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Dean Tirrell Named Fellow of American Academy of Arts and Sciences

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Matthew Tirrell

(Santa Barbara, Calif.) ?? Matthew Tirrell, Dean of the College of Engineering at UC Santa Barbara who will become UC Berkeley's chair of the Department of Bioengineering in July, has been elected a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the group announced Monday. Tirrell is also a member of the National Academy of Engineering and a Fellow of the American Institute of Medical and Biological Engineers, the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and the American Physical Society.

An independent policy research center, the academy is made up of scholars and practitioners from diverse fields, which enables the organization to conduct a wide range of interdisciplinary studies and public policy research. Its membership includes more than 250 Nobel laureates and 60 Pulitzer Prize winners. The academy's research focuses on science and global security, social policy, the humanities and culture, and education.

This year's fellows come from 28 states and 11 countries. They represent universities, museums, national laboratories, private research institutes, businesses, and foundations. The newly elected group includes Nobel laureates and recipients of the Pulitzer and Pritzker prizes, MacArthur fellowships, Oscars, Grammy and Tony awards, and the National Medal of Arts. "These remarkable men and women have made singular contributions to their fields, and to the world," said Academy President Emilio Bizzi.

"I feel sincerely honored by my election to the American Academy of Arts & Sciences, which is a unique collection of scholars, artists and leaders from a very broad spectrum of activities of importance to society," said Tirrell, who, in addition to dean, is the Richard A. Auhl Professor in UCSB's College of Engineering. "I look forward to contributing to the mission of this academy."

Said UCSB Chancellor Henry T. Yang: "This wonderful honor recognizes Professor Tirrell for his outstanding scholarship in the area of polymer surface properties and biomolecular materials and also his innovative academic leadership. He is highly respected by his peers and colleagues in the engineering community, as well as on the UC Santa Barbara campus, where we join in saluting him on this achievement." Tirrell's selection br

ings to 25 the number of UCSB faculty members who have been elected fellows of the prestigious academy.

This year's new fellows include biographer Robert Caro, U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, California Supreme Court Chief Justice Ronald George, singer/songwriter Emmylou Harris, actors Dustin Hoffman and James Earl Jones, mezzo-soprano Marilyn Horne, and author Thomas Pynchon.

Other scientists and engineers among the new fellows include co-winner of the 2007 Nobel Prize in Medicine or Physiology Mario Capecchi, recognized for his contributions to gene targeting; physicist Lene Hau, whose experimental work succeeded in stopping a beam of light; mathematician and Fields Medal winner Terence Tao; astrophysicist Guinevere Kauffmann, whose techniques calculate numerically the creation and evolution of galaxies and black holes in the early universe; and chemical engineer Adam Heller, whose numerous inventions include the lithium chloride battery and photochemically self-cleaning windows.

Among the newly elected foreign honorary members of the academy are Nelson Mandela, Dame Judith Dench, and Bono.

Founded in 1780 by John Adams, James Bowdoin, John Hancock and other scholar-patriots, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences has elected as fellows and foreign honorary members the finest minds and most influential leaders from each generation, including George Washington and Benjamin Franklin in the eighteenth century, Daniel Webster and Ralph Waldo Emerson in the nineteenth, and Albert Einstein and Winston Churchill in the twentieth.

The academy will welcome this year's new class at its annual Induction Ceremony on October 10, at the academy's headquarters in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

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