

Center Focus

A Publication from the
Center for Forest Products Marketing and Management
Department of Wood Science and Forest Products
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
<http://www.woodscience.vt.edu/cfpmm/index.htm>

March 2005

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Investing in the Future of the Forest Products Industry

A belated happy New Year and I hope that 2005 will be as exciting for our industry as the past year has been. We know that the business cycle will repeat itself, that demand for selected species will change, foreign competition will remain, and that our companies (and institutions) will adapt to meet the requirements to remain successful. John Kennedy once said, *"There can be no progress if people have no faith in tomorrow."* We are very fortunate at Virginia Tech because we get to look into the eyes of tomorrow every day in the students we teach. As I mentioned in our last newsletter, Virginia Tech has been very fortunate to be awarded a Sloan Center designation for the Forest Products Industry. We are very excited about the opportunities that this will bring to the industry, to allow us to expand our research capabilities to meet your needs.

We view this as a significant opportunity to expand our services in terms of recruiting students who might be interested in the industry and creating a more direct link to faculty expertise in other disciplines such as business and engineering. We look forward to working together to make Virginia Tech the leader for your needs

in marketing, management and business education and research. Since last fall the Center staff has been meeting to develop a method to best meet your needs in these areas. I have discussed this with a number of members. We evaluated the mission of the Center and believe that its ultimate purpose is to provide you with the best trained workforce for marketing, manufacturing and management in the forest products industry. That is the primary reason we exist. To most effectively utilize our resources, the CFPMM will refocus our efforts on undergraduate recruitment, retention, internships and employment opportunities for our students. Support will be used for scholarships to attract good students, reward exceptional students, further develop industry learning opportunities, and allow students to participate in professional/industrial functions so they feel part of our community early in their careers. I am very excited about these changes and believe we will have a better employee for you upon completion of their education.

The Sloan Foundation Forest Industries Center will focus on research and graduate education programs that will impart global competitiveness and sustainable growth of the forest products industry. This new center brings new resources and faculty expertise, allowing us to broaden our research and education goals. With these changes, Dan Cumbo has taken on new responsibilities. Dan along with Earl Kline will be leading a forest products manufacturing initiative under the new Sloan center.

As the CFPMM continues to grow and serve you, we need your continued support for our students. Investing in students is an investment in the future of our industry. We know that the challenges our industry faces will only continue to grow. Our job is to train young adults to be prepared for those challenges with the latest marketing, manufacturing and business education. Later in this newsletter you will see how we have adjusted our Department's curriculum to address these areas. We also have added a number of new faculty in specific areas. We are looking forward to these changes and again I wish you the best in 2005. I will close by another quote by John Kennedy, *"Our progress as a nation can be no swifter than our progress in education. The human mind is our fundamental resource."*



Department Announces Curriculum Changes

The Society of Wood Science and Technology (www.swst.org) conducted an on-site visit for reaccreditation of our undergraduate curriculum in February 2005. An on-site visit is conducted every ten years, with interim and annual reports updating any curricular changes. Significant changes have been implemented in our curriculum during the past 24 months. This revision can best be summarized as consolidating eight concentrations within two options and one major into one major with six options. Each of the six options is made up of 15 credit hours of coursework in that option, in addition to the common department core curriculum for all department majors.

The new single major is **Wood Science and Forest Products** and the six options are:

- Adhesion Science
- Manufacturing Systems
- Marketing and Management
- Non-timber Forest Products
- Packaging Science
- Wood Structures and Materials (pending approval by University governance spring 2005)

Eleven courses were added and/or revised in the core curriculum and ten courses were dropped from the core curriculum. Five new courses are associated with three of the options:

- WOOD 3334 Survey of Non-timber Forest Products (Non-timber Forest Products Option)
- WOOD 4004 Senior Seminar in Forest Products Marketing and Management (Forest Products Marketing and Management Option)
- WOOD 4124 Paper and Paperboard Packaging (Packaging Science Option)
- WOOD 4224 Wood Pallet, Container, and Unit Load Design (Packaging Science Option)
- WOOD 4634 Forest Products Business Management

This curriculum revision process took over 24 months to complete and was a comprehensive study and discussion involving all faculty and the Department's advisory board in decision making. The curriculum change request was approved by University governance in the fall of 2004 (with the exception of the Wood Structures and Materials option which is pending approval now). Students graduating in May 2006 will be the first to migrate to the new curriculum. Freshman and sophomore students in the fall semester 2004 were required to adhere to new curriculum requirements. The curriculum changes should be beneficial to students, faculty, and industry.

Two new courses: Forest Products Business Management and Secondary Wood Products Manufacturing will be required for the Marketing and Management option. For more information on the Marketing and Management option see the following link: http://www.cnr.vt.edu/cnr_pdf/current_checksheets/marketing.pdf

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New Member Spotlight: Structural Systems, Inc.

Founded in 1968 by Bruce Gordon as an agent for Trus Joist (now Weyerhaeuser Corp.), Structural Systems, Inc. (SSI) has grown into a major manufacturer of wood structural components and one of the largest distributors of engineered wood products on the east coast. In addition, SSI distributes and installs Jeld-Wen and Silverline windows, as well as Andersen's Therma-Tru doors. Along the way, SSI introduced innovative builders such as Pulte Homes and NVRyan to engineered wood. The company serves customers that range from a single homeowner building a custom home, to some of the largest national builders and general contractors in the industry. Anyone can build a roof truss, but what separates SSI from its competitors are the value-added services it provides. SSI's revenues are consistently increasing because many builders are looking for value-added systems. SSI continues to develop new products and services for the evolving needs of its customers. One of the value-added services offered is a large in-house engineering and design department. They provide clients with custom designs, accurate layouts, sealed drawings, and ongoing technical and engineering support.

Working closely with the design department, the SSI sales team is made up of over 25 professionals. Members of this technical group typically possess architectural, engineering or wood technology degrees and are directly involved in the design of their products. The diverse areas of expertise offered by the SSI sales staff enables the company to provide the best possible structural solutions for all types of projects. SSI also possesses an experienced inside sales/sales support team. This department acts as a liaison between the clients, technical sales and all of the internal departments. The primary function of the inside sales/sales support team is to coordinate all of the customer orders and resolve any issues or concerns. Structural Systems has two manufacturing plants, in Thurmont, Maryland and Culpeper, Virginia. It also boasts two distribution facilities, one in Frederick, Maryland and another in Culpeper, Virginia. The corporate office is located in Thurmont, Maryland, approximately 45 minutes west of Washington, DC and Baltimore, Maryland.



Thurmont, MD facility



Culpeper, VA facility



New Faculty Join Department of Wood Science and Forest Products

Three new faculty members have become part of the Department over the past year. Each professor brings their own expertise to the Department. Below is a brief introduction of each new professor.

Dr. Maren Roman joined Virginia Tech as an assistant professor in the summer of 2004. Dr. Roman received a German university diploma in Chemistry, equivalent to an American M.S. degree, from Clausthal University of Technology in 1997. She earned her Ph.D. degree in Polymer Chemistry at SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry in 2002. Her doctoral research was on wood-based polymer nanocomposites. Prior to joining Virginia Tech, Dr. Roman held a postdoctoral research position at the Pulp and Paper Research Centre at McGill University in Montreal, where she studied the self-assembly behavior of cellulose nanocrystals. Dr. Roman teaches NR1114 Introduction to Renewable Natural Resources and WOOD 3434 Wood Chemistry, Products, and Processes. Dr. Roman's research specialization is properties and utilization of cellulose nanocrystals. Specific research interests include: self-assembly properties of cellulose nanocrystals and their implications on wood ultra-structure, application of cellulose nanocrystals as reinforcing additive in polymer composites, and molecular interactions of polymers, e.g. wood polymers, wet-end polymers, and commodity and performance polymers, with native cellulose surfaces.

Dr. Jongkoo Han joined our department in September 2004 as an assistant professor. Dr. Han works in the area of logistics and packaging. His background is in chemical engineering with an emphasis on materials application to packaging. He received his PhD degree in packaging from Michigan State University and he served as a visiting assistant professor at Indiana State University and instructor at Michigan State University. He was a packaging research scientist in the Korea Design and Packaging Center for 15 years. Dr. Han's research program is centered around interaction among product, package and environment. The program spans interdisciplinary and applied projects in logistics and packaging. Dr. Han will develop and teach packaging related courses including "Principles of Packaging", "Paper and Paperboard Packaging", "Packaging Dynamics for distribution", etc.

Dr. Daniel Hindman joined the Virginia Tech Wood Science and Forest Products department in September 2003. His main interest in research is wood engineering. He is interested in studying the mechanical behavior of wood composites, especially when this behavior is different than solid sawn lumber. Dan grew up in Huntingdon, Pennsylvania and attended Pennsylvania State University. He teaches WOOD 4316, Wood Mechanics II, and CEE 3414, Design of Wood Structures. He has also been involved in the introductory course to the college, NR 1114 Introduction to Renewable Natural Resources, for two years.

Center Meeting Moved to Fall

For many years we have had our Center's Annual meeting and awards banquet in conjunction with the College's and Department's advisory board meetings to minimize travel time for many of you who share in several college advisory tasks. The College has changed this format and the Department of Wood Science and Forest Products will be holding the meeting in the fall of 2005. In conjunction with this change, we will also move our annual awards banquet to coincide with the Department's annual meeting. There will be no spring meeting and dates for the fall meeting will be distributed as they become available.



Calendar of Events

April 21 & 22, 2005	Advanced Sales Training in the Forest Products Industry
July 2005	Lean Manufacturing
Fall 2005	Center's Annual Meeting

Advanced Sales Training in the Forest Products Industry April 21-22, 2005

Personal selling is the major form of promotion used in the forest products industry. Individuals are often expected to learn on the job the most important aspects of selling forest products. This course is designed for those individuals who are familiar with the forest products industry, but would like to improve their self management and interpersonal skills. This course will focus on the attributes of a good salesperson, how to effectively communicate, relationship building, sales negotiation strategies, effective time management and how to stay positive during difficult times. The course is intended for all salespeople who want to improve their skills to make them better sales people.

Who Should Attend

Forest products sales people and managers who want to improve their ability to relate to customers. The course is designed for those who are currently selling forest products and want to understand the importance of improving their communication, time management and negotiation skills.

Fee and Registration

The short course fee of \$395 (\$325 for employees of companies that are members of the Center for Forest Products Marketing and Management) covers registration, instructional materials, coffee breaks, continental breakfasts, and lunch. The registration deadline is **March 31, 2005**. Registration is limited to the first 30 applicants.

Sponsored by

- Virginia Tech's Center for Forest Products Marketing and Management
- Virginia Forest Products Association
- Hardwood Manufacturers Association
- Virginia Tech's Continuing and Professional Education

For More Information

Check out the Center's website: <http://www.woodscience.vt.edu/cfpmm/index.htm>

OR

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