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UNH Professor Named National Academy of Inventors Fellow

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(HTTPS://WWW.UNH.EDU/UNHTODAY/NEWS/2018/12/12/UNH-PROFESSOR-NAMED-NATIONAL-ACADEMY-OF-INVENTORS-FELLOW)

DURHAM, N.H.—Wheeler Ruml, professor of computer science at the University of New Hampshire, has been named a fellow of the National Academy of Inventors (NAI). Ruml (<https://ceps.unh.edu/person/wheeler-ruml>), whose research in artificial intelligence has led to 17 U.S. and 12 foreign patents, joins the NAI 2018 class of 148 fellows.



“This is a wonderful and well-deserved national recognition for Professor Ruml’s significant contributions to artificial intelligence,” said Jan Nisbet, senior vice provost for research. “We’re proud of our innovative faculty who bring their important research into the marketplace.”

Ruml’s research concerns planning for artificial intelligence. “If you have a robot or a factory or some

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machine that is capable of doing lots of jobs, planning is the process by which you decide what to do in order to achieve your goals,” he said.

Prior to joining the UNH faculty, Ruml worked at the Palo Alto Research Center, where many of his patents in automated manufacturing originated. At UNH, his research has focused on time-aware planning, which he describes as “real-time planning, for when you don’t even have time to make a plan.” Ruml is currently collaborating with C3I, an Exeter company specializing in marine communications, controls and instruments, and has worked with UNHInnovation (<https://innovation.unh.edu/>) to file a patent application related to helping self-driving cars make safe “decisions.”

While he describes his UNH work as driven by curiosity, Ruml said “I do try to make sure it doesn’t make unrealistic assumptions and actually could apply to the real world. In academia, there are so many interesting things to work on. I always try to keep as a tie-breaker the question of: Could the project have an impact?”

Election to NAI fellow status is the highest professional distinction accorded solely to academic inventors who have demonstrated a prolific spirit of innovation in creating or facilitating outstanding inventions that have made a tangible impact on quality of life, economic development and the welfare of society. With the election of the 2018 class, there are now over 1,000 NAI fellows, representing more than 250 research universities and government and non-profit research institutes. Ruml joins UNH professor of mathematics Kevin Short (<http://www.unh.edu/unhtoday/news/release/2014/12/16/unhs-kevin-short-named-national-academy-inventors-fellow>), who became a NAI fellow in 2014.

The University of New Hampshire is a flagship research university that inspires innovation and transforms lives in our state, nation and world. More than 16,000 students from all 50 states and 71 countries engage with an award-winning faculty in top ranked programs in business, engineering, law, health and human services, liberal arts and the sciences across more than 200 programs of study. UNH’s research portfolio includes partnerships with NASA, NOAA, NSF and NIH, receiving more than \$100 million in competitive external funding every year to further explore and define the frontiers of land, sea and space.

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