



Kavli Institute for Astronomy and Astrophysics at Peking University: An International Center for Excellence in China

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The Kavli Foundation (<http://www.kavli-foundation.org>) is a US-based private philanthropic organization “dedicated to advancing science for the benefit of humanity, promoting public understanding of scientific research, and supporting scientists and their work.” It supports four major areas of basic research, astrophysics, nanoscience, neuroscience, and theoretical physics, through a network of 17 institutes worldwide. Every two years, it awards the prestigious Kavli Prize to “recognize scientists for their seminal advances in astrophysics, nanoscience and neuroscience.”

In the area of astrophysics, the Kavli Foundation has established research institutes at six leading universities, including Stanford, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, University of Chicago, Cambridge University, University of Tokyo, and Peking University (PKU) in China. Founded in 2006 and in full operation in 2008, the Kavli Institute for Astronomy and Astrophysics (KIAA; <http://kiaa.pku.edu.cn>) at PKU is designed to be an international center of excellence to promote basic astrophysical research. Its members have access to a variety of domestic and international observing facilities and computational resources. KIAA's programs are focused in four major areas of research:

- Observational cosmology, galaxy formation and evolution
- Interstellar medium, star formation, stellar and planet systems
- Gravitational physics and high-energy phenomena
- Computational astrophysics (N-body, hydrodynamics, and MHD simulations)

With English as its working language, KIAA is developing an intellectual environment for scientific exchange. In partnership with the National Astronomical Observatories and other astronomical centers and universities in China,



KIAA is engaged in theoretical and observational initiatives, development and utilization of facilities, and training of students and postdocs. Currently, the institute, in conjunction with the Department of Astronomy, has a total of about 25 faculty, 12 postdoctoral fellows, 45 graduate students, and 120 undergraduates. It also regularly hosts a number of international visiting scholars.

KIAA regularly sponsors thematic workshops, conferences, and special-topic training programs. KIAA is establishing exchange and visiting programs with other Kavli institutes and a network of universities and astronomy centers worldwide. The Institute is under the leadership of its new Director, Luis C. Ho, formerly a Staff Astronomer at the Observatories of the Carnegie Institution for Science in Pasadena, California, USA. Ho was educated at Harvard University and University of California at Berkeley, and he is a world expert on supermassive black holes and active galaxies. Under his leadership, Ho wishes not only to build a first-rate astrophysics institute in China, but he is also very interested in working with other universities and institutes throughout greater Asia who share the same vision for the future.