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SWST—TRULY AN INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION

As I write this, we are preparing for the 2011 Annual Convention in Portland, OR. As you read this we will have already met and will be looking forward to August 27-31, 2012, and the 2012 *Society of Wood Science and Technology/International Center for Bamboo and Rattan* International Convention in Beijing, China. In the January 2009 issue of *Wood and Fiber Science* (W&FS), then SWST President Jerry Winandy wrote about SWST's highly successful first venture abroad, the 2008 International Convention at the Universidad del Bío Bío in Concepcion, Chile. He wrote that this is an exciting time for the *Society of Wood Science and Technology* and that our new goal is to expand SWST's services to our members worldwide. At that time, the SWST Board was developing its latest Strategic Plan, which captured those goals and now states "SWST is committed to pursuing its Vision of becoming an international professional society." I'd like to summarize what has happened since then in regard to "going international."

Our most recent annual convention was held last October at our second international venue, Geneva, Switzerland, at our joint meeting with the UNECE Timber Committee. We could not have done this without the help of our members in Europe, especially Ed Pepke of UNECE/TC, all of our session cochairs, all of the presenters and members who attended, and Yves Weinand who hosted our visit to École Polytechnique Federale Lausanne.

Mostly as a result of that meeting, this past year our new members have come from Austria, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Czech Republic, Egypt, Iran, Malaysia, Nepal, Serbia, Switzerland,

Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United Arab Emirates as well as the United States. We now have close to 400 members from six continents and 45 countries. SWST has established a new membership category for members from emerging countries. These members now also have the opportunity to apply for the SWST Emerging Country International Travel Grant, which SWST created to encourage those members to participate in SWST conventions.

Our Board of Directors now has a Board member from Concepcion, Chile, Cecelia Bustos. SWST committees are populated with members from Canada, Chile, China, Germany, Hungary, Mexico, New Zealand, Switzerland, The Netherlands, Turkey, and the United States. The Education Committee's contact list now includes international universities. Our list of accredited universities now includes the Universidad del Bío Bío in Concepcion, Chile.

Over the past few years, the special charges to our committees have become less centered on North American issues and have increasingly included issues that face our international members. The Membership Committee is working on ways to attract more international members and to facilitate timely processing of applications for membership in some countries. The Education Committee and Accreditation Committee are working together to assist universities overseas who would like to pursue accreditation of their programs. The Research Initiatives Committee has been asked to investigate funding sources/programs at the international level to encourage collaborations and assist our members overseas. The Visiting Scientist program now includes international visitations.

Although SWST has held conventions with a theme of education, this past meeting in Portland is the first time that the technical program has included speakers from Europe, South America, and China, who spoke on the status for wood science and technology education in their countries.

It is obvious that going international has increased the visibility of *Wood and Fiber Science*, and we expect that this will benefit our journal and our members. The W&FS Editorial Advisory Board is composed of members from Austria, Canada, Switzerland, The Netherlands, and the United States.

Thanks to the efforts of SWST Executive Director Vicki Herian, complete sets of W&FS journals were donated to university libraries in 15 countries (University of Malawi; Adama University, Ethiopia; Boussengue Athanase, Gabon; Univ. Laval, Canada; ICBR, China; UBB, Chile; Carlito Calil University, Sao Paolo, Brazil; CAF, China; University of Zvolen, Slovakia;

Rubberwood Test Laboratory, India; Istanbul University, Turkey; Ecole Supérieure des Sciences Agronomiques, Madagascar; Federal University of Technology, Akure, Nigeria; Knust Main Library, CSIR, Ghana; and Roger Moya Rogue, Campus de la Sede Central, Cartago, Costa Rica).

In 2012, SWST will travel to a third continent outside of North America for the Annual Convention in Beijing, China. There is no doubt that holding our annual meetings outside of North America is benefitting our society in many ways. We look forward to China in 2012 and beyond with anticipation of meeting new members, establishing new collegial relationships, and forming new partnerships as we truly are an international organization.

Thank you!

SUSAN ANAGNOST
President, SWST