

WOOD AND FIBER SCIENCE

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ACTIVATE YOUR MEMBERSHIP!

Activate your membership in the Society of Wood Science and Technology. I don't mean just pay dues, but become more involved in *your* professional society. Certainly as an educator and researcher in the wood products field, you realize that membership in SWST is a "no-brainer." So, is membership in SWST only for academics and hard-core researchers? If it is, we are all in trouble. A diverse membership is the foundation for a healthy society.

For example, one major function of SWST is to maintain the quality of education and training for future professionals. So you ask, if I am not considered an "academic," what can I do about the quality of wood products education? Education is everyone's business. Education of our students is essentially an investment for our future. The quality of our profession is maintained through the quality of our educational system. Since SWST accredits our wood products programs, input on the type of education our undergraduates are getting needs to be examined continuously—especially by those hiring wood products graduates. Having only academics set up and control the curriculum is the same as producing products without knowing your customers. Remember, formal education in wood products primarily produces future employees for the wood industry, as well as future researchers, and future "academics." Any member can become active by serving on the Education Committee, learning about the requirements for accreditation, and working toward changes that need to be implemented. Another way is working through your favorite university program.

Activate your membership by keeping

abreast of advancements in the profession. Professional development takes place not only through reading of articles in *Wood and Fiber Science*, but the journal can also be used as a window from which to view emerging technologies and products in our field as well as the leaders who are charging ahead. Professional development also occurs through identifying and working on critical issues in our profession, and participating in our visiting scientist program, both domestically and internationally. In addition, advancement occurs at annual meetings, and through annual meeting proceedings and our membership *Newsletter*.

SWST is only as good as its membership. This is *your* professional society and you need to both use it, as well as support it. Like a muscle, the more it is used, the stronger it becomes. Take advantage of your membership by interacting with educational programs, making sure your needs are met, and commenting on the research that is being done. A letter to our *Newsletter* would be one way to do this. Take advantage by obtaining support to visit a research institution to exchange ideas. Remember, this is open to all members.

Support your Society through an active membership by working on committees, and most importantly, providing your thoughts and ideas to your board members to better the Society and better meet your needs as a member of the Society. Become an officer in the Society. In addition, if you are an educator or have access to students, be sure to encourage them to become members of the Society and participate in the student poster competition. This will help them develop a sense of own-

ership in the profession in which they are about to embark. Most of all, develop the satisfaction of knowing that you contributed to the future of your profession through your activities.

I challenge each of you to activate your membership in the Society of Wood Science and Technology by taking a new look at your membership, renewing your interests if they have lapsed, and letting at least two non-members know why they should become members. If you are not sure why at least two non-members you know should become members,

please contact me by phone, fax, or e-mail and let's talk about why. I would very much appreciate knowing your reason why other activities are continuously more important than the future of our profession.

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