Training for Transformative Discovery in Psychiatry

Postdoctoral Program

The Department of Psychiatry, Western Psychiatric Institute and Clinic, University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine, is offering a postdoctoral program: Training for Transformative Discovery in Psychiatry. This Program is funded by the National Institute of Mental Health. It is open to M.D.s and Ph.D.s who are interested in enhancing their skills in conducting translational neuroscience research, with the intent of transitioning to an independent academic research career.

The core philosophy of the Training for Transformative Discovery in Psychiatry Program is that translational neuroscience investigation is a skill in its own right. This skill consists of the ability to critically evaluate hypotheses and conduct experiments with knowledge of the clinical expression of disease, the associated cellular and molecular pathology, the expected pathophysiological mechanisms leading to the phenotype, and the possibilities and limitations of experimental models. Our training program components have been developed to ensure trainees achieve this goal.

We provide core training activities focused in both research skills and professional development. Training in Translational Models and Investigative Strategies emphasizes learning through mentored research activities. We have assembled an outstanding group of mentors in our Training Faculty, a list of their interests and approaches is provided on the next page. The efforts of our Faculty are augmented by a weekly translational neuroscience research seminar presenting by leading local, national, and international investigators, and the biweekly translational models practicum-a critical dissection of approaches to translational neuroscience inquiry lead by the program directors. Training in Professional and Research Career Skills has as its core our highly successful Professional Survival Skills seminar, a substantial proportion of which is focused specifically on developing grant writing skills. Other training focuses on developing and managing interdisciplinary collaborations, setting professional priorities, and the responsible conduct of research. Outside of these two core training domains, individualized training components are designed to ensure that trainees have established “fluency” in both basic and clinical neuroscience concepts, without which the goal of effective translation cannot be achieved. For example, a series of clinical exposure activities are available to individuals with basic neuroscience training.

To learn more about the program, please contact the program director:
Dr. Robert Sweet
sweeta@upmc.edu
http://www.wpic.pitt.edu/research/sweetlab/TTDP.htm
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Faculty Mentors

Program Director
Robert A. Sweet, M.D.

Primary Research Area: Neurobiology of Psychosis
Methods Used: Genetic, Animal, Brain Tissue, Clinical

Program Co-Directors
Mary L. Phillips, M.D.

Primary Research Area: Functional Imaging of Mood Disorders
Methods Used: fMRI, Clinical

Colleen McClung, Ph.D.
Primary Research Area: Molecular Basis of Psychiatric Disorders
Methods Used: Genetic, Animal

Training Committee
Judy Cameron, Ph.D
Primary Research Area: Primate Developmental Models of Mood Disorders
Animal
Methods Used: Animal

William E. Klunk, M.D., Ph.D.
Primary Research Area: Amyloid Biomarker and Treatment Development
Methods Used: Animal, Brain Tissue, PET, Clinical

David A. Lewis, M.D.
Primary Research Area: Neurobiology of Schizophrenia
Methods Used: Genetic, Animal, Brain Tissue, EEG, PET, fMRI

Allan R. Sampson, Ph.D.
Primary Research Area: Statistics for Neuroscience Applications

Faculty
Susanne Ahmari, M.D., Ph.D.
Primary Research Area: Neurobiology of Obsessive Compulsive Disorder
Methods Used: Animal

Yanhua Huang, Ph.D.
Primary Research Area: Sleep Regulation of Reward
Methods Used: Animal
Howard Aizenstein, M.D., Ph.D.
Primary Research Area: Cognitive Neuroscience of Mood Disorders and Aging
Methods Used: fMRI, Clinical

Meryl Butters, Ph.D.
Primary Research Area: Neuropsychology of Mood Disorders
Methods Used: Brain Tissue, PET, fMRI, Clinical

Cecille Ladouceur, Ph.D.
Primary Research Area: Affective Neuroscience
Methods Used: fMRI, Pheno

Frank Lotrich, M.D., Ph.D.
Primary Research Area: Genetic and Inflammatory Mediators of Depression
Methods Used: Genetic, Animal, Clinical

Beatriz Luna, Ph.D.
Primary Research Area: Adolescent Brain Development
Methods Used: fMRI

Rajesh Narendran, M.D.
Primary Research Area: Molecular Imaging of Schizophrenia
Methods Used: PET

Vishwajit Nimgaonkar, M.D., Ph.D.
Primary Research Area: Bipolar and Schizophrenia Genetics
Methods Used: Genetic

Greg Siegle, Ph.D.
Primary Research Area: Neuroimaging and Modeling of Mood Disorders
Methods Used: fMRI, Clinical

Dean Salisbury, Ph.D.
Primary Research Area: Neurophysiology of Psychosis
Methods Used: fMRI, EEG, MEG

David W. Volk, M.D., Ph.D.
Primary Research Area: Neurobiology of Schizophrenia
Methods Used: Animal, Brain Tissue