

## **Prominent Neuroscientist Mu-ming Poo named first holder of UCSD's Stephen W. Kuffler chair**

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### **PROMINENT NEUROSCIENTIST NAMED FIRST HOLDER OF UCSD'S STEPHEN W. KUFFLER CHAIR**

Mu-ming Poo, a nationally recognized neuroscientist, has been appointed to the Stephen W. Kuffler Chair in Biology at the University of California, San Diego. He is the first holder of the chair, which was established in 1990 by an anonymous gift in honor of the late Stephen W. Kuffler, John Franklin Enders University Professor at Harvard University.

The appointment will continue until Poo ceases to hold a full-time, tenured professorship at UCSD.

Poo, who recently joined the faculty of UCSD's Department of Biology, shares a similarity of style with Kuffler, who was well known for his ability to focus directly on major problems of neurobiological interest.

Poo had been a faculty member of the Department of Biological Sciences at Columbia University since 1988. He began his career at University of California, Irvine, then moved on to Yale University in 1985.

He was trained as a biophysicist, but is widely known for his significant contributions to cellular, molecular and developmental neuroscience.

Poo's recent research centers around problems related to the development of the nervous system. He has examined the cellular and molecular processes that regulate the growth of nerve cells, and the formation of connections between them. These connections, known as synapses, are regions in the brain that are most susceptible to change. Poo's recent work has led to important insights into how natural electrical activity and protein factors in the brain may influence the synaptic function and the pattern of nerve connections.

Since many of changes at synapses involve modifications in the manner in which chemical messages, known as neurotransmitters, are secreted by one nerve cell and received by the other, Poo also has focused his attention on the mechanism involved in the neurotransmitter secretion process, and on how the release can be modified by electrical activity and protein factors in the brain.

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