

MIT physicist receives grant for gravity work

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MIT Professor of Physics Xiao-Gang Wen has received a grant from the Foundational Questions Institute to fund his study of the relationship between quantum mechanics and gravity.

Wen is one of 30 researchers to receive funding in the inaugural round of grants awarded by the Foundational Questions Institute (FQXi).

FQXi, a new philanthropically funded agency, awards grants to researchers to investigate questions about the deep nature of the universe, including topics such as the fundamental constants of nature, the relationship between quantum mechanics and theories of gravity, the possible existence of other universes, time travel, extraterrestrial life and the ultimate theories of physics.

"Over the past century, scientists have discovered how the universe evolved and revolutionized our understanding of the nature of space and time, matter and energy. We're delighted to help give them a crack at new big questions and to see what they find," said Max Tegmark, MIT associate professor of physics and scientific director of FQXi.

The institute plans to help researchers focus on "big questions" that conventional funding sources are reluctant to support. FQXi is distributing \$2 million in grants in its inaugural round. Wen will receive \$94,924.

Wen's research focuses on developing a unified understanding of light and gravity. In his proposal, he outlined a plan to find a new organization

of particles such that collective motions of newly organized particles correspond to gravitational waves. If successful, the particle system will correspond to a quantum theory of gravity and will solve the long-standing problem of putting gravity and quantum mechanics together.

Source: MIT

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