

ACEC Missouri

2026 Summer Meeting

SPEAKER



Joel Burken, PhD, PE, BCEE, F. AEESP
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BIOGRAPHY

Dr. Burken received his PhD from the University of Iowa in 1996, where he conducted some of the initial research on phytoremediation. He has been at Missouri University of Science and Technology (formerly University of Missouri – Rolla) since 1997. He currently serves as Chair and Curators' Distinguished Professor of the Civil, Architectural and Environmental Engineering Department. Dr. Burken has also held temporary positions at: EAWAG in Zurich Switzerland (research intern), at the National Environment Research Institute (NERI) in Denmark (visiting researcher and OECD Fellow) and at the University of Canterbury, New Zealand as an Erskine Fellow. Dr. Burken has served a variety of national professional and agency related leadership roles. He was elected to the president of the Board of Directors of the Association of Environmental Engineering and Science Professors (AEESP) and currently is elected to the ASCE Department Heads Coordinating Council and serving as chair of the council. He is a past member of the US EPA Science Advisory Board, serving from 2016 - 2021. Dr. Burken's research and teaching has focused upon low impact and natural treatment systems since 1991. In that time, terms of sustainable-remediation, green infrastructure, and green-remediation have evolved and now promote the same fundamental aspects surrounding water quality and water resource management. Dr. Burken has generated 4 entirely new courses at Missouri S&T and initiated the Environmental Engineering program in 2003. His research in phytoremediation of organic contaminants and pioneering work in sustainable infrastructure and remediation have led to over 100 publications, a patented environmental assessment method for assessing potential exposures, and international recognition with multiple research, teaching, and service awards. This recognition for scholarly work and teaching includes receiving the 2007 AEESP Outstanding Teaching in Environmental Engineering and Science Award, the inaugural 2018 Science Award from the American Academy of Environmental Engineering and Science (AAEES), twice winning the ASCE Rudolf Hering Medal, an NSF Career award, and being appointed a Fellow AEESP and a Board Certified Environmental Engineering by AAEES. Dr. Burken has received the highest Missouri S&T awards for teaching, service, advising and has received the Faculty Excellence award 7 times. Dr. Burken was appointed as a Distinguished Curator's professor at Missouri S&T in 2015.