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Annual conference

November 3rd till November 8th 2009

Development of forest sciences curricula in Europe

First announcement

On behalf of the SILVA Network, the Faculty of Forestry and Natural Environment, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, will host a conference on Forestry education.

Topic

Curriculum development at European forestry faculties over the years is mirrored in the topics and contents of the SILVA Network annual conferences since SILVA's beginnings. At the 1997 conference in Wageningen there was a special focus on the state of curricula, which is documented in the proceedings of the conference with more than 20 curriculum descriptions.

Since 1997 the dynamics of curriculum development have even been increasing, so that most of the curricula described then do not look the same any more today. This dynamic development was discussed during all of the subsequent annual conferences, if under different topics and perspectives. Recently, the Bologna Declaration caused fundamental changes, forcing many universities to move from one-cycle five-year programmes to three-cycle curricula (BSc, MSc, PhD)

All changes in curricula have great impact at the start and the end of the programmes (selection and self selection of students, output orientation of assessments) as well as

during the learning and teaching process itself. At the same time we observe a diversification of curricula: very often you find more than one Bachelor programme and a variety of Master programmes, where only few years earlier just one study programme was offered.

Motivations of students have changed as well as their career perspectives. Studying abroad, experiencing cultural, political, climatic and educational differences, was a special issue in forestry and other faculties; today, however, student exchange seems to be more difficult than it used to be. And that in a time, when globalisation and the European Higher Education Area and the European labour market emphasises the growing importance of international experiences during education.

But still there are special profiles of faculties of forestry in Europe. At the end of the SILVA conference in Wageningen 2005 we even formulated expectations of a growing competition between universities due to local specialization. On the other hand, universities should take advantage of international cooperation. An important condition for mutual benefits is to take advantage of each others niche expertise.

Developments in forest science education will continue. Students and teachers involved in learning, teaching and curriculum development can profit enormously by discussing the above topics, their backgrounds, connections and future developments.

After the 2006 conference in Valencia we look forward to a new conference in a Mediterranean environment, for the first time in Thessaloniki, Greece, a very exciting perspective indeed.

Call for contributions

We invite you to prepare a presentation in closer or wider connection with the theme of the conference. Do not hesitate to address future developments and corresponding challenges. Student participation is encouraged.

The programme will comprise two days of indoor conference including workings groups and two field trips of one day each including cultural aspects – in Greek lifestyle.

Please send by E-mail an abstract of up to 300 words to the Organisation Committee till June 21 2009. The organizing committee will decide on contributions; all applicants will be informed till July 31 2009.

Contact

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