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# INSIDE VT WOOD

## Reminder...

Remember to submit department news items by Friday 3 p.m. of each week to Will Pfeil at [wpfeil@vt.edu](mailto:wpfeil@vt.edu) for inclusion in Inside VT WOOD each Monday morning. All past issues of Inside VT Wood reside on our department website under the [publications link](#).

## News From Paul Winistorfer

- Our Faculty Spotlight this week is Professor Tom Hammett. Dr. Hammett joined our department in 1995.
- We are working on curriculum and course offerings for fall semester 2009. Students please note the information below and watch for further information prior to registration week in March.
- I'm still looking for 3 undergraduate students to join our planning committee for Wood Week 2009. You would gain considerable experience in working on our committee and have a hand in shaping this important event for our department. See me in Cheatham Hall if you are interested.
- We have been working on building concept drawings for our Building Our Future campaign in preparation for more communication with alumni and friends about our aspirations.
- We are preparing materials for an electronic mailing to our department alumni.

## Updates From the S.A.W.M.I.L

Research lab directed by Scott Renneckar

Efforts from the Self Assembly Wood Macromolecular Interfaces Lab are highlighted in two journals published by the American Chemical Society (ACS). Renneckar and recent M.S. graduate/WBC fellow Yu (Angela) Zhou, published in a new ACS journal, ACS Applied Materials and Interfaces. Ms. Zhou's recent thesis work led to the manuscript title "Nanoscale Coatings on Wood: Polyelectrolyte Adsorption and Layer-by-Layer Assembled Film Formation".

The second publication, by PhD student/ICTAS doctoral scholar Karthik Pillai and Renneckar, titled "Cation- $\pi$  Interactions as a Mechanism in Technical Lignin Adsorption to Cationic Surfaces" was published in *Biomacromolecules*. These manuscripts showcase fundamental science on how to manipulate the deposition conditions to create coatings that are one billionth of a meter in thickness. Broad applications can be derived from this work for functional coatings, adhesion in composites, and wood durability.

We are very appreciative of the support from the Wood-Based Composite Center, Sustainable Engineered Materials Institute, Institute of Critical Technology and Applied Science, the College of Natural Resources, and the Department of Wood Science and Forest Products. The articles are published online under the ASAP format found at [pubs.acs.org](http://pubs.acs.org), accessible through the University library system.



Dr. Tom Hammett

After growing up in New England and moving around to several regions and across the globe I jumped at the opportunity to settle here. I started my career overseas working in research and extension in reforestation and forest management. Later I worked several years for a large pulp and paper company in the Southeast, closing my career there in procurement of various wood fiber raw materials for what was then the largest wood using mill in the world – the Union Camp mill in Savannah. I realized that I enjoyed working with people wanted to “get out of the woods”. So I moved into marketing, and entered graduate school at the University of Georgia. After a few years consulting, I landed a research faculty position at Yale and directed the formation of a new natural resources campus in Nepal. When I finished my assignment in Nepal we moved here to join the Virginia Tech community!

I arrived at Virginia Tech in July of 1995 to serve as a faculty member in Forest Products Marketing and to join a team at the Center for Forest Products Marketing and Management. My experience and interest in international markets complemented the interests of the other faculty here. Soon after my arrival I was named the Coordinator of International Programs for the college and served in this capacity for over 13 years. When I got here I saw the need to equip our students for the global economy - international exposure was a growing need of the industry that hires our students. We started a study abroad program that has

grown to be one of the largest on campus. Nearly 200 students will enroll in our courses during 2009! On campus I teach courses focused on forest-based enterprise management, sustainable global forest products and global issues in natural resources. My research has focused on non-timber forest products (NTFPs), niche markets for forest products, and forest-based enterprise development.

I started out 20 years ago doing research on hardwood lumber exports from Central Appalachia. Now, I look for ways to improve markets and the utilization of forest products. I look at issues associated with forest certification and focus on small producers and local or regional markets. My international projects have included more work in Nepal (developing a small business center to help forest products companies, and helping to grow the campus I helped form), looking at the influence of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Eastern Africa on natural resources, and developing markets for certified forest products produced in Bolivia.

Since joining Virginia Tech I have completed programs in well over 20 countries. My wife Lisa has been patient with all my traveling! We are blessed with two active daughters with similar inclinations. Wilson is interested in art and track, is a junior at Blacksburg High School. She is spending this school year as an exchange student in Portugal. Laura Margaret is majoring in Urban and Environmental Planning in her fourth year at the University of Virginia. She is seeking internships in Asia and an appointment with Peace Corps in Central Asia. Both are following their Dad’s international footsteps!

Working in the department has been a great opportunity for me to learn together with a vibrant faculty and enthusiastic students. I continue to look for opportunities that will help our students see the connections between sectors, and to help them be prepared for the challenges that they will face. I look forward to sharing more of my experiences with you in person someday soon.

## Early Information on Course Changes for Fall 2009

UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS NOTE THE FOLLOWING PLANNED CHANGES IN OUR COURSES AND CURRICULUM FOR FALL SEMESTER 2009. Watch for further information prior to registration regarding established times for these course changes in our curriculum. Plan to see your advisor as needed for help and clarification.

### Undergraduate Students

#### Options will be Merged:

- Forest Products Marketing and Management and Manufacturing Systems will be merged into a single new option named Forest Products Business

#### Courses will be Merged:

- Mechanics I & II (WOOD 3315/3316) will be merged into a new single course. For fall this new course will come under the heading of WOOD 4984 Wood Mechanics Special Study (4 credits)
- Composites I&II (WOOD 4445 and 4446) will be merged into a new single course. For fall this new course will come under the heading of WOOD 4984 Wood Composites Special Study (4 credits)
- Wood Products Operations Management and Forest Products Business Management (WOOD 4624/4634) will be merged into a new single course. For this fall the new course will come under the heading of WOOD 4984 Forest Products Business Systems Special Study (3 credits)
- Lumber Manufacturing & Drying and Secondary Wood Products Manufacturing will be merged into a new single course. For fall this new course will come under the heading of WOOD 4894 Wood Products Manufacturing Special Study (3 credits)

#### New Courses to be Offered

- WOOD 4984 Wood Enterprise Institute Special Study will be moved into the option checksheet as a requirement for the new Forest Products Business option and is a two semester sequence. For fall this new course will come under the heading of WOOD 4985 Wood Enterprise Institute Special Study (3 credits)
- WOOD 4984 Green Building Systems Special Study is a new course that is planned to be added into the Wood Structures and Materials option. This option will also soon be renamed. For fall this new course will come under the heading of WOOD 4984 Green Building Systems Special Study (3 credits)

### Graduate Students

- WOOD 5984 Special Study: Fundamentals of Wood Material Science will be offered this fall semester, 2009. A course proposal to establish this course as Wood 5124 Fundamentals of Wood Material Science has been submitted to the College Student Policy and Affairs Committee but because there is not sufficient time to get approval prior to the fall semester, we will again teach this as a special study.

This course is considered the foundation course in wood material science that establishes the base for subsequent in-depth graduate courses in wood science. It is required for all incoming graduate students and it will be offered annually in the fall semester. The lecture component is Tues & Thurs 9:30 - 10:45 a.m. and laboratory sessions are Monday 1:30 - 3:30 a.m. The course is 4 credits.

Content includes wood anatomy and formation, wood polymer science, and mechanical and physical properties of wood and wood-based composites.

For more information, contact Dr. Zink-Sharp



## Virginia Tech Graduate Student Assembly

25 Graduate Life Center (0186), Blacksburg, VA 24061

Phone: (540) 231-7919; Email: [gsa@vt.edu](mailto:gsa@vt.edu)

*Dear Faculty/Graduate Students,*

On behalf of the Graduate Student Assembly (GSA) we would like to invite you to participate in the 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Research Symposium to be held on March 25<sup>th</sup> 2009 at Graduate Life Center (GLC). The GSA Research Symposium provides a unique opportunity for graduate students to bring together ideas, and research findings, from different disciplines that showcase their scholarly pursuits and achievements. Students from various majors actively participate in this highly competitive, highly anticipated event. The competition has resulted in superb quality research presentations in the past. This year will be like no other, as we are celebrating the Silver Jubilee of this rewarding experience. The event will include our honored keynote speaker, Dr. Grant Willson from University of Texas at Austin. Dr. Wilson is the 1999 recipient of the National Academy of Sciences Award for Chemistry in Service to Society. In addition, the graduate school, its constituent colleges, and Novazymes inc. highly support the GSA Research Symposium.

To celebrate the 25<sup>th</sup> Research Symposium, GSA is raising the bar for the entire event; including higher monetary awards for student researchers. Cash prizes in the amount of \$500, \$400 and \$300 will be awarded to the top three presenters in various categories for lecture or poster presentation. The GSA 25<sup>th</sup> Research Symposium is a competitive event, and this year for the first time the submitted abstracts will be subject to peer review. For abstract submission guidelines and more details, please visit the research symposium website at <http://filebox.vt.edu/users/techy/public/RS/>. **Please note that the abstract review process will take into account the date of submission; early submission is favored.**

On behalf of research symposium committee, we request you to help us make the 2009 Research Symposium and Exposition of Virginia Tech reach its fullest potential. Thank you very much.

Ashish Ranjan  
Research Symposium Chair, 2009

## Wood Was Used Extensively During Past War Times

These poster images are Courtesy of the University Of North Texas Libraries

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