The University of Costa Rica and University of Texas Health Science Center of San Antonio announce the establishment of an exciting new training program for the study of the genetics of neuropsychiatric disorders, funded by the Fogarty International Center of NIH. We are recruiting both predoctoral and postdoctoral (Ph.D, M.D.) candidates from Costa Rica to participate in our program. Trainees will receive their training at the Health Science Center in San Antonio and will be provided with a stipend for living expenses. The goal of the program is for successful trainees to return to Costa Rica for careers in neuropsychiatric genetic research.

PhD program

This program is an integrated Ph.D. program in genetics and neuroscience with emphasis in the biology of aging, molecular biology and pharmacology at the Health Science Center San Antonio. Candidates must have a BA or an MA/MS in a biological science from an accredited college or university. They must have taken the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) and Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). Application priority deadline is January 15, 2010 with a final application deadline of April 15, 2010. The selection will be made by the graduate program at UTHSCSA and the start date is September 2010. Additional information and the online application can be found at: http://gradschool.toolbox.net/students/academic/phd/imgp/overview

Post Doctoral Fellowship Program

This program offers advanced training in neuroimaging, aging and geriatrics, and neuropathology and brain banking. Emphasis is in neurological disorders such as degenerative disorders, schizophrenia and bipolar disorder. Training will occur primarily at the University of Texas Health Science Center San Antonio; however, some exceptions can be made depending on the specific training needs. Candidates must have completed a Ph.D. or M.D. at an accredited college or university. Application deadline is January 15, 2010. Start date will be the first week April 2010. The selection will be done by the steering committee (Drs Escamilla, Thompson, Leach from UTHSCSA and Drs. Raventos and Contreras from UCR). Additional information can be found at: http://psychiatry.uthscsa.edu/Annoucements/Neuropsychiatric_Training.pdf. Interested students should send their applications to Eva García- Rodríguez (GARCIABE@uthscsa.edu) and include the following information:

Personal information (CV) including: Positions Held (last 5 years), education, awards obtained, publications (last 3 years), other fellowships or extended courses.

Research area: Research topic (One abstract ONLY describing your current research or professional work, max one page), other research interests, present area of interest and how do you plan to apply the training offered with this fellowship in Costa Rica

Referees: Name and contact information of 3 referees that we can contact.

Prior to applying all applicants must contact Eva García- Rodríguez (GARCIABE@uthscsa.edu).
Post Doctoral Program Key Mentors

Michael Escamilla, M.D.

Peter Thompson, M.D., M.S. Dr. Thompson is the director of the Southwest Brain Bank and staff Psychiatrist at the Bipolar Research Clinic at UTHSCSA. Dr. Thompson’s general interest areas are in the cellular and molecular pathology associated with bipolar disorder. His laboratory has projects studying the presynaptic protein SNAP-25, GABA and serotonin interactions in bipolar disorder, alcoholism and suicide.

Laura Almasy, PhD. Southwest Foundation for Biomedical Research (SFRB). Primary Department: Department of Genetics. Role Training Project: Mentor. Dr. Almasy is an Associate Scientist at SFRB whose specialty is statistical genetics. She trained at Yale University, where she received her PhD in Genetics, and has also been a National Science Foundation research fellow. In the last three years alone, she has authored or co-authored 26 published articles on genetic research. Her main areas of research interest are in the genetic basis of psychiatric and neurological phenotypes and she is currently working on family studies of alcoholism, evoked brain potentials, neurocognitive function, and SC. She has special expertise in statistical analyses of complex genetic diseases, linkage analyses, and genetics of mental disorders. For students who choose this route (PhD candidates or post-doctoral fellows), they will spend from one to two years working at the Southwest Foundation for Biomedical Research, in the Population Genetics Laboratory. This laboratory, which includes several statistical scientists, works with large computer files of data from genetic research studies currently going on throughout the world. Dr. Almasy and Dr. Blangero are also largely responsible for the development of the SOLAR program, a multi-purpose set of linked programs ideal for linkage analyses and variance component analyses.

John Blangero, PhD. SFRB. Primary Department: Genetics: Role in Training Project: Mentor. Dr. Blangero is a statistical scientist and senior member of the population genetics laboratory at SFRB. He is the chief architect of the SOLAR program and a highly regarded statistical geneticist and a major area of his research is in the development of appropriate statistical methods for genetic epidemiological analysis has become a major emphasis in our laboratory. He currently works on several NIH funded projects in human genetics and has a special emphasis on genetic research in isolates and with large pedigrees. His work includes projects in developing countries, as well as the United States. He will serve as a course instructor, seminar instructor, teacher, and mentor for PhD students and post-doctoral students from Costa Rica who choose to learn statistical genetics as their primary focus.

Maria del Consuelo Walss-Bass, PhD. Primary Department: UTHSCSA Department of Psychiatry. Role in Training Project: Mentor. Relevant Research: Genetics of SC. Cellular protein expression. Serotonin Receptor Analyses. Students may elect to work with her in these areas.
Peter Fox, MD. Peter T. Fox, M.D., Role Training Project: Mentor. Dr. Fox was selected as Director of the Research Imaging Center (RIC) at UTHSCSA. Fox is a neurologist who trained in PET imaging at the Washington University Laboratory of Michel Ter-Pogossian. Functional mapping of the human brain, Fox's research area. He has received numerous RO1 research awards.

Arlan Richardson, Ph.D. Director, The Barshop Center for Longevity and Aging Studies at UTHSCSA, Senior Research Career Scientist South Texas Veterans Health Care System. Role Training Project: Mentor Dr. Arlan Richardson is an author on 164 peer-reviewed scientific publications and 36 chapters. Since 1990, Dr. Richardson has held a Research Career Scientist Award from the Department of Veterans Affairs. Dr. Richardson has held a variety of administrative positions over the past decade. The goal of his research is to understand the role of oxidative stress/damage in aging and age-related diseases, such as cancer, Alzheimer's disease, etc.

Jeremy Silverman, Ph.D. (Mt. Sinai, New York City). Dr. Silverman is an experienced researcher in the genetics of schizophrenia and in cognitive studies of aging. He has performed research as part of NIMH collaborations on the genetics of schizophrenia and also led research studies in schizophrenia in Puerto Rico. For the last several years, he has collaborated with Dr. Raventos on genetic studies of aging and cognition, conducted in Costa Rica. He will provide consultation for fellows interested in these research areas and, should a fellow choose to conduct training with Dr. Silverman, he will serve as a mentor for such students during their time at Mt. Sinai, New York.

David Glahn, Ph.D. (Yale and Connecticut Center for Living). Dr. Glahn is a cognitive researcher and geneticist, with special interest in brain structure and function, schizophrenia and bipolar disorder. He was the Director of the Imaging Genomics Program, Research Imaging Center, UTHSCSA and has collaborated with researchers from both UTHSCSA and UCR for the last 7 years, and has functioned as a mentor for several of the previous fellows in our training programs. Dr. Glahn will serve as a consultant for fellows wishing to receive extra training in neuroimaging and cognitive research. He will also serve as a mentor should any of the fellows wish to complete targeted or longer term training in these areas at Yale.

James Henry, MD. Dr. Henry is a professor of pathology at UTHSCSA and has over 30 years of experience in neuropathology. He is consultant to the Medical Examiner of Bexar County and is an integral member of the Southwest Brain Bank.

Donald Royal, MD. Dr. Royal is a professor in the Department of Psychiatry at UTHSCSA and Chief of Geriatric Psychiatry. He has research interests in Alzheimer’s Disease and minimal cognitive dysfunction. Currently Dr. Royal in the PI of several large funded longitudinal projects studying Alzheimer’s disease progression.

Rene Olvera, MD. Dr. Olvera is an Associate Professor in the Department of Psychiatry at UTHSCSA. He is received grant support from NIMH. His primary research interest is in studying mood and impulse control disorders in particular, Bipolar Disorder, Conduct Disorder, Major Depression, and Aggression. Dr. Olvera has a keen interest in the clinical, biological, and phenomenological research of mood instability with a focus on neuroimaging.