

# THE *Current*

December 16, 2014

Julie Cohen

## **Necessity is the Mother of Invention**

Adding yet another honor to a growing list of accolades, Shuji Nakamura, UC Santa Barbara's 2014 Nobel laureate in physics, today was named a fellow of the National Academy of Inventors (NAI).

Distinction as an NAI fellow is accorded to academic inventors who have demonstrated a prolific spirit of innovation in creating or facilitating outstanding inventions that have made a tangible impact on quality of life, economic development and the welfare of society. The total number of fellows to date is 414, representing more than 150 prestigious research universities and governmental and nonprofit research institutions.

"I'm honored to be elected as a fellow of the National Academy of Inventors," said Nakamura, who is a professor of materials and of electrical and computer engineering. "It has been my aim to focus my research on areas with a high degree of economic and societal relevance, and we continue to pursue this ideal in the Solid State Lighting and Energy Electronics Center at UCSB."

Nakamura joins two other faculty members who are NAI fellows. Both Steven DenBaars and Samir Mitragotri were so honored in 2013.

Last week in Stockholm, Nakamura was presented with the 2014 Nobel Prize in Physics for his invention of the blue light-emitting diode, which has enabled bright and energy-saving white light sources. He is the recipient of numerous honors and awards, including Japan's Order of Culture, a Technology and Engineering Emmy, the

Harvey Award, the Prince of Asturias Award, the Czochralski Award, the Benjamin Franklin Medal, the British Rank Prize, the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers Jack A. Morton Award, the Materials Research Society Medal Award and the Nishina Memorial Prize.

The Cree Professor in Solid State Lighting and Display, Nakamura currently serves as research director of the Solid State Lighting & Energy Electronics Center. He holds more than 200 U.S. patents and more than 300 Japanese patents and has published more than 550 papers in his field. He is an elected member of the National Academy of Engineering.

Nakamura holds three degrees in electrical engineering from the University of Tokushima in Japan, where he joined Nichia Chemical Industries Ltd. in 1979. A decade later, Nakamura began researching blue LEDs and in the mid-1990s he developed the first group-III nitride-based blue/green LEDs and violet laser diodes. He joined the faculty in 2000.

The NAI fellows will be inducted by the deputy U.S. commissioner for patent operations from the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) during the Annual Conference of the National Academy of Inventors, set to take place in March at the California Institute of Technology in Pasadena. Each fellow will be presented with a special trophy, a newly designed medal and a rosette pin in honor of their outstanding accomplishments. A plaque listing the name and institution of each NAI Fellow will be on permanent display at the USPTO.

The 2014 NAI fellows also will be recognized with a full-page announcement in the Jan. 16, 2015, issue of The Chronicle of Higher Education, and in upcoming issues of Inventors Digest and Technology and Innovation.

---

## **About UC Santa Barbara**

The University of California, Santa Barbara is a leading research institution that also provides a comprehensive liberal arts learning experience. Our academic community of faculty, students, and staff is characterized by a culture of interdisciplinary collaboration that is responsive to the needs of our multicultural and global society. All of this takes place within a living and learning environment like no other, as we draw inspiration from the beauty and resources of our extraordinary location at the edge of the Pacific Ocean.