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## **The International Astronomical Union teams up with the Norwegian Academy of Science and the Kavli Prize**

**5 June 2008, Oslo: In an important move, the Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters and the International Astronomical Union have joined forces in support of both the Kavli Prize and the IAU International Schools for Young Astronomers.**

The International Astronomical Union (IAU) and the Norwegian Academy of Sciences and Letters (NASL) have united in support of the Kavli Prize and the IAU International Schools for Young Astronomers (ISYA) after finding common ground in promoting astrophysics research and training young scientists in the latest astronomical research techniques.

The Kavli Prize Committee is composed of distinguished scientist based on recommendations from leading international academies and other equivalent scientific organizations. Beginning in 2010, the Norwegian Academy will seek advice by the International Astronomical Union in order to establish a balanced prize committee with respect to the various fields of Astrophysics. They will work together on publicising the events. From 2009 NASL will donate a yearly sum to the IAU ISYA programme, allowing the programme to expand. Furthermore, Kavli Prize winners will be invited to speak at the ISYA alongside the usual experts. The agreement was signed by the President of NASL, Prof. Ole Didrik Laerum, and the President of the IAU, Dr. Catherine J. Cesarsky.

The Kavli Prize, which is given in the areas of astrophysics, neuroscience and nanoscience, encourages future research directly through incentive by providing winners with \$1,000,000, a medal and a diploma. Every two years the Kavli Prize in Astrophysics is awarded to one or more scientists who have demonstrated outstanding achievement in advancing human knowledge and understanding of the origin, evolution, and properties of the vast Universe. The Prize is open to a wide range of fields, including cosmology, astrophysics, astronomy, planetary science, solar physics, space science, astrobiology, astronomical and astrophysical instrumentation and particle astrophysics.

The first Kavli Prize in Astrophysics was awarded jointly to Maarten Schmidt, of the California Institute of Technology in the United States, and to Donald Lynden-Bell, of Cambridge University in the United Kingdom, on 28 May 2008.

Since 1967, the IAU ISYA programme has promoted the development of professional astronomers around the world by facilitating interaction between young scholars and established professionals. It also provides them with the practical knowledge essential to access the data archives that have become the basis for astronomical research. Individuals with a Masters degree in science can participate in the 21-day conference, which occurs at a different location each year to perpetuate international cooperation in astronomical research. Participants do everything from listen to lectures given by experts to becoming involved through hands-on practicals and computer sessions where they learn how to use essential astronomical tools.

This year the ISYA meeting will take place in Istanbul, Turkey in July. A diverse array of topics will be covered, from the structure of neutron stars to a discussion of the science completed using the Hubble Space Telescope.

### Notes

The IAU is the international astronomical organisation that brings together almost 10,000 distinguished astronomers from all nations of the world. Its mission is to promote and safeguard the science of astronomy in all its aspects through international cooperation. The IAU also serves as the internationally recognised authority for assigning designations to celestial bodies and the surface features on them. Founded in 1919, the IAU is the world's largest professional body for astronomers.

An international consortium of five scientists will sit on the committee to choose the Kavli Prize winners. These scientists are leaders in astrophysics and are chosen by the Norwegian Academy, advised by the IAU, based on recommendations made by the Max Planck Society in Germany, the National Academy of Sciences in the United States, the Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters, and the Royal Society in the United Kingdom. Individuals cannot nominate themselves for the Kavli Prize. The Prize was first awarded in 2008.

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