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UCT academic inducted into prestigious American Institute for Medical and Biological Engineering

Professor Deon Bezuidenhout of the University of Cape Town (UCT) has been elected to join the [American Institute for Medical and Biological Engineering \(AIMBE\)](#) College of Fellows which comprises the top 2% of the medical and biological engineering community.

Bezuidenhout is director of the Cardiovascular Research Unit and co-director of the Cape Heart Institute at UCT.

He was nominated, reviewed, and elected by peers and members of the College of Fellows for leading biomaterials contributions to advanced cardiac devices and advocating for accessibility of such devices to underprivileged patients needing them.

"I am honoured to have been elected a Fellow of the AIMBE. The membership opens additional opportunities for collaboration with distinguished colleagues to facilitate the application of biomaterials science and engineering to the development of medical devices, especially those suitable for patients in low- and middle-income countries who may otherwise have little or no access to treatment," said Bezuidenhout. "I am especially grateful to Professor Art Coury from Northeastern University (Boston) for his nomination and support."

As professor in the Department of Surgery (UCT), Bezuidenhout teaches the multidisciplinary field of Biomaterials Science at undergraduate and postgraduate levels to students from backgrounds in science, engineering, surgery and medicine. He has 25 years of experience with the design, synthesis, modification, and processing of polymeric and bioprosthetic materials, and specialises in the development of biomaterial scaffolds and biomimetic matrices for prosthetic and regenerative medicine approaches to vascular grafts, heart valves and other applications.

Bezuidenhout is also a founder member and technical director of Strait Access Technologies, a university start-up company developing transcatheter aortic heart valve replacements and related devices. The valves, that can be inserted without the need for open heart surgery, are not only useful for older patients with typically calcified and stenotic (blocked) heart valves, but are specifically designed to also be suitable for the more than a million younger sufferers of rheumatic heart disease in the developing world who currently need heart valve replacement due to predominantly regurgitant (leaking) valves.

[AIMBE](#) Fellows are regularly recognised for their contributions in teaching, research, and innovation and have been awarded the Nobel Prize, the Presidential Medal of Science and the Presidential Medal of Technology and Innovation.

A formal induction ceremony will be held during [AIMBE's 2021 Annual Event](#) on 26 March. Bezuidenhout will be inducted along with 174 colleagues who make up the AIMBE Fellow Class of 2021.



Prof Deon Bezuidenhout

Photo: Supplied

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