

## ***BioResources*: Ten Years of Service for the Progress of the Science and Technology of Lignocellulosic Products**

Martin A. Hubbe and Lucian A. Lucia

The co-editors of *BioResources* note the completion of our first ten years. We think that the journal can be judged as a success based on having achieved an impact factor of about 1.4 each year since 2009 and having reached a publication rate of about 700 articles per year. We strive to be a “people’s journal” serving scientists, students, and society. We plan to continue emphasizing editorial pieces and review articles, which supplement our main service of publishing peer-reviewed articles dealing with the science of lignocellulosic materials, chemicals, and their uses. We also support undergraduate scholarship in our academic department, including tuition payment, opportunities for pre-editing work, and support for undergraduates to attend conferences, *etc.*

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*Contact information:* Department of Forest Biomaterials, College of Natural Resources; North Carolina State University, Campus Box 8005, Raleigh, NC 27695-8005;

*Corresponding authors:* hubbe@ncsu.edu; lucian.lucia@gmail.com

### **Where We Came From**

On March 21, 2006 *BioResources* published its first research article. That article, authored by a team from the University of Aveiro in Portugal, was an auspicious start for us – a major work that subsequently has received 23 citations. In addition to breaking new ground in exploring the effect of bleaching on the lipophilic extractives from wood pulp, the authors also demonstrated the flexibility of online publishing by presenting a key table in landscape form. It’s not quite ten years since that auspicious beginning, but the start of our Volume 11 seems an appropriate time to celebrate.

In 2006 the journal published just 20 articles, if one excludes the editorial pieces. By contrast, our current rate of publication is about 700 per year. In 2006 there were many factors that could have caused a prudent author to doubt whether the journal would exist in another three years, let alone ten. For one thing, the journal was not affiliated with any publishing company or academic society. And despite being an online publication, the journal had adopted a rather quaint one-column format that looked old-fashioned. As for staff, for the first few years the work was done mainly just with the volunteer time of the co-editors themselves, with support from the college’s computer center. In year five we began to rely increasingly on undergraduate students from our academic department to help in the pre-editing of articles, which were being submitted at an increasing rate from all over the world. Any fool could have told us that it would be a bad idea to expend hours of work on improving the formatting and grammar of articles before there was any indication of whether or not a given article would later be published. And in 2010, as we began to take payments from authors to support a core staff, any fool could have told us that authors would refuse to cover the costs of publication, given the availability of numerous other scientific journals that rely on subscription fees and don’t ask authors to pay anything.

## Where Are We?

In 2009 the Thomson-Reuters company first assigned an impact factor to *BioResources*, and ours was about 1.4, putting us into the top quartile of the category “Materials Science: Paper and Wood”. Since that time we have remained steadily at that level. We are in very good company. *Cellulose*, the journal in the category that commands the highest impact factor, is published by Springer, a leading publisher in scientific fields. The second journal on the list, *Wood Science and Technology*, is also a Springer publication. *Holzforschung*, which currently leads *BioResources* in impact factor by a narrow margin, is from Walter de Gruyter, another leading publisher. But it takes all three of those other journals together to approximately match our annual output of published articles.

One aspect that is very different at the end of our tenth year, compared to when we started, is that we now have a professional staff of six. Dr. Olivia Lenahan, our production editor, joined us in 2012. Josh Green joined our staff in 2013 as submissions editor, and now he serves as the manager of operations. Dhana Savithri, who joined us in 2015, has taken on the role of submissions editor. Elisha Peck and Shelley Barry also joined us in 2015 as process editors. Our longest-serving core staff member is Melissa Rabil, who takes care of financial matters as well as tracking of submission accounts.

Currently about one-third of the funds that we receive from authors are destined for the scholarly support of undergraduate students in our department – either in the form of merit-based scholarships, support for undergraduate trips to academic conferences, or support for a bi-annual undergraduate trip to worldwide papermaking facilities, *etc.* The rest covers our staff expenses, which include sending salaried staff members to conferences dealing with either editing or the science of lignocellulosic materials. Our “page charge” rate of \$105 per page, which has not changed since March 2013, is among the lowest for journals such as ours that post their publications for free on the web.

## Where Are We Headed?

Not being affiliated with any corporation or professional association has had some advantages – such as freedom to devote attention to under-served groups and under-served areas of technology. One of the key under-served groups has been the many scientists in our field of interest who speak English as a second, third, or higher language. The world is getting smaller, and for some strange reason the world of science has chosen English as its prime mode of communication. Yes, we are always hoping to find a “diamond in the rough” when we receive a submitted article that needs language help. And yes, we often decline to publish such articles, even rejecting them ahead of the peer review process, if we become convinced that they are lacking in either novelty or in scientific value. Some of the under-served areas of technology served by *BioResources* include wood-based composites, non-destructive testing of lignocellulosic materials, cellulosic biofuels, and chemistry related to wood components.

What will the coming decade bring? Will our readers insist on being able to download articles in a form that can be read on a cellphone screen? Will peer-reviewed journals become superseded by wiki-type publications or by schemes in which published articles can gain points by being “liked” by readers? Our bet, knowing something about how long it takes for decisions to be made within universities, is that the peer review system will remain very important in the lives of academic scientists for decades into the future. And, just maybe, so will *BioResources*.