

David Rumelhart named winner of MacArthur Fellowship

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PSYCHOLOGY PROFESSOR WINS \$275,000 MACARTHUR FELLOWSHIP

David Rumelhart, professor of psychology and co-director of the Institute for Cognitive Science at the University of California, San Diego, has been named a winner of a MacArthur Fellowship from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation.

Rumelhart became the sixth UCSD faculty member to win a MacArthur Fellowship, a \$275,000, tax-free award spread over five years. The terms of the award allow the recipients to use the funds in any way they wish.

"I imagine I am going to keep doing what I have been doing, that is, continue my research into brain style computation," said Rumelhart, who got word of the award on June 11, the day before his birthday.

According to the foundation, the purpose of the awards is to allow winners "to pursue their work in accordance with their own direction and inclination."

Rumelhart was one of 32 winners nationally, and three within the UC system, announced by the Chicago-based foundation Tuesday (June 16). The other UC winners were at UC San Francisco and UC Berkeley.

The 45-year-old psychologist is one of the leading researchers in studying how the human brain learns.

"My work has been on building computational models of mental processes," said Rumelhart. "Of late, I've been developing a new sort of paradigm of computational modeling in which we attempt to formalize the kind of computation that brains do rather than what conventional computers do.

"I like to say we are trying to replace the computer metaphor of mind with the brain metaphor of mind. We're trying to show how intelligent behavior emerges from the interactions from among the large numbers of simple neuron-like processing elements," he said.

Rumelhart said that initially he was uncertain how he would use his new-found funding.

"The award allows me to push my ideas in directions that are a bit more speculative," he said. "I won't be as dependent upon conventional sources of funding. But, I haven't decided what impact this is going to have on how I organize my life."

Rumelhart will be leaving UCSD for Stanford University where he has accepted an appointment beginning in the fall.

Other UCSD faculty members who have won MacArthur Fellowships are: Michael Freedman, mathematics; Ramon Gutierrez, history; Edwin Hutchins, cognitive science; Arnold Mandell, psychiatry, and Shing-Tung Yau, mathematics.

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