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Artificial Intelligence For The Greater Good? USC Brings In Top AI And Social Work Scholars To Explore Solutions

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USC Center for Artificial Intelligence in Society Hosts First AI and Social Work Fellows Program; Problems Studied to Include Suicide Prevention; Resettlement of Refugees; Wildlife Conservation

Press Release – LOS ANGELES – June 6, 2017 – The USC Center for Artificial Intelligence in Society (CAIS)—a joint venture of the USC Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work and USC Viterbi School of Engineering—will host its first Visiting Fellows Program this summer focused on employing AI to help solve complex societal problems.

As part of the Fellows Program, visiting researchers from all over the world will come to USC this summer for up to three months to learn from a working model established by the Center's co-founders, Eric Rice of the USC Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work and Milind Tambe of the USC Viterbi School of Engineering. The two had successfully collaborated by employing AI to ensure that homeless youth shared important public health information among peers in the youths' own social networks.

"Using artificial intelligence to promote the greater good is an emerging area of study with huge potential," said Eric Rice, co-director of CAIS and associate professor at the USC Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work. *"Our goal in establishing this fellowship is to bring together the best and brightest scholars in artificial intelligence and social work to explore breakthrough solutions to age-old problems plaguing many of our cities and communities."*

Topics to be studied by fellows this summer include suicide prevention among college students; social support for North Korean refugees to help their integration into South Korean society; wildlife conservation through poaching prevention in developing nations' national parks; HIV and substance abuse prevention for homeless youth; and predicting and reducing gang violence in Los Angeles. On some projects, fellows will collaborate with non-government organizations (NGOs) currently executing similar "real world" experiments in these subject areas around the globe.

"Our hope is that by applying AI to the types of problems that cross disciplines and transcend borders, we can greatly improve or even save lives, as well as better allocate resources where they will have the most benefit and impact," said Milind Tambe, co-director of CAIS, professor of computer science and the Helen N. and Emmett H. Jones Professor in Engineering at the USC Viterbi School of Engineering.

The 12 summer fellows were selected through a rigorous screening process this past year. The group includes doctoral students, post-doctoral students and assistant professors representing nine different universities including Harvard, MIT, Carnegie Mellon, Georgia Tech, University of Southampton, Trinity University, University of Denver, Nanyang Technological University in Singapore, and the University of Southern California.

USC Center for Artificial Intelligence in Society (CAIS)

The Center for Artificial Intelligence in Society (CAIS) is a joint venture between the USC Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work and the USC Viterbi School of Engineering. Founded in 2016, CAIS conduct research in artificial intelligence to help solve the most difficult social problems facing our world. The newly formed center has received accolades for its work to apply AI to address HIV prevention and to deter wildlife poaching. For more information, please visit cais.usc.edu.

USC Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work

The University of Southern California Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work ranks among the nation's top social work graduate programs. A recognized leader in academic innovation, experiential learning, online education and translational research, the school prepares students for leadership roles in public and private organizations that serve individuals, families and communities in need. Its Hamovitch Center for Science in the Human Services was the first endowed research institute for interdisciplinary social work research and remains a pioneer in translational science—the acceleration of research findings into practice settings.

USC Viterbi School of Engineering

Engineering Studies began at the University of Southern California in 1905. Nearly a century later, the Viterbi School of Engineering received a naming gift in 2004 from alumnus Andrew J. Viterbi, inventor of the Viterbi algorithm that is now key to cell phone technology and numerous data applications. One of the school's guiding principles is engineering +, a term coined by current Dean Yannis C. Yortsos, to use the power of engineering to address the world's greatest challenges. USC Viterbi is ranked among the top graduate programs in the world and enrolls more than 6,500 undergraduate and graduate students taught by 185 tenured and tenure-track faculty, with 73 endowed chairs and professorships. http://viterbi.usc.edu/