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CoMotion at the University of Washington, Amazon Add 6 Amazon Catalyst Fellows

SEATTLE, Wash., Feb 13. 2017 – Amazon Catalyst has awarded six grants to a group of University of Washington (UW) students, faculty, and staff to fund big ideas across all disciplines. The Amazon Catalyst program is a collaboration between UW CoMotion and Amazon to encourage innovation within the UW community and awards grants of up to $100,000 per project. The goal of the program is to inspire people to think big, invent solutions to real-world problems, and make a positive impact on the world. Open to all three UW campuses and all disciplines, the program provides the winners with mentorship, community through the Amazon Catalyst Fellows, and funding. Amazon Catalyst is not a traditional research fund; it is a different kind of funding model to stimulate big ideas with immediate impact.

The quarterly deadline for this winter quarter is March 26 11:59 PM PST.

"The addition of these six recipients to our Amazon Catalyst Fellows cohort is particularly exciting," said H.B. Siegel, managing director of Amazon Catalyst. "Our mission has always been to fund big ideas across all disciplines, so we are pleased to award grants to such a diverse pool of applicants with projects spanning the range of academic disciplines including the sciences and the humanities."

"This program is a prime example of the type of public/private partnership that CoMotion, UW's collaborative innovation hub, has been cultivating," said Vikram Jandhyala, vice president for innovation strategy and executive director of UW CoMotion. "We believe this program and collaboration is one of the ways we are able to meet our goals of strengthening the innovation mindset across the UW community and expanding UW's societal impact.

The six recipients and their projects are listed below:

- **A Biosensor for Pancreatic Cancer**
    - Pancreatic cancer is a particularly deadly form of cancer. To diagnose it, doctors usually need to do an MRI or an invasive test, like a biopsy or endoscopy. A new biosensor can now detect biomarkers even when a tumor is in its earliest stages, increasing the chances of successful treatment.
    - *Richard Lee, Mehmet Sarikaya, Carolyn Gresswell, Deniz Yucejoy*
- **Cluster**
    - College students need to learn how to write effectively, however, universities have consistently struggled to adapt to the changing needs of their students. Studies show that students often have trouble transferring the writing skills they learn in class to real-life situations. A team from the UW English Department is hoping to solve that problem with Cluster, an online suite of composition tools that uses comics and gamification to develop learners' writing skills. Teachers are able to tailor their lesson plans to fit the

needs of their students and the students are able to play games online, witness real world applications of the content they have learned in class, and receive peer feedback as they go.
    - *Dylan Medina, Tait Bergstrom, Yijun Wang, Jiechao Tong, Anis Bawarshi*
- **Smart Eyewear**
    - In the United States, 75% of adults need some form of ophthalmic support. Depending on the patient's needs, this may require several different pairs of glasses or contacts to accommodate a wide range of potential conditions. Smart Eyewear solves this problem by using dynamically focusing lenses. These new smart, vision-corrective eyeglasses allow patients with multi-focal prescriptions to adjust the focal length of their glasses within seconds, accommodating a huge range of vision impairments.
    - *Arka Majumdar, Shane Colburn, Alan Zhan*
- **Toward a Renewable Energy Grid**
    - Using a technology from the food packaging industry, scientists have found a way to dramatically lower the cost of batteries that store solar power. By dramatically reducing the costs of these large batteries, scientists are able to store wind and solar energy for later use, potentially eliminating the need for fossil fuels.
    - *Gregory Newbloom, Guozhong Cao, Lilo Pozzo, Eden Rivers, Aaron West, Ian Hochstein*
- **The "Ask A _____" Project**
    - A person-to-person gathering encouraging one-on-one conversations with people from different social, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds, designed to promote understanding, empathy, and acceptance.
    - *Ross Reynolds, Caroline Dodge, Lisa Wang*
- **A Low-Cost Desalination Device**
    - A new device will desalinate seawater at less than 10% of the cost of current methods.
    - *Guozheng Shao*

Amazon Catalyst was launched in November 2015. Since then, Catalyst has instituted a quarterly application deadline. The deadline to apply for Winter 2017 is March 26, 11:59 PM PT. More information can be found at http://catalyst.amazon.com/uw

About CoMotion

CoMotion at the University of Washington (UW) is the collaborative innovation hub dedicated to expanding the societal impact of the UW community. By developing and connecting local and global innovation ecosystems, CoMotion helps innovators achieve the greatest impact from their discoveries. We deliver the tools and connections UW researchers and students need to accelerate the impact of their innovations.

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