



## **Bezos Family Foundation Endows Chair for Early Childhood Learning**

**May 7, 2009, Seattle, WA** — The University of Washington College of Arts & Sciences and the Bezos Family Foundation announced that Dr. Patricia Kuhl is the first recipient of the Bezos Family Foundation Endowed Chair for Early Childhood Learning.

Dr. Kuhl is internationally recognized for her research on early language and brain development, particularly in demonstrating how early exposure to language alters the brain. She is Co-Director of the UW Institute for Learning and Brain Sciences (I-LABS), Director of the University of Washington's NSF Science of Learning Center, and Professor of Speech and Hearing Sciences in the College of Arts & Sciences.

The generous gift from the Bezos Family Foundation allows Dr. Kuhl to continue her work in understanding the significance of early exposure to language and the resulting alterations to a child's brain. This work has implications for critical periods in development, for bilingual education and reading readiness, for developmental disabilities involving language, and will help build a bridge from neuroscience to education.

"Our family foundation is driven by a passion for strengthening educational opportunities for everyone, and for cultivating learning as a life-long process that begins in early childhood," stated Jackie Bezos, President of the Bezos Family Foundation. "We take great pleasure in creating this endowed chair to support Dr. Patricia Kuhl's research and teaching in this critical area of transformational science. Dr. Kuhl's research will play a pivotal role in understanding human brain development, a field of study that can profoundly shape our lives, and future lives. We hope these research findings will be shared with a broad audience of educators, parents, caregivers and the community at large."

"We are grateful that the Bezos family recognizes the value of an interdisciplinary center committed to exploring the fundamental principles of human learning that begins in early childhood," said Ana Mari Cauce, Dean of the College of Arts & Sciences. "Dr. Kuhl's leadership and passion to better understand how children learn leads to discovering innovative ways for children to reach their full potential. By involving our students in her research, she provides them with an outstanding educational experience. Her dedication to improving child well-being also has a profound impact on our entire community."

On May 6, 2009, the College of Arts & Sciences held a private event to recognize the endowment and to honor both the Bezos family and the work of Dr. Kuhl.

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## **ABOUT THE BEZOS FAMILY FOUNDATION**

The Bezos Family Foundation is a private, independent foundation established by Jackie and Mike Bezos—who along with their three children and spouses—serve as directors. The Foundation works to strengthen educational opportunities for everyone, regardless of economic circumstances, and cultivate learning as a life-long process that begins in early childhood.

The Bezos Family Foundation Endowed Chair for Early Childhood Learning was created in 2008 to support research and teaching in the critical area of early learning, and to promote the research findings to a broad audience of educators, parents, caregivers and the community at large.

## **ABOUT I-LABS**

The Institute for Learning and Brain Sciences is an interdisciplinary center dedicated to discovering the fundamental principles of human learning that will enable all children to achieve their full potential. By conducting innovative research and disseminating this knowledge to international audiences, we will advance the understanding and appreciation of the importance of learning throughout the lifespan.

The Institute's Co-Directors are Dr. Patricia K. Kuhl, UW professor of Speech and Hearing Sciences, and Dr. Andrew N. Meltzoff, UW professor of Psychology. Their scientific studies on children and adults have had a far-reaching impact on cognitive science, neuroscience, artificial intelligence and education.

## **ABOUT THE UW COLLEGE OF ARTS & SCIENCES**

The University of Washington College of Arts and Sciences provides an education of tremendous breadth and depth to more than 25,000 students while advancing research in the arts, humanities, natural sciences and social sciences. With more than 6,000 classes offered in the College annually, students can study everything from art to physics. More than 70% of all University bachelor's degrees and nearly 30% of all PhD degrees are from the College. Additionally, undergraduates who are pursuing non-Arts and Sciences degrees take at least one-fourth of their credits in the College.

The College has more than two dozen interdisciplinary centers and ties to many other centers, enabling scholars in diverse fields to collaborate on complex research questions in the humanities, demography, labor studies, law, astrobiology, climate change and other areas.

The College teaches more than 50 languages and offers study abroad programs in London, Rome, Paris, Prague, Spain, Mexico, South Africa, Zimbabwe, and other locations.

All of the University's arts units – the Schools of Music, Art, and Drama, the Dance Program, Digital Arts and Experimental Media (DXARTS), the Henry Art Gallery, the Burke Museum of Natural History and Culture, UW World Series, and Meany Hall for the Performing Arts – are part of the College. They offer more than 280 performances, 60 exhibits, and 100 public programs annually.

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