

Press release

For immediate release

Renowned Physicist Professor Wang YAO was selected in Tencent's New Cornerstone Investigator Program 2023

November 1, 2023



Congratulations to Professor Wang YAO, Chair Professor of the Department of Physics, for his being selected in New Cornerstone Investigator Program 2023, which is a nonprofit and independent fund initiated by Tencent. Professor Yao was one of the 46 selected scientists in 2023, among them, three are from Hong Kong. Among the researchers affiliated with the Faculty of Science at HKU, two other distinguished individuals were selected last year. They include Professor Shuang ZHANG, who currently serves as the Interim Head and Chair Professor of the Department of Physics, as well as Professor Xuhua HE, Chair Professor in the Department of Mathematics.

Professor Yao Wang expresses his heartfelt gratitude and profound enthusiasm, stating, 'I am honoured to have been selected as a New Cornerstone Investigator. I am very grateful to Tencent's New Cornerstone Science Foundation for their strong support in advancing basic research.'

Tencent established the Foundation in 2022 to provide long-term support for basic research with a funding of RMB 10 billion over 10 years. The New Cornerstone Investigator Program takes an innovative approach to encouraging basic research spearheaded by leading scientists. The Program focuses on Mathematics and Physical Sciences, and Biological and Biomedical Sciences, and encourages interdisciplinary research between the two areas. Each investigator will be awarded an annual budget of up to 5 million RMB (for experimental research) or up to 3 million RMB (for theoretical research) for an initial five-year term.

Professor Yao has concentrated his research on two-dimensional materials and their heterostructures. Together with his collaborators, he pioneered concepts in valleytronics in 2D materials and their moiré superlattices. His research has spearheaded the development of the emerging field of valley optoelectronics and introduced the concept of moiré excitons in twisted two-dimensional semiconductors.

Professor Yao has been named one of the ‘Highly Cited Researchers’ by Clarivate Analytics from 2018 to 2022. His exceptional achievements and contributions to the field of physics have been recognised through various prestigious awards, including the Huang Kun Prize for Solid Physics and Semiconductor Physics, the 2021 Xplorer Prize, the 2021 (Ninth) Nishina Asia Award, the OCPA Achievement in Asia Award (Robert T. Poe Prize) in 2014 from the International Organization of Chinese Physicists and Astronomers (OCPA), the Croucher Innovation Award in 2013 and the Croucher Senior Research Fellowship in 2020 from the Croucher Foundation, RGC Senior Research Fellowship in 2021 from Research Grant Council, and the Outstanding Researcher Award for 2014/15 and Outstanding Young Researcher Award for 2012/13 from The University of Hong Kong. He is elected as fellow of American Physical Society and fellow of Optica (Optical Society of America).

Learn more about Professor Wang Yao: <https://www.physics.hku.hk/~wangyao/>

Learn more about the New Cornerstone Investigator Program: <https://www.newcornerstone.org.cn>

Image and video for download: <https://www.scifac.hku.hk/press>

For media enquiries, please contact Ms Casey To, External Relations Officer (tel: 39174948; email: caseyto@hku.hk) / Ms Cindy Chan, Assistant Director of Communications of HKU Faculty of Science (tel: 3917 5286; email: cindycst@hku.hk).