Tulane scientist wins prestigious international award

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YiPing Chen is chair of the Department of Cell and Molecular Biology in the Tulane School of Science and Engineering.

YiPing Chen, a professor of cell and molecular biology at Tulane University, has been named the winner of the 2021 International Association of Dental Research (IADR) Distinguished Scientist Award in Craniofacial Biology Research.

The IADR Distinguished Scientist Awards program acknowledges renowned scientists who have made significant scientific contributions of original, outstanding or innovative discoveries in the related field of research. There are 17 awards in various scientific research specialties such as craniofacial biology research.

Chen, chair of the Department of Cell and Molecular Biology and the John L. and Mary Wright Ebaugh Chair in Science and Engineering, studies genetic and molecular mechanisms of organ development and pathogenesis, with specific interests in the roles of growth and transcription factors in craniofacial and cardiac develpment and congenital defects.

One of his major projects is a study of molecular mechanisms of tooth initiation and patterning. He also studies the molecular basis of cleft palate caused by gene mutations in mammals. Cleft palate is one of the most frequent congenital birth defects in human beings. Chen’s research in craniofacial biology has been continuously funded by the National Institutes of Health since he started his career at Tulane in 1997.

“I am thrilled to be bestowed such an honor by the IADR, which recognizes my long-time contributions to the knowledge in craniofacial biology,” Chen said.

Chen will receive the Distinguished Scientist Award at the annual IADR meeting in July.