RIT

AWARE-AI NSF Research Traineeship Program

August 2022 Onboarding Bootcamp

The AWARE-AI program hosted its first annual multiday onboarding bootcamp for the incoming NRT cohort in mid-August, 2022. The onboarding aimed to kick-start the AWARE-AI academic year and also allow the incoming trainee cohort to get to know each other and the AWARE-AI faculty before the fall semester started.

The first bootcamp day began with a program orientation (Dr. Alm), followed by sessions about AWARE-AI's internship partnership program (Dr. Sahin) and lab rotations (Dr. Bailey). In addition, all faculty members in the research track on human-sensing AI software kicked off the Research to Mentoring Bridge series, which included short talks by faculty sharing about their own career journeys and their areas of research expertise. The day concluded with a virtual plenary talk on the topic *From Autonomy to Synergy: Envisioning Next Generation Human-AI Partnerships* with Sidney K. D'Mello, professor in the Institute of Cognitive Science and Department of Computer Science at the University of Colorado Boulder and PI for an NSF national AI institute.

The next day featured a session about visits to minority-serving institutions, a program component organized by Dr. Shinohara. In addition, faculty from two research tracks–human-sensing AI hardware and human-computer interaction for AI–presented short talks in additional sessions of the Research to Mentoring Bridge. Trainees also discussed professional communication in research and received an overview of the new trainee seed funding program opportunity. The day ended with trainee discussions in breakout sessions by research tracks.

On the last bootcamp day, members from the RIT Ombuds Office spoke with students about conflict resolution in research teams, with research-relevant interactive discussion scenarios. After the final installment of the Research to Mentoring Bridge with the faculty in the cognitive modeling for AI research track, Dr. Orobia delivered an AI lecture on *Learning Neurobiologically-motivated Generative Models without Backpropagation of Errors*. The afternoon was dedicated to presentations by the incoming trainees about themselves and their research plan for their traineeship year, attended by AWARE-AI faculty and peers.

We look forward to the next annual onboarding, anticipated to take place in August 2023!