

# WOOD AND FIBER SCIENCE

JOURNAL OF THE SOCIETY OF WOOD SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

VOLUME 44

JULY 2012

NUMBER 3

## ADAPTING TO CHANGE, RESPONDING TO NEEDS

As I write these lines, we are preparing for the 2012 *Society of Wood Science and Technology/International Center for Bamboo and Rattan International Convention* in Beijing, China, from August 27 to 31. I am looking forward to meeting you at this meeting which promises to be exciting with more than 150 communications in the format of oral presentations and posters. Moreover, it will be the third SWST convention outside North America and the first to be held in Asia. I acknowledge the great collaboration we had from ICBR in the organization of this event. Beyond the exchange of information, this meeting will be an excellent opportunity to discuss the development of SWST and how it can continue to be relevant to members in our continuously evolving society needs and values.

SWST has gone through major changes over the last 5-7 yr. It has become an international organization and continues to grow that way. As a result, we have seen our membership stopping to decrease and it is now growing slowly but steadily. More international members are involved in the Board of Directors and in the committees. Our accreditation criteria are currently being revised by the Accreditation Committee and adapted to the rebranding of many wood science programs currently ongoing in North America and around the world. One wood science undergraduate program outside the United States is now accredited: *Universidad del Bío Bío*. Others should join in the coming years. It is important to mention that in those times of accelerated changes, the financial situation of SWST is sound thanks to the volunteer work of its members and careful financial management by our Executive Director, Vicki Herian, and by the Board of Directors over the

years. A visionary Strategic Plan was put together by SWST a couple of years ago. Our flagship, the journal *Wood and Fiber Science*, is also in very good shape due to the volunteer work of our current editor, Dr. Mike Barnes. The Journal is now available online and a web-based submission and review system has been implemented by the previous editor, Dr. Frank Beall.

SWST has a lot of assets but obviously we have to continue to move forward and remain relevant to our members and to the changing needs and values of the society in a broad sense. In this regard, we have to implement the SWST Strategic Plan. However, I would like to share with you a few specific ideas and ask for your input.

SWST should be a source of information on wood and other renewable materials. To accomplish this, we could revise and rebrand what we have. We should also publish short articles or “fact sheets” on actual research topics, easily available from the web. Another way to reach out would be to offer webinars on current research performed by our members.

There must be advantages to becoming an SWST-accredited program. We should find a way to develop educational material that could be used in our undergraduate programs.

The impact factor of *Wood and Fiber Science* increased over the last few years but it should be higher in my opinion given the quality of the articles published. How could we increase it? State-of-the-art papers are currently being invited by the Editor. This will certainly make the content even more appealing to the readers. Another way is to increase the diffusion of the Journal. How do we do that without impacting

the funding structure of SWST? Should we make the Journal available free of charge from the web? Should we reconsider our page charges policy? Should we rebrand the Journal and try to reach out to new readers? There is no easy answer to these questions but I believe that we must focus on this and develop an action plan.

I got to know SWST when I was a graduate student and became a student member. The student membership is fundamental for the future of SWST and we have to find a way to increase it. We could solicit brief articles from student members to be published in the SWST Newsletter. We could be more active

in promoting SWST's Facebook page and use it to create a SWST student network.

These are a few ideas that came to my mind after a couple of years serving on the Board of Directors. I invite you to send me or other Board members your comments and suggestions to continue the development of SWST and to make it more relevant to your needs.

I am looking forward to meeting you in Beijing!

Thank you.

ALAIN CLOUTIER  
*President, SWST*