to explore the developments of technology and increase public recognition of how technology affects us all and the generations to come. The theme, "Design 101: Black Families Rising Up!" will acknowledge attributes, the work and research done by African-Americans in the STEM fields -- science, technology, engineering and mathematics -- along with Hampton students.

The opening ceremony took place at 7 p.m. Wednesday in Ogden Hall, with Cato Laurencin as the keynote speaker. Laurencin is an expert in limb regeneration research, and serves as a professor at the University of Connecticut.

Once serving as dean of U. Conn's School of Medicine and the vice president for Health Affairs at the university from 2008 to 2011, he has currently taken on more roles as the chief executive officer of the Connecticut Institute for Clinical and Translational Science, the director of the Institute for Regenerative Engineering, and the director of the Raymond and Beverly Sackler Center for Biomedical, Biological, Physical, and Engineering Sciences at the University of Connecticut.

Laurencin is one of only three practicing orthopedic surgeons in the Institute of Medicine of the National Academies, and was the first Orthopedic Surgeon to achieve University Professor level rank in the country, according to his **biography** on the U. Conn website.

"Science, engineering, and technology are fields where most African-Americans feel they do not belong or will not strive well, so to see a black man who has held his head high through times where he may have been shot down is inspiring," said Gibril Ghee, a sophomore kinesiology major from Atlanta.

"I am a biology major, hoping to go into dental, but it is harder to stay afloat when there are not many people on your side once you get into the real world," said Lauren Brown, a sophomore biology major from Burlington, North Carolina.

Laurencin, and many people like him, are changing and opening a path for students of color. His achievements give students of color hope, and encourages them to set forth on a path that many do not think is for them.

Hampton University's Conference on the Black Family shed lights on families and individuals who make a change and inspire those who wish to follow their path. "I hope to meet more and more people like Laurencin because they are such an inspiration, even for me, an accounting major," said Morgan

Harris, a junior from Hartford, Connecticut.

*The student is a writer in the **Scripps Howard School of Journalism and Communications**.*