

Dr. Mark Richards, UC Berkeley

Topic: “Triggering of the Largest Deccan Eruptions by the Chicxulub Impact”

or

“What Really Killed the Dinosaurs”

Biography: Dr. Mark Richards earned his BS in engineering at the University of Texas, Austin, and his MS in physics and PhD in geophysics from the California Institute of Technology. He was a postdoc at Australian National University and served on the faculty at the University of Oregon prior to moving to UC Berkeley in 1989. He served as Dean of Mathematical and Physical Sciences from 2002-2014 and also as Executive Dean of the College of Letters and Science from 2006-2014, before returning to full-time research and teaching in the Department of Earth and Planetary Science. Professor Richards is a geophysical modeler and observer, focusing on the effects of large-scale dynamic processes in the interiors of the terrestrial planets on surface phenomena ranging from plate tectonics to large-scale volcanism. Recently, Professor Richards and his colleagues have suggested that one of the largest volcanic eruptions in Earth history, the Deccan Traps of India, was accelerated by the impact in Yucatán, Mexico, and that both events may have contributed to the great Cretaceous-Tertiary mass extinction. Professor Richards is a Fellow of the American Geophysical Union and the California Academy of Sciences. He is also the PI for the NSF-funded California Alliance (Berkeley, Caltech, UCLA, Stanford) project promoting diversity at the graduate, postdoctoral, and professorial levels in the mathematical and physical sciences. He has won Berkeley’s two highest awards for contributions to diversity, the Academic Senate’s Leon Henkin Award and the Chancellor’s Award for Institutional Excellence.