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Dr. Ballard is Associate Adjunct Professor in the project engineering and management program within the Department of Civil & Environmental Engineering at the University of California, Berkeley. He has been a member of the Berkeley faculty since 1989. Dr. Ballard was appointed Research Director for the University's Project Production Systems Laboratory in 2006. His principle research interest is adapting lean production theory from manufacturing to project management practice. To that end, he has developed a model for lean delivery of capital facility projects, the Lean Project Delivery System.

Dr. Ballard has worked as a manager, trainer and consultant with numerous organizations ranging from construction and engineering firms to public utilities to international oil and gas companies. These organizations include: Aera Energy, BAA, Bechtel Corp., Boldt Construction, BNIM Associates, Brown & Root, Caltrans, Ford Motor Co., HGA, Jacobs Engineering, Petroleos de Venezuela, Pacific Gas & Electric, Skanska, St. Joseph Health System, and Sutter Health.

Dr. Ballard co-founded the International Group for Lean Construction in 1993 and the Lean Construction Institute in 1997; both dedicated to applying Lean theory, principles and techniques to designing and constructing the built environment.