Two Post-Doctoral Research Fellowships at the WELL Center

The WELL Center (drexel.edu/wellcenter) is currently recruiting two NIH-funded research post-doctoral fellows under the joint supervision of Evan Forman, PhD, and Adrienne Juarascio, PhD. As per the descriptions below, fellowships are in the areas of (1) Treatment Outcome Research for Obesity and Eating Disorders and (2) Leveraging Technology and Data Science to Facilitate Treatments for Weight and Eating Disorders. The positions offer ample opportunities for, and training/mentoring in, manuscript writing, grant writing, the use of innovative technology and methodology, and leadership roles. In addition, positions are flexible depending on the interests of the postdoctoral fellow, and considerable attention will be devoted to developing the fellow’s line of research including the planning and execution of an independent project. Pilot study funding will be provided. In addition, the postdoc fellow will be mentored in the writing of one or more independent grant proposals. Responsibilities include assistance overseeing research coordinators, undergraduate and graduate students; monitoring study protocols, conducting statistical analyses; writing scientific manuscripts, and potentially clinical service and/or supervision of clinical service. As a result of fellowship activities, training, and mentorship, fellows will be highly competitive for the NIH Loan Repayment Program and for NIH training grants (e.g., F32s, K23s). Start date is planned for summer 2019 and is negotiable.

All applicants specializing in eating and weight disorders who have strong potential and interest in an academic/research career are encouraged to apply. Official application is forthcoming. Questions/requests to be notified when the application is released can be directed to Claudia Iannelli (cji25@drexel.edu).

Treatment Outcome Research for Obesity and Eating Disorders

The first position entails working on clinical trials examining innovative treatments for obesity and eating disorders. These projects include an NIH-funded Multiphasic Optimization Strategy (MOST) trial to evaluate the independent efficacy of components of mindfulness and acceptance treatments for weight loss and an NIH-funded trial to improve weight loss outcomes for individuals with binge eating disorder. The position will have both clinical and research components, with approximately 30/70 percent allocation of time for clinical and research tasks, respectively. The fellow will assist in the development of a treatment protocols, lead treatment groups, conduct outpatient treatment for adults with eating and weight disorders, supervise research staff, provide training to graduate students, and conduct assessments of potential participants. This training experience is designed to build expertise in clinical research in the area of eating disorder and obesity treatment. The ideal candidate will have a doctorate in clinical psychology and have experience with eating and weight disorders. Experience with assessment methods (e.g., semi-structured diagnostic interviews), a strong training background in behavioral treatments for eating disorders and/or obesity, good statistical skills, and good writing skills (e.g. publications) are required.

Leveraging Technology and Data Science to Facilitate Treatments for Weight and Eating Disorders

The second position will involve taking a prominent role in a number of projects that are utilizing technology to facilitate weight loss and/or eating disorder treatment. These projects include development and evaluation of: a just-in-time adaptive intervention (JITAI) augmentation to CBT for bulimia, two systems using passive sensing technology (heart rate variability and continuous glucose monitoring) to detect risk for binge eating and restrictive eating behaviors, a smartphone and cloud computing-based system that uses machine learning to predict and prevent lapses from a weight control program based on automatically- and manually-collected predictor data, an artificial intelligence (AI)-powered treatment optimization system involving continuous assessment of digital data, and a virtual reality (VR) neurocognitive training program for binge eating. The fellow will assist with development and iteration of the technologies, methodologies and algorithmic functions of these projects; data processing and analysis; and manuscript write-up. In addition, the fellow will help develop follow-up designs and grant proposals. Depending on need, interest and training, the fellow may also serve as a clinical interventionist on one or more projects. Candidates are invited to apply whether
they have a background in psychology or behavioral science/computer science. The ideal candidate will have experience and skills in applying technology to behavior change, and/or experience in one or more of the following: smartphone app development, website development, R, Unity, coding, passive sensing, machine learning.