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UCT professor elected to US National Academy of Sciences **Professor Bond is available for interviews**

University of Cape Town Professor William Bond has been elected as a foreign associate of the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) of the United States of America.

Professor Bond, who works in biological sciences, is the fifth African scientist to have the honour of being elected a foreign associate.

The NAS is an independent body of approximately 2200 members and 400 foreign associates. Nearly 200 members of this prestigious body are Nobel laureates.

Professor Bond is an ecologist with a particular interest in the processes that control large-scale vegetation in Africa and the world. He and his colleagues in South Africa and elsewhere have shown that wildfires are a major force shaping contemporary global vegetation and that they have continued to do so for many millions of years in the past.

"African vegetation is particularly interesting and challenging to study because of the complex interplay between climate, fire, large mammal herbivores, people and increasing CO₂, the hidden hand of global change," said Professor Bond.

The NAS is a private, non-profit society of distinguished scholars, established by an Act of Congress, signed by Abraham Lincoln in 1863.

The NAS is charged with providing independent, objective advice on matters related to science and technology. Scientists are elected by their peers to membership for outstanding contributions to research.

Professor Bond joins Professor Richard Cowling, a conservation biologist at Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, as the only two current South African foreign associates of the NAS.

From the rest of the African continent (including Madagascar) there are only four

foreign associates. This year, Dr Meave Leakey from Kenya was also added as an associate.

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