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## **UCT strengthens global footprint with prestigious US Academy induction**



Professor Alison September.

Photo: Supplied

The University of Cape Town's (UCT) global influence in research and scholarship has been further cemented with the induction of Professor Alison September into the prestigious National Academy of Kinesiology (NAK) in the United States. Professor September, deputy director of the [Health Through Physical Activity, Lifestyle and Sport \(HPALS\) Research Centre](#) in the [Department of Human Biology](#), was honoured at the Academy's 94th Annual Meeting in Pittsburgh in September 2025.

The NAK, founded in 1930, promotes research on human movement and physical activity while recognising scholars whose work has shaped the field. Its [Fellows](#) include Nobel laureates, Guggenheim and MacArthur Fellows, and leaders of universities across the world.

In 2025, the academy welcomed 12 new Fellows: 10 from the United States and two international scholars. Among them was UCT's Professor September, who was honoured for her distinguished and sustained contributions to kinesiology through scholarship and professional service.

Reflecting on her election to the NAK, Professor September said: "I was quite overwhelmed by the president of the academy's congratulatory letter to me, as well as other fellows who wrote to me saying 'Welcome to the National Academy' and that they're looking forward to meeting me in September."

She also noted the significance of her induction: "Fifty years ago, I think there were two South African fellows.... I am now the only fellow of the academy who is living and working in Africa."

NAK Fellows are recognised as leading voices in advancing the science of human movement. The academy's purpose is to encourage the study and application of kinesiology and to honour those whose work has advanced the discipline.

Professor September, born and raised in Belgravia, Cape Town, holds a bachelor's degree in microbiology and an honours, master's and PhD in human genetics, all from UCT. A full professor of physiological sciences, she has published more than 96 research papers and supervised over 50 postgraduate students.

Her research profile is internationally recognised. From 2019 to 2025, SciVal ranks her as the second top global author in anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) genomics and positions HPALS and UCT as the leading institute in this niche research area together with Professor Malcom Collins (first position). Her team pioneered the use of whole-exome sequencing in Achilles tendon injuries and whole-genome sequencing in ACL rupture injuries.

"We are delighted to welcome Professor September to the Academy. Her leadership and scholarship exemplify the qualities we seek in Fellows – advancing knowledge, mentoring the next generation, and strengthening the future of kinesiology," said NAK president Dr Monica Lounsbery.

Professor September's induction is a milestone for UCT, South Africa and Africa. It marks her as the only African currently serving as a Fellow of the Academy.

This achievement also reinforces UCT's position as a leading global research university. Professor September's recognition by one of the world's most respected academic academies highlights the university's impact on advancing knowledge, transcending borders and strengthening Africa's voice in international scholarship.

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