UC SANTA BARBARA

THE Current

December 4, 2019
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Imagination Plus Expertise

Two faculty members in UC Santa Barbara's College of Engineering have been elected as fellows of the National Academy of Inventors (NAI). Michael Chabinyc and Sanjit Mitra are among the 168 prolific academic innovators from around the world to earn fellow status for 2019.

The NAI Fellows Program highlights academic inventors who have demonstrated a 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. Election to NAI Fellow is the highest professional distinction accorded solely to academic inventors.

"We offer sincere congratulations to Professor Michael Chabinyc and Professor Sanjit Mitra on their election to the National Academy of Inventors, a well-deserved and prestigious peer recognition of their innovation and important contributions to society with leading-edge research," said Rod Alferness, dean of the College of Engineering.

Chabinyc, chair of the Materials Department, studies materials for flexible electronics. Flexible printed electronic materials and systems enable wearable electronics, information displays and sensors for the "internet of things." Particular emphasis in his research group is on characterization of the electrical and structural properties of organic and inorganic thin films. He is an inventor on 47 patents in the areas of flexible electronics, bioanalytical devices and electronic materials.

“The NAI is an important organization because it recognizes the significance of translating academic research into real-world applications,” Chabinyc said. “I am honored to join my UC Santa Barbara colleagues in the NAI.”

Earlier this year, Chabinyc was elected to the status of fellow by the Materials Research Society for “contributions to the fundamental science of the structure and electronic properties of organic semiconductors and the translation of these relationships to functional devices.” He also is a fellow of the American Physical Society, for “contributions to the understanding of relationships between structure and electronic properties of conjugated polymers, and the translation of these relationships to functional devices such as transistors and solar cells.”

Mitra, a professor emeritus of the Electrical and Computer Engineering Department, has published more than 700 papers in the areas of analog and digital signal processing, and image processing. He has spent more than 40 years at UC Santa Barbara after joining the faculty in 1977, has authored and co-authored twelve books, and holds six patents.

“I am honored to be elected a fellow of the National Academy of Inventors,” Mitra said. “This recognition by my peers is particularly gratifying as the inventions which had the biggest impact are based on my initial research carried out at UC Santa Barbara in collaboration with visiting researchers from industry.”

Previously, Mitra was elected a fellow by the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers, the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and the International Society for Optical Engineering. He is a member of the U.S. National Academy of Engineering and of several foreign academies.

To date, NAI Fellows hold more than 41,500 issued U.S. patents, which have generated over 11,000 licensed technologies and companies, and created more than 36 million jobs. In addition, over $1.6 trillion in revenue has been generated based on NAI Fellow discoveries.

“Congratulations to the 2019 class of NAI Fellows,” said Laura A. Peter, Deputy Under Secretary of Commerce for Intellectual Property and Deputy Director at the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. “It is a privilege to welcome these exceptionally qualified individuals to this prestigious organization. I am certain their accomplishments will inspire the next generation of invention pioneers.”

Fellows will be formally inducted during the 2020 NAI Fellows Ceremony on April 10, 2020, in Phoenix, Arizona.

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.