

# **SOCIETY OF WOOD SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

## **STRATEGIC PLAN**

### **Our Vision**

The Society of Wood Science and Technology will be the world leader in advancing the profession of wood science.

### **Our Mission**

To provide service to Society of Wood Science and Technology members; to develop, maintain, and advance the educational, scientific, and ethical standards that define the profession; and to advocate the socially responsible production and use of wood and other lignocellulosic products.

### **The Purposes of Society of Wood Science and Technology are to:**

- Develop and maintain the unique body of knowledge distinctive to the science and technology of wood and other lignocellulosic materials.
- Encourage the communication and use of this knowledge.
- Promote policies and procedures which assure the wise and responsible use of wood and other lignocellulosic materials.
- Assure high standards for professional performance of wood scientists and technologists.
- Foster educational programs at all levels of wood science, other lignocellulosic materials and their technologies and furthering the quality of such programs.
- Represent the wood science and technology profession in public policy development.

## Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats

- 1. The range of raw materials, products, and technologies that Society of Wood Science and Technology (SWST) members deal with is expanding.** SWST has adapted by including “other lignocellulosic products” in the language of our Mission. The science and technology of bio-processing, green building, and nanotechnology are examples of other opportunities our members are addressing. By pursuing new extensions of the discipline, we are also cooperating and competing with scientists in a diverse set of disciplines.
- 2. Wood science and technology (WS&T) is increasingly multidisciplinary.** SWST no longer represents a single, specialized discipline as described by Ellis<sup>1</sup> in his 1964 treatise on wood science education. SWST and its members must embrace professionals whose educational backgrounds and experiences are diverse. Some of these professionals who are engaged in wood and bio-based materials education and research hold first loyalty to professional organizations representing broader, but related fields or highly specialized professional organizations with overlapping interests with SWST. SWST must deal with this competition and take advantage of the opportunity for collaboration with these organizations.
- 3. SWST is committed to pursuing its Vision of becoming an international professional society.** Improvement and popularization of communications technology have resulted in the disappearance of national, geographic and cultural boundaries. Supply and consumption patterns of wood products and bio-based materials are shifting and international trade is increasingly important. Our first annual convention outside North America was a success. As an example of our commitment, conventions in Geneva and Beijing will take place in 2010 and 2012. The international composition of SWST membership is changing and future officers and Board membership will likely represent the international constituency of the organization.
- 4. Viability of educational programs and research institutions is threatened.** There are fewer WST programs than there were 20 years ago producing fewer WST graduates at universities. Public, academic and private research organizations face shrinking budgets and staff.
- 5. Funding for wood science research is uncertain.** For example, funding for WST research in the U.S. has been reduced or changed in ways that make obtaining funds more

---

<sup>1</sup> Ellis, EL (1964) Education in Wood Science and Technology. Society of Wood Science and Technology. Madison, WI. 187 pp.

challenging. Opportunities for SWST members to obtain funding in new areas will develop. Most recently, bioenergy and climate change have emerged as research priorities relevant to our profession. We continue to support funding for McIntire-Stennis, Hatch, NRI, and Wood Utilization Research funds in the U.S. We will work with our international membership to assess and promote policies to enhance research in wood science and technology

- 6. Public concern for the environment will continue to impact the profession and SWST.** Public concern for the health of the environment offers numerous opportunities for professionals dealing with sustainable, renewable, environmentally-benign materials. The profession, however, is stigmatized by negative public perceptions. New environmental concerns over energy and climate change offer opportunities to change public perceptions. SWST has an opportunity to become a trusted source of science-based information on wood and bio-based materials.
- 7. SWST enjoys numerous opportunities to partner with related organizations.** SWST has maintained a partnership with FPS for many years that remains strong. We have also partnered with the Forest Products Laboratory, FP Innovations, IUFRO, and the UN Economic Commission Europe (UNECE). As we broaden our outreach internationally, SWST must explore new and creative partnerships with organizations in all corners of the world.
- 8. The financial stability of SWST is sound but maintaining long-term economic viability will require constant attention.** The Society is heavily dependent upon revenues from *Wood & Fiber Science* (W&FS) for its economic survival. The Society must seek ways to diversify into other revenue streams for future financial sustainability.
- 9. Long-term management and leadership of SWST must be maintained.** SWST must plan for succession and reexamine the volunteer nature of SWST leadership in order to ensure long-term leadership stability. SWST needs to develop an institutional memory to assist new officers and members in better understanding past issues and objectively assess past decisions.

## STRATEGIC GOALS

### **1. Develop the science base to understand the sustainability of wood and other lignocellulosic materials and disseminate pertinent information**

#### Action Steps

- Determine gaps in research in areas related to sustainability of wood and other lignocellulosic materials
- Developing funding source for research gaps in sustainability of wood and other lignocellulosic material
- Develop data base and database of experts base on sustainability issues of wood and other lignocellulosic materials
- Develop a plan to market SWST as the premier source of science-based information on sustainability of wood and other lignocellulosic materials

### **2. Develop the body of knowledge unique to wood science, other lignocellulosic materials and their technologies**

#### Action Steps

- Identify emerging research topics and encourage work on these topics, e.g. bio-refining, alternative materials, green building and products, smart materials, environmental impacts of wood use (Research Initiatives Committee)
- Identify research funding opportunities for wood science and technology and disseminate to members (Research Initiatives Committee)
- Recognize excellence in wood science research. Include in this discussion an expansion of our awards program (Marra Award Committee, Education Committee)

### **3. Encourage the communication and use of this knowledge**

#### Action Steps

- Become the premier source for objective information to the public on wood science and technology and enhance our linkages with other professional organizations (Board)
- Identify, evaluate and focus on new and existing target “audiences” and the means and methods for providing information to each audience (Education Committee, Marketing and Communications Committee)
- Develop educational materials for K-12 on wood and other lignocellulosic products and share with existing educational programs targeting this audience
- Compile and disseminate science-based information on environmental impacts of wood and other lignocellulosic materials
- Create peer-reviewed technical fact sheets on wood and other lignocellulosic materials for the public, students, professionals, and policy makers

- Develop creative and effective ways for disseminating this information to our target audiences
- Ensure continued high quality and success of W&FS and strive to improve the impact factor (Publications Policy and Editor of W&FS)
- Keep SWST programs on the cutting edge of communication technology, e.g. webinars, redesigning the SWST web page to be a more interactive portal, extending its functionality to a broader international membership, linking to information on other sites, and considering hiring a professional web designer (Ad hoc Marketing and Communication Committee)
- Create an online database of WS&T experts comprised of our members (with their permission) for public access (Visiting Scientist Committee)
- Strengthen the Visiting Scientist Program, e.g., expanding the range of programs, encourage the participation of international scientists, and increase financial support for the program (Visiting Scientist Committee and Board)
- Determine how SWST can more effectively use conventions, conferences, and workshops to disseminate information on wood and other lignocellulosic materials (Board)

#### **4. Promote policies and technologies which assure the wise use of wood and other lignocellulosic materials**

##### Action Steps

- Increase our networking with other organizations and professional societies, including those with members who use or specify wood, or who develop and promulgate codes, standards, or rules governing the use of wood (Board)
- Generate official society position statements on issues affecting materials policy (Policy and Critical Issues Committee)
- Share those official society position statements with policy-makers, the media, and the public (Policy and Critical Issues Committee)
- Develop and implement a strategy to increase the visibility of SWST. (Marketing and Communication)

#### **5. Assure high standards for professional competence in the area of wood science and technology**

##### Action Steps

- Promote the SWST Code of Ethics. (Board)
- Revise accreditation standards to ensure relevance to domestic and international programs. (Accreditation)

**6. Foster educational programs - at all levels - dealing with wood science, forest products, other lignocellulosic materials and their technologies, and further the quality of such programs**

Action Steps

- Identify related programs and develop opportunities to provide them with SWST services
- Identify existing, and develop new, educational materials on wood for K-12 and youth organizations, and determine and implement effective ways for disseminating those materials (Education and Marketing and Communications)
- Develop educational materials that encourage students to pursue degrees in WS&T (Education and Marketing and Communications)
- Explore models that have been employed internationally to encourage students to enroll in WS&T academic programs that may be adopted to enhance programs in North America and other parts of the globe (Education and Marketing and Communications)

**7. Represent the profession in public policy development**

Action Steps

- Advocate increased funding for wood science and technology research (Research Initiatives Committee)
- Determine how to effectively disseminate official society position statements, and then do so (Policy and Critical Issues Committee)

**8. Ensure financial solvency, effective leadership of SWST, and enhanced membership**

Action Steps

- Ensure financial solvency. (Past Presidents' Council, Publications Policy Committee, and Editor of W&FS)
  - Re-examine W&FS page charge and subscription options
  - Study viability of online journal only in lieu of hard copy
  - Explore advertising in W&FS
  - Explore advertising on web page
  - Determine optimal strategy for managing SWST's financial portfolio
  - Review member dues structure
  - Develop other means of revenue
- Ensure the continuation of effective leadership (Past Presidents' Council)
  - Re-evaluate committee structure, including considering combining research initiatives and policy and critical issues

- Maintain strong long-term leadership
  - Prepare succession planning for Executive Director position and Board
  - Identify and develop future leaders for SWST, including young and international members
  - Provide opportunities for international members on board through webinar technology
- Promote clear understanding of responsibilities/expectations of board membership/committee chair
  - Improve communication between committee chairs/board/members
  - Provide better direction for committees in the Committee handbook.
- Enhance membership (Membership Committee)
  - Evaluate and track membership demographics
  - Explore awards for teaching, outreach, service to SWST (Board)
  - Explore means of enhancing the value of membership
  - Expand membership
    - Explore alternative membership categories
    - Seek to build international membership
    - Consider ways to more effectively engage students
    - Adjust membership requirements
    - New benefit to members – lower webinar cost
  - Keep our core/traditional members
- Enhance International Convention (Board)
  - Explore ways to make participation in International Conventions possible
  - Improve International Conventions to grow attendance
  - Determine the best timing for International Conventions
  - Consider all options for semi-annual North American International Conventions

**9. Foster cooperation with other organizations and professional societies (Board, Public Liaison)**

Action Steps

- Identify and evaluate potential domestic and international cooperators
- Consider co-hosting meetings with alternative societies
- Find ways to offer continuing education units at International Conventions
- Review relationship between SWST and FPS
- Discuss how to become the premier source for credible information on wood to other organizations
- Develop a certification program to teach, evaluate, and recognize core competencies in wood science and technology (Ad hoc Certification Committee)