Dr. Richard C. Benson - Biography

Dr. Richard C. Benson, the fifth president of The University of Texas at Dallas, earned a bachelor of science and engineering degree in aerospace and mechanical science from Princeton University, a master's degree in mechanical engineering from the University of Virginia, and a doctorate in mechanical engineering from the University of California, Berkeley.

Prior to beginning his university career, he worked for the Xerox Corporation as a technical specialist and project manager from 1977 to 1980. He joined the University of Rochester in 1980 as an assistant professor of mechanical engineering and was named the top teacher in the College of Engineering and Applied Science in 1981. He progressed to associate professor in 1983 and full professor in 1989. He served as associate dean for graduate studies in the College of Engineering and Applied Science from 1989 to 1992 and as chair of the Department of Mechanical Engineering from 1992 to 1995.

Benson's research at the University of Rochester was primarily focused on the mechanics of highly flexible structures. With sponsorship from the Eastman Kodak Company, Hewlett Packard, Bausch and Lomb, Xerox and others, he and his advisees modeled magnetic disks and tapes, paper sheets, soft contact lenses, photographic film and other easily deformed structures.

At Penn State University, Benson served as head of the Department of Mechanical Engineering from 1995 to 1998 and head of the Department of Mechanical and Nuclear Engineering from 1998 to 2005. He co-taught, with a partner from the Women in Engineering Program, first-year seminars on toy making and dancing robots.

As dean of Virginia Tech's College of Engineering, Benson oversaw record growth from 2005 to 2016. The number of engineering applicants nearly doubled during his tenure. Also, the College of Engineering climbed to its highest-ever ranking in the National Science Foundation's report on engineering schools' research expenditures.

Benson's teaching interests are in the fields of structural mechanics, design and applied mathematics. At the graduate level he has taught courses in structural mechanics, structural stability, plates and shells, elasticity and continuum mechanics. At the undergraduate level he has taught courses in advanced mechanical design, statics, mechanical systems, kinematics, complex variables and boundary value problems.

Benson has received three significant honors from the American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME). In 1998 he was made a Fellow of the ASME. In 2009 he was elected to a three-year term on the ASME Board of Governors (2010-13). He also has held editorial positions with the *ASME Press, ASME Journal of Applied Mechanics* and *Applied Mechanics Reviews*.