BATTERY EXPERT POWERS UP WITH A SCIALOG AWARD

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When it comes to batteries, UH engineer Yan Yao never runs out of award-winning ideas.

Yao, an associate professor of electrical and computer engineering at the UH Cullen College, and his research partners are known for their work to create better, safer and longer lasting batteries in the energy storage field.

He teamed up with Jahan Dawlaty of the University of Southern California, and Puja Goyal of SUNY Binghamton to further explore the fundamental mechanisms at play in aqueous batteries. Their work on an alternative non-flammable and rechargeable aqueous battery, titled "Proton-coupled electron transfer in batteries based on quinone crystals," recently received a Scialog Award from the Research Corporation for Science Advancement.

In March, research by Yao and his postdoctoral researchers made the cover of Angewandte Chemie International Edition, a renowned chemistry journal.

In 2017, Yao’s group announced a technical breakthrough in aqueous batteries using inexpensive, organic quinone materials. A paper on this was published in Nature Materials. He was also named a Scialog Fellow and received funding from the Department of Energy’s Battery500 consortium the same year.

Other accolades earned by the University of Houston Professor include: The Robert A. Welch Professorship by UH’s Texas Center for Superconductivity (TcSUH), the Ralph E. Powe Junior Faculty Enhancement Award from the Oak Ridge Associated Universities and the 2013 Office of Naval Research Young Investigator Award.