

Engineering professors elected to the National Academy of Engineering

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By Janelle Polcyn

Two professors from the Cockrell School of Engineering were elected to the National Academy of Engineering out of 102 engineers from all over the world.

David Maidment and Bridget Scanlon became new members of the prestigious institution because of their accomplishments in their fields. Their membership was announced Feb. 8, but the award letters were mailed out before the announcement.

"Friday afternoon - I got a box of materials Fed-Exed from the National Academy of Engineering with the award letter," Maidment said. "It means a great deal. This is the highest honor that engineering faculty at U.S. universities aspire to."

The NAE is an elite group composed of experts who have made recognizable innovative progress in the field of engineering. There is no application, only confidential nominations and elections from members of the Academy.

Maidment said he was elected for development in digitally mapping a landscape and tracing the water movement through it. Scanlon was elected for the evaluation of groundwater recharge and aquifer depletion, according to the NAE website,

"There are only about 2,000 engineers in the academy, so it's pretty honorific," said Randy Atkins, NAE media relations officer. "[The NAE] is part of the broader national academies created to advise the government and the nation on engineering and medicine."

The election is an award as well as an opportunity to be involved in engineering nationwide.

"[The members] provide the leadership and expertise for numerous projects focused on the relationships between engineering, technology and the quality of life," said Kim Garcia, membership elections manager for the NAE. "Elected members may participate in the governance and membership-related activities of the Academy, serve as officers or counselors, serve on study committees and attend meetings of the Academy."

Having more NAE members at the University means more recognition, Atkins said.

"I know U.S. News, when they look at college ranking, they look at faculty who are NAE members," Atkins said.

The resources UT provides helped him win the award, Maidment said.

"I came to UT-Austin as an assistant professor in 1981, and I've spent my whole career here," Maidment said. "I feel that UT has been a stimulating and supportive environment that has enabled me to do my best."

Scanlon said she was honored to receive the nomination.

"I am very grateful for all the research support I have received at the Bureau of Economic Geology and from the Jackson School of Geosciences," Scanlon said.

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