

Dr. Richard J. Balling Retires



Professor Richard J. Balling of the BYU Civil and Environmental Engineering Department announced his retirement at the end of the Winter 2017 academic semester. Balling began his work as a professor at BYU in 1982 and since then has served on multiple university committees and councils. Professor Balling received his BS in Civil Engineering and Mathematics from the University of Utah in 1978 and later went on to receive his MS and PhD in Engineering from the University of California, Berkley in 1982.

During his time at BYU, Professor Balling taught 13 different undergraduate courses and 5 different graduate courses. In addition to time spent in the classroom, he wrote textbooks for nearly every course he taught -- 11 textbooks in all -- including a 3-volume textbook on Structural Analysis. His texts cover several different subjects including: Finite Elements, Plates and Shells, Nonlinear Solid Dynamics, Computer Structural Analysis, Computer

Structural Optimization, Continuum Mechanics and Elasticity, and Advanced Solid Mechanics. Balling has published 117 peer-reviewed manuscripts and his publications have received 2,187 citations to date in manuscripts published by peers.

When asked what his greatest teaching accomplishment was he responded, "I am most happy to have participated in the China MegaInfrastructure Study Abroad Program. I have directed this program with Professors Grant Schultz and Brett Borup for 10 years with up to 200 students. This program served as a culminating design experience for teams of students who got to visit 7 cities in China within a period of two weeks."

Over his last 25 years at the University, Professor Balling has been the lead principal investigator on six research grants from the National Science Foundation that have provided nearly continuous support for 20 years from 1983 to 2003. (He also wrote 21 additional proposals to the National Science Foundation for \$10 million that were not funded.) He was a co-recipient of the National State-of-the-Art Award from the American Society of Civil Engineers in 1998 and again in 2004. In addition to this, he also gave one of three keynote addresses at the International Conference on Modeling, Simulation, and Applied Optimization in 2009, held in the United Arab Emirates. He has served as Associate Editor of the ASCE Journal of Structural Engineering and monitored the review of 70 manuscripts, reviewed 163 manuscripts for 18 different journals and chaired ASCE's technical committee on Methods of Structural Analysis. Balling has also served as member and chair of the BYU University Rank and Tenure Committee where he read 98 of 400 faculty files for promotion, served as member of the BYU Academic Unit Review Committee where he interviewed and evaluated eight departments across campus, served as executive member of the BYU Faculty Advisory Council, and served as coordinator of the ABET Accreditation Review of the Civil Engineering Department.

When asked about his family life and post-retirement plans Balling reported: "Three years ago, my heroic wife, Cindee, passed away after a long struggle with a rare hereditary nuerodegenerative disease named SCA7. Two years ago I was able to marry a wonderful woman, Diana, who has brought me much happiness. Together we have 9 children. Eight of them are married, and our youngest, Jacelyn, is on a mission in Baltimore, Maryland. We have 17 grandchildren and one more on the way. Two of my daughters, Mandee and Aubree, also have SCA7, and Aubree is in the advanced stages. Thanks to a

procedure known as preimplantation genetic diagnosis, none of my grandchildren have SCA7. Much of my retirement is and will be spent doing things with and for my children and grandchildren. I sold my home in Orem and moved into Diana's home in Murray. We both like to travel and have some exciting trips planned to Europe and Hawaii. We also purchased a nice truck and travel trailer which allows me to continue my research while fly fishing my favorite rivers throughout the west. We plan to serve a mission further down the road and currently teach the Marriage and Family Relations class in our ward."