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Faculty Appointed to CAS Think-Tank

Three researchers from the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST) have been appointed Overseas Experts by the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS). They are: Prof Lionel Ni, Head of the Department of Computer Science, Dr Zikang Tang, Associate Professor of Physics and Prof Mingjie Zhang, Professor of Biochemistry.

The Academy established the Overseas Experts Scheme in 1998 to recruit outstanding overseas academics to help promote research collaboration, conduct evaluation, and award research projects (www.castalents.ac.cn). Of the 84 Overseas Experts elected by the CAS in this latest cohort, only four are from Hong Kong.

Computer scientist Prof Lionel Ni is also the Director of the Ministry of Education/Microsoft Research Asia (MOE/MSRA) Information Technology Key Laboratory at HKUST, the first MOE key lab in Hong Kong. Prof Ni's research interests lie in developing novel computing and networking systems, such as wireless networking, high-performance computer architecture and network security tools. His inventions include the award winning Voice over IP hardware and Internet emulator.

In 2000, Dr Zikang Tang fabricated the world's smallest single-walled carbon nanotubes which have a diameter of only 0.4 nanometers, and he later discovered their superconducting properties. An expert in nanotechnology, Dr Tang also developed the room-temperature ultraviolet-emitting laser from a thin film of nano-structured zinc oxide semiconductor. This outstanding achievement earned him the 2003 State Natural Science Award, China's most prestigious award in the field of natural sciences.

Prof Mingjie Zhang focuses his research on investigating the structure and functions of proteins in regulating neuronal signal transductions. His laboratory has elucidated a series of the structures and the biological functions of proteins that play central roles in regulating cellular activities. His research also involves screening lead compounds from traditional Chinese medicine using high-resolution nuclear magnetic resonance, which may provide potential drug elements for treating stroke patients.

Prof Zhang's research results have been published in a number of prestigious scientific journals including *Science* and *Nature Structural Biology*. Prof Zhang was honored with the 2003 Croucher Senior Research Fellowship for his fundamental contributions to biochemistry.



From left: Prof Mingjie Zhang, Hefeng Li of Bureau of Personnel and Education of CAS, Dr Zikang Tang and Dr Long Quan (representing Prof Lionel Ni) at the award presentation ceremony