The Geological Engineering program inaugurated an annual field trip for incoming undergraduate students in 2008 with a week-long expedition to Peru during Spring Break. Its purpose is to recruit new Geological Engineering students with an exciting, real-world example related to one of our fields. Most of the cost of the trip is covered by the GE program, but the trip is limited to sophomore students that are GE majors, and are enrolled in GE110 at the time of the trip. This year’s participants on the cover photograph: Bottom Left to Right: Marcella Buel and Catherine Lucke. Top Left to Right: Professor Leslie Gertsch, Adrienne Boettcher, Bobby Swain, and Joey Baughman. Barbara Summers took the picture.

The terraces were built to regularize the chaotic boulder field that existed originally on the site. The bedrock is mainly granite, and the site is a saddle demarcated from the mountains of Machu Picchu and Huayna Picchu by faults. The Machu Picchu fault essentially parallels the right side of this photo, about a quarter-mile to the right.
The back wall of the main temple at Machu Picchu, from the front. Compare to the right wall. There is more going on here than foundation failure; the structure was repaired to be stable in its deformed configuration, possibly for religious purposes.