

HISTORY

FACULTY OF FOREST INDUSTRY

The Faculty of Forest Industry is the successor of the Forest Industry Department, founded in 1949 at the Agricultural Academy - Sofia. By Decree of the Presidium of the National Assembly No. 3754/12.01.1953 of the academic year 1953/1954, an independent Higher Forestry Institute was established (now a university) with five specialities, one of which is "Mechanical Wood Technology". The same decree legitimizes the division of the Forest Industry Department into two independent specialities: "Mechanical Wood Technology" and "Chemical Wood Technology". Later, in the academic year 1954/1955, the speciality "Chemical Wood Technology" was transferred to the then newly established Chemical Technology Institute.

The first graduating class, the speciality "Mechanical Wood Technology," was accepted in 1950/1951. The first department of the Forest Industry Department, which directly trains students, is "Wood Technology," headed by Corresponding Member Prof. Vasil Stoyanov.

The establishment of the new speciality "Mechanical Wood Technology" is an event of great importance—both for deepening and improving the training of engineering personnel and for the formation and development of the woodworking and furniture industry and its transition to a modern industrial basis.

We can only imagine the great difficulties and problems in this initial period in the creation of curricula and programs, in providing the necessary teaching staff, in equipping the appropriate material base for the implementation of the educational process and many other significant problems. With a sense of respect, we must recall the hard work of our first teachers, such as Corr. Memb. Prof. Vasil Stoyanov, Prof. Petko Chernaev, Prof. Nikola Minkov, Prof. Karl Slavomirov, Prof. Tsviatko Hristov, Associate Professor Valko Gochev and the then first assistants (later professors) Encho Enchev and Svilen Nikolov.

The separation of the speciality "Mechanical Wood Technology" has resulted in the fundamental transformation and restructuring of the branch "Woodworking and Furniture Industry". Gradually, the curricula and programs are being improved, and the teaching pedagogical and material training base is being expanded, albeit with difficulty. Thus, in 1953, the "Mechanical Wood Technology" department was founded, which takes over and directs the preparation of students in the leading technological profiling disciplines, such as "Wood Science", "Wood Drying", "Sawmill Production", "Plywood production", "Furniture production", "Special productions" and "Occupational Safety". The first head of the department was Prof. Petko Chernaev. It is worth noting his contribution, as well as that of several young teachers at the time, in consolidating the educational documentation of the speciality, and especially in

writing the first textbooks and teaching aids, in the creation of academic laboratories, technological gatherings and another material base for conducting the educational process.

Great merit for the engineering and technical training of the students from the speciality "Mechanical Wood Technology" goes to the department "Machines and Tools" established in 1953 with the first head of the department Assoc. Prof. Valko Gochev, which in the later stages of development was renamed "Mechanization and Automation of Woodworking" (in 1972) and "Woodworking Machines" (in 1994).

The relocation of the Higher Forestry Institute in 1955 to a separate building in the Darvenitsa quarter, where it is still located, is of great importance for developing the material and technical training base for "Mechanical wood technology". This makes building several teaching and research laboratories in the newly created departments possible. The teaching staff, constantly growing during that time, also contributed to building and developing the speciality. Thus, even after the first 10-15 years since the creation of "Mechanical Wood Technology", grew up as well-established and erudite teachers and researchers: Prof. Svilen Nikolov, Prof. Encho Enchev, Prof. Penyo Karadochev, Prof. Tacho Iliev, Prof. Geno Donchev, Prof. Andrey Raichev, Prof. Georgi Filipov, Prof. Hristo Shehtov, and later Prof. Andrey Kavalov, Prof. Georgi Kyuchukov, Prof. Nikolay Yosifov, Prof. Hristofor Videlov, Prof. Bozhidar Dinkov, Assoc. Prof. Ivan Shishkov and others.

With each passing year since the creation of the "Mechanical wood technology" speciality, the authority of its graduates grows. At the same time, the requirements and responsibilities for them as engineers in a dynamically developing industry such as the woodworking and furniture industry are also increasing. This circumstance makes it necessary to constantly improve the training of specialists and increase their theoretical and practical training with a direction that best meets the specific production needs. The development of technical progress necessitated in the early 1960s the introduction into the curricula of new study disciplines such as "Automation of production processes in woodworking", "In-factory transport", expansion of the disciplines of studying machines and equipment in the woodworking and furniture industry, differentiated training and profiling in the profile "Machinery, woodworking and furniture production" (the first graduated engineers in the three profiles were in 1971).

An essential stage in preparing engineers for woodworking and furniture production is organizing extramural training in "Mechanical wood technology." The first part-time students in "Mechanical Wood Technology" were accepted in the academic year 1956/1957—then only nine students. In the following years, part-time training was established as an additional form of personnel training with an advantage over the environments of production enterprises.

The Faculty of Forest Industry was established as an independent educational and scientific structure in 1974 based on the "Mechanical Wood Technology" speciality. To provide educational teaching work at the Faculty of Forest Industry, the Department of Mechanical Wood Technology is divided into two new departments - "Woodworking" with its first head, Prof. Geno Donchev and "Furniture Production" with its head, Prof. Svilen Nikolov.

The Department of "Woodworking" was later renamed "Wood Technology" (in 1986) and "Mechanical Wood Technology" (in 1993).

The Department of "Furniture Production" was developed in 1984 and renamed "Furniture Design and Production." In 1998, to provide teaching in the newly created speciality "Engineering Design," it was divided into two new departments—" Interior and Furniture Design" and "Furniture Production," led by Prof. Georgi Kyuchukov and Assoc. Prof. Hristofor Rusanov.

In connection with the adoption of the three-level educational structure in higher education in 1996, the speciality "Mechanical Wood Technology" was merged with "Mechanization of the Forest Industry" to form a typical speciality "Woodworking and Furniture Production", with an educational and qualification degree. Bachelor's degree and three master's degrees: "Woodworking", "Furniture Production", and "Woodworking Machines and Equipment". In each of the three directions, one can continue the education to obtain the educational and scientific degree "Doctor". The engineers of the first and subsequent graduates who were trained in the speciality "Mechanical Wood Technology" handled with dignity the arduous and responsible work of creating and establishing modern industrial production related to wood processing, the design and manufacture of furniture and other products from wood.

We are pleased to note that every stage of technology development and technical progress in the woodworking and furniture industry results from the skills, knowledge and joint efforts of the teachers and engineers in mechanical wood technology who graduated from the University of Forestry. Prof. Nino Statkov was elected as the first Dean of the faculty. Then, successively, the deans were Prof. Andrey Kavalov, Prof. Hristo Shehtov, Prof. Georgi Filipov, Prof. Hristofor Videlov, Prof. Nikolay Yosifov, Prof. Bozhidar Dinkov, Assoc. Prof. Hristofor Rusanov, Assoc. Prof. Neno Trichkov, Prof. Zivko Gochev. Since 2024, Prof. Dimitar Angelski has been the Dean of the faculty.