

KAVLI INSTITUTE FOR BRAIN AND MIND INAUGURATION TO BE HELD NOVEMBER 4 IN CEREMONIES AT UCSD

October 27, 2004

Barry Jagoda

With multi-institutional and cross-disciplinary research already underway, the Kavli Institute for Brain and Mind at the University of California, San Diego will celebrate its formal inauguration on Nov. 4. Ceremonies will be held in the Natural Sciences Building, on the UCSD campus, beginning at 4:30 p.m.

The new research center was announced earlier this year through a \$7.5 million endowment from the Kavli Foundation of Santa Barbara and from its chairman and founder, Fred Kavli, with the objective of bringing together researchers from the many leading laboratories and institutions in the San Diego region. The mandate is to cross academic disciplines by engaging scientists from more than 20 different scholarly departments and perspectives.

"We have a campus-wide commitment to interdisciplinary work and the Kavli Institute is a superb example of crossing departmental and institutional lines to aim for breakthrough discoveries," said UCSD Chancellor Marye Anne Fox.

Co-directors of the institute, known as KIBM, are UCSD scholars Jeffrey Elman, associate dean, Division of Social Sciences, and Nicholas Spitzer, professor of biology and former chair of the neurobiology section in the Division of Biological Sciences. Kavli will speak at the inauguration, as will Professors Elman and Spitzer.

"Our formal inauguration is a happy time for all concerned because we have already had a chance to plan our course of work and have begun to get feedback that lets us know that we are on the right paths. Because the challenges are so great we are involving a wide and deep group of researchers and it is gratifying to note the interaction that is already resulting," said Elman.

"The La Jolla community of scientists is poised to discover critical linkages between mental activity and brain function. We are born with a brain, yet we develop a mind. How are the two related?" added Elman.

Spitzer said: "I am particularly pleased that we have such extensive collaboration with our colleagues at the Salk Institute, The Scripps Research Institute and The Neurosciences Institute. The ideas that we are formulating indicate the necessity for a cross-disciplinary approach to understanding how the brain and mind work.

"Interdisciplinary research will lead us to knowledge that can be helpful in treating societal problems, such as mental disease and learning impairment, and in developing whole new approaches for collective social interactions in activities such as education or war," continued Spitzer.

The issues being worked on are numerous and include such subjects as how brains repair themselves, the role of genetics in establishing the functions of the nervous system, and the neural bases of attention, learning, memory and consciousness.

The Kavli Institute is engaged in interdisciplinary training programs, seminars, and faculty exchange programs to share information widely. Seed funding for non-traditional basic research, combined with graduate student research support, shared data networks, critical infrastructure support and international symposia, are further expected to enable breakthroughs in understanding the relationship between brain and mind.

The Kavli Institute leverages the strength of UCSD's neurosciences graduate program, ranked first in the nation by the National Research Council, and incorporates faculty from many campus departments, the School of Medicine and a number of other La Jolla-based research institutions such as the Salk Institute for Biological Studies, The Scripps Research Institute and The Neurosciences Institute. Other involved UCSD state-of-the art resources include the San Diego Supercomputer Center, the Center for Functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging, the California Institute for Telecommunications and Information Technology, the Institute for Neural Computation, the National Center for Microscopy and Imaging Research and the university's teaching hospitals.

The Kavli Foundation has established scientific institutes at leading universities in the United States and Europe. In announcing support for the KIBM and other Kavli institutes, Fred Kavli said, "I feel that it is especially important to pursue the most far-reaching opportunities and challenges and to seek answers to the most fundamental unanswered questions."

The public is invited to attend. Parking will be available in lots P103 and P104. Parking attendants will be on duty to hand out one-day permits and to direct guests to the atrium of the Natural Sciences Building. Click on map to view a map of UCSD.

More information about KIBM can be found at the Institute's website at: <http://kibm.ucsd.edu>

Media Contact: Barry Jagoda, (858) 534-8567