

THE Current

June 29, 2011

George Foulsham

UCSB Assistant Professor Named Outstanding Young Researcher

Cenke Xu, assistant professor of physics at UC Santa Barbara, has been named Outstanding Young Researcher for 2011 by the Overseas Chinese Physics Association.

The Outstanding Young Researcher Award is given annually to a physicist of Chinese ethnicity working in North America, Europe, or other regions outside of Asia. It is intended to encourage and to recognize the young researcher's contributions in physics. The award includes a \$1,500 cash prize.

"Professor Xu is a theoretical condensed matter physicist who is doing extremely interesting work on such topics as quantum magnets, topological insulators, and ultra-cold trapped atoms," said Omer Blaes, chair of UCSB's Department of Physics. "We were fortunate in being able to recruit him as an assistant professor one year ago, and his work is already receiving widespread recognition in the condensed matter physics community. This latest award places him among a very elite set of young Chinese physicists working outside of China."

Xu said he was surprised to receive the award, especially since he wasn't aware that he had been nominated. "I am glad that other Chinese physicists found my work interesting and useful," he said. "I am grateful to all my colleagues who supported me with my research. I am also grateful to UCSB for offering me amazing research resources, so I could accomplish my work."

Xu said he is hopeful that China and the United States may be able to open more scientific doors in the future. "Right now, science in China is developing with a staggering speed," Xu said. "In the last few years, many institutions in China have made great contributions to various fields in condensed matter physics, such as topological insulators, iron-pnictides superconductors, etc. There is no doubt that China will become one of the next superpowers in science.

"I think American and Chinese physicists should really have more collaborations, so we can share our ideas and resources," he added. "I am sure the future of science would be much brighter if scientists from these two great nations could work hand-in-hand."

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