

# **Breaking Out of Silos – Engineering for a Sustainable Future**



**Alan E. Rimer, P.E., D.E.E.**  
**ESE Distinguished Alumnus  
Award Recipient**  
**Director of Water Reuse  
Black & Veatch**

**Friday, November 16, 2007**  
**1301 McGavran-Greenberg Hall**  
**3:00 p.m.**  
**Reception to follow**

**Abstract:**

**As the field of engineering becomes more specialized we may be running the risk of missing the big picture of who, why and how we serve our constituency – human kind and the planet. Entrenched in our various technical silos, we might not be looking broadly enough at how engineers can meet society’s needs in the broader framework of a systems approach. We want to go beyond just solving problems; we must design ways to avoid them in the first place. Can we look to the social sciences for a broader view and even nature itself for inspiration? Does the concept of sustainability provide us a paradigm for the future? Alan will share thoughts on these issues gained from nearly 40 years of experience in the field of environmental engineering in projects throughout the world.**

**Bio:**

**Dr. Rimer is Director of Water Reuse at Black and Veatch International. He is also an Adjunct Professor in UNC’s Department of City and Regional Planning and at Duke’s Sanford School of Public Policy. He is a member of the Orange Water and Sewer Authority (OWASA) Board of Directors and is Principal Editor of the 3rd edition of the American Water Works Association’s Manual of Water Supply Practice, M24, “Dual Water Systems.”**