

## **Evolving Undergraduate Curricula in Forest Products**

**Issue:** Nationwide, enrollment in the Forest Products discipline has trended downward. At the same time, the U.S. population has grown and along with it has the demand for wood products and the demand for skilled graduates. Compounding the problem, a very large portion of the leadership in the forest products industry is retirement eligible. The primary issue is how best to attract and educate young professionals in order to quench societies appetite for forestry based products in a sustainable and economically feasible manner.

**What has been done:** The Forest Products Department held a two day national level visioning workshop with the goals of 1) evaluating the current state of forest products-related higher education and 2) possibilities for improving enrollment, and 3) increasing the number and quality of young professionals that are available during the next decade.

**Impacts:** The Forest Products Department at Mississippi State University is critically revisiting its curriculum with the aim of broadening its offering, incorporating more environmental science, and making the coursework more appealing to a wider audience. At the national level, a network of leaders for similar efforts has been identified and developed. One refereed paper has been submitted for publication.

**Funding Sources, Cooperators, Partners, Mentors etc.:** Funding for the initial national-level workshop was provided by the USDA (\$30,000) and Mississippi State University. Further funding for curricular changes will most likely come from the same two sources.

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