

## **Announcement of Earth Engineering Center (EEC), Columbia University, March 26, 2019**

Prof. Nickolas Themelis, Stanley-Thompson Professor Emeritus, EEE-SEAS, has announced that Prof. Xi Chen of Earth and Environmental Engineering has taken over as Director of the Earth Engineering Center (EEC). EEC is the first (1995) engineering unit of the Earth Institute. The original mission of EEC was to direct engineering research on processes and products that balance the rapidly increasing use of materials with the finite resources of the Earth. EEC ([www.columbia.edu/cu/earth](http://www.columbia.edu/cu/earth)) introduced three sustainable development courses, developed the M.S. program in Earth Resources Engineering, and founded the *Global Waste to Energy Research and Technology Council* (2002; [www.GWCouncil.org](http://www.GWCouncil.org)) which now has sister organizations in ten countries, including China and India.

Prof. Xi Chen received his Ph.D. from Harvard (2001) and joined Columbia in 2003 after a postdoc at Harvard. He is now a Professor of Earth and Environmental Engineering. His group's primary research focus is to develop advanced materials and systems that address challenges in energy and environment, in particular carbon capture and utilization and the loop of energy and material resources. He is a pioneer in the use of scalable and low-cost moisture-swing technology for direct air capture of carbon dioxide and in economically viable pathways for carbon dioxide utilization. His group is also a leader in the construction of flexible and long-life lithium batteries. There are over six thousand citations of Prof. Chen's publications and he has received numerous awards, including the *Presidential Early Career Award for Scientists and Engineers* (PECASE), *NSF CAREER Award*, *Sia-Nemat Nasser (SNN) Early Career Award*, *SES Young Investigator Medal*, and the *Thomas J.R. Hughes Young Investigator Award*.

Prof. Themelis will continue his work on advancing sustainable waste management worldwide and directing graduate research, as EEC Senior Scientist.