

Champion of Engineering Education

M. G. (Ron) Britton, P.Eng., PhD.



Dr. Ron Britton is the Associate Dean of Design Education in the Faculty of Engineering at the University of Manitoba. Born in Regina and raised in Lang, Saskatchewan he obtained his B. Sc. in Civil Engineering degree from the University of Saskatchewan, M.Sc. in Agricultural Engineering from University of Manitoba and Ph.D. in Agricultural Engineering from Texas A&M University.

Ron spent five years working in industry between his B.Sc. and his M.Sc. During that time he was employed by Shell Oil, the Plywood Manufacturers Association of British Columbia and Beaver Lumber. His work took him from Winnipeg to London, England and Toronto. During that time he concentrated on the design of buildings, with an emphasis on wood, and ultimately focusing on agricultural buildings.

Ron has held academic appointments at both Texas A&M and the University of Manitoba. He rose through the ranks in the Agricultural Engineering (now Biosystems Engineering) departments. He now holds appointments in both Civil Engineering and Biosystems Engineering in addition to his administrative responsibilities. In 2001 he was awarded a Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council Chair in Design Engineering, a Chair he held for 10 years. During that time Ron was instrumental in the establishment of the Design Group, the promotion of engineering design concepts through departmental courses, the restructuring of the delivery of technical communications throughout the Faculty, and the recruitment of Engineers-in-Residence as active partners in the delivery of design engineering courses. Ron was also instrumental in the establishment of the Internationally Educated Engineers Qualification Program which assists foreign trained engineers to achieve their P.Eng in Manitoba.

Ron brings the issue of design education to the attention of provincial industry through the regular column "Thoughts on Design" in the Keystone Professional. Through Ron's efforts, a culture of design has been established at the U of M, along with an understanding by industry of their role in undergraduate engineering education.

Ron is an honorary lifetime member of the Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education, and a member of numerous other technical and education related societies. Ron is a 3M Teaching Fellow and has received a number of other awards including the CCPE Medal of Distinction in Engineering Education, the CSBE Maple Leaf Award, the APEGM Merit Award and Outstanding Service Award, the University of Manitoba Dr. & Mrs. H.H. Saunderson Award for Excellence in Teaching, and the Dr. & Mrs. D.R. Campbell Outreach Award. During his career, Ron has authored over 30 papers published in refereed journals, 12 papers published in refereed conference proceedings, books, monographs, articles, chapters and has provided editorial services in books. He is a nationally recognized speaker on the topic of Engineering Design Education, and has supervised 41 Undergraduate and 17 Postgraduate theses.

Away from the campus Ron is a proud grandfather of four and a sometimes obsessive baseball fan. He is probably one of the few to include questions on baseball in his final exams.

In recognition of his outstanding efforts to improve and promote engineering education, the Faculty of Engineering at the University of Manitoba, together with the Association, is pleased to present the Champion of Engineering Education Award to M.G. (Ron) Britton.