

■ **M. Johnny Rungtusanatham, Feature Editor, Arizona State University**

**W**e, as members of the Decision Sciences Institute, are well aware that the institute's mission is to become "a multidisciplinary international association dedicated to advancing knowledge and improving instruction in all business and related disciplines." As we reflect on this charter, we have an opportunity below to hear from two DSI members who have been nominated as candidates for president-elect: Professor Gary L. Ragatz (Michigan State University) and Professor Vicki Smith-Daniels (Arizona State University). Both individuals have actively served DSI in many roles, including as program chairs, and have agreed to share their thoughts and perspectives on the placement and role of DSI within the larger community of scholars and scholarship. I trust that you will find their commentaries interesting, provoking, insightful, and useful in helping us to help DSI fulfill its mission.

## **Looking to the Future— Serving the Global Community of Business Scholars**

**by Gary Ragatz, Michigan State University**



OVER THE PAST TEN TO FIFTEEN YEARS, changes have taken place in the business world and in the world of business education that have posed challenges for the Decision Sciences Institute and its members. Two separate but related phenomena have had dramatic effects on our profession—rapid technology change and the globalization of business and business education.

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These changes create significant challenges for business scholars and for professional organizations like DSI. Business scholars are challenged to stay abreast of the changing environment, to make sense of it, and to help our students and the business community learn to cope with it. For DSI as an organization, the challenge is finding ways to continue to serve the growing global community of business scholars effectively.

### **Technology Change**

Technology change has had a two-dimensional impact. First, it has altered the way business works. Powerful technology-based tools have offered the promise of improved analysis and decision making. Advances in information technology have enabled businesses to share information and collaborate more effectively across functional, organizational, and geographical boundaries. Evolving technologies have even given rise to completely new business models.

With these changes in how businesses are structured and managed have come exciting new business issues to be researched, and important new tools and concepts to be incorporated into business education. Keeping abreast of these issues

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## **Expanding Our Global Reach**

**by Vicki L. Smith-Daniels, Arizona State University**



### **Good News for DSI**

Almost all of us would agree that DSI is a different organization today than it was twenty years ago. The Institute has grown in many important ways—in its influence, in its scope, and in its membership. Many of the Institute's changes reflect the changing environment of our business colleges. More importantly, DSI members have led many of these changes in our business schools through our expanding research disciplines, by developing innovative pedagogical approaches, and through shaping the administration of our universities. If we look at the Institute's core activities such as our journals (*DSJ* and *DSJIE*), our news publication (*Decision Line*), and our annual, regional, and international meetings, we find that the Institute remains vibrant in achieving our mission of being a premier, interdisciplinary business professional association.

### **Threats to DSI**

While we should continue to celebrate our successes, we also need to be mindful of the fact that other business professional associations have become extremely visible in our professional communities and have been gaining momentum in shaping the direction of business research and pedagogy. These other organizations have grown in their international scope and influence, just as the number and prominence of business programs in international universities have been growing. In my early days as a member of DSI, I found that few universities outside the U.S. granted MBA degrees. Now it seems every month I receive an invitation to attend an exciting conference hosted by international professional associations in Europe, Asia, Latin America, or even closer to home, Mexico. Not only

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and integrating them into our courses and curricula is a serious challenge for all of us.

In addition to altering how business works and thereby the issues we teach and research, technology has had an important effect on *how* we teach and do research. Advances in information technology and instructional technology have changed what we *can* do and what we're *expected* to do, both in our research and in the classroom. As the breadth and complexity of our research issues have expanded, so too has the set of tools and methodologies we bring to bear on those issues. Likewise, the range of instructional technologies available to us is constantly growing, and our students expect us to make use of those technologies.

## Globalization

Globalization, too, has had a two-dimensional impact. *Business* is globalizing, and so is business *education*. Businesses buy and sell around the world (often via the Web), develop products using virtual teams spread around the globe, and share information and collaborate with customers and suppliers in various corners of the world. As business scholars, we have the challenge of understanding these developments and preparing students to work effectively in this changing environment. International and cross-cultural issues have begun to infuse our courses and curricula. In many business programs, international experiences—study abroad programs and international study tours—have become a standard part of the curriculum.

Around the world, and particularly in developing countries, interest in business education has grown. Meanwhile, business-related research activity has intensified globally as well. All too often, however, the communication and linkages among business scholars in various regions of the world have been limited. As business scholars, we need to interact with colleagues around the world, and as a professional society, DSI must look to serve the global community of scholars.

## Challenge for DSI

Demands on business scholars have been growing. Technology change and increasing globalization challenge us to keep our

research and teaching relevant and up to date. Economic and competitive factors have created, in many of our institutions, increasing expectations both for research productivity and for teaching effectiveness—with a variety of audiences.

The Decision Sciences Institute has served the community of business scholars well for some 34 years. In recent years we have seen a proliferation of journals, conferences, and professional societies that are competing for the interest and loyalties of those scholars. A critical question for the Institute is how to maintain a leadership position in this changing environment. What is the value proposition the Institute can offer to the profession?

## Playing to Existing Strengths

The Institute has a number of existing strengths that form the foundation for the value proposition it can offer to the profession in the future. These offerings have delivered value in the past and, with some effort at continuous improvement, will keep the Institute competitive as it moves forward.

These strengths are in at least four areas:

- Support for quality research on important business issues
- Long-standing focus on curriculum and pedagogy issues in addition to research
- Multidisciplinary nature of the Institute
- Strong network of regional organizations

Through original research, knowledge creation continues to be a key part of business scholarship, and the Institute has played an important role in supporting and promoting this activity. The Institute's conferences offer a variety of venues for business scholars to present their research, learn about colleagues' research, and exchange ideas. *Decision Sciences*, our flagship journal, offers a highly respected outlet for quality research.

The Institute has always been a leader, however, in emphasizing the importance of effective teaching as well—through the Instructional Innovation Award Competition, the Innovative Education track and Curricular Issues programs at the conferences, and most recently through the launch of *Decision Sciences Journal of Innovative Education*. Interest in effective teaching is high, and the need for support is

great. Leadership in this arena is a strength the Institute can build on.

The multidisciplinary nature of the Institute is also a strength to be further developed. Increasingly, business decisions are made in cross-functional and cross-disciplinary environments. The issues of globalization and technology change referred to earlier are, by their nature, cross-disciplinary. DSI's multidisciplinary orientation uniquely positions the institute to support its membership in researching and teaching cross-disciplinary issues.

For many years, DSI has had a strong network of regional organizations—first within the U.S. and then, with the founding of the Asia-Pacific Region, internationally. This structure has helped the Institute serve a broader constituency by providing more accessible regional meetings and offering leadership opportunities to a broader array of members at the regional level.

## Going Forward

How can the Institute build on these strengths to better serve the global community of business scholars in the future? There are at least three areas that deserve attention:

- Use technology to expand access to the Institute's products and services
- Extend and improve on the professional development and pedagogical/curricular programming at the Institute's meetings
- Continue to develop international regional organizations

## Access to the Institute's Products and Services

In the last few years, the Institute has made great progress in providing electronic access to many of its products and services. *Decision Sciences* abstracts, *Decision Line* feature articles, and conference programs are all available on-line; *DSJIE* will have an even more significant on-line presence. Capabilities of the on-line placement information system have also evolved rapidly. This type of accessibility is essential in bringing the services of the Institute to the global community. We should also explore making conference proceedings available

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are the locations attractive, the program content reflects the latest in our business disciplines with leading scholars from around the world serving on the program committee. Locally, our business programs continue to expand the globalization of their curriculum and their programs. International students from across the globe are enrolling in our business programs at a record rate. Global partnerships between business programs are leading to new programs in new markets. As a professor, there are definitely more opportunities to participate in exciting international activities than there was twenty years ago!

### Implications for DSI

What do these changes mean for our Institute? Consider a few examples of where we are today. Since 1991, DSI has organized six international meetings in Belgium, Korea, Mexico (twice), Australia, and Greece. Next summer, the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual International Conference of the Institute "Decision Sciences in the Information and Knowledge Era" combined with the 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Regional Meeting of the Asia-Pacific Decision Sciences Institute will be held in Shanghai, China under the leadership of the distinguished Dr. Linda Sprague of the China Europe International Business School and Dr. Kee Young Kim of Yonsei University, Korea. In 1994, the Asia-Pacific region was formed, expanding for the first time our boundaries outside the U.S. Our partnerships in Mexico have been expanding based on our collaborative endeavors and the leadership of Dr. Benito Flores (Texas A&M University), with the possibility of an official Mexico Region in the near horizon. Our premier journal, *Decision Sciences*, reflects the changing global nature of our Institute with research topics embracing the globalization of our business disciplines and increasing number of authors from international universities. The 2001 Annual Meeting had nearly 70 international universities actively involved as authors, discussants, and session chairs in all of the tracks and programs. The first videoconference symposium, "Designing and Managing Global Supply Networks—The New Benetton Case," was held at the

2001 Annual Meeting and was successfully received by Benetton executives and session participants. Most importantly, the work of our founding Global Development Coordinator, Dr. Bob Markland (University of South Carolina), and the Strategic Planning for International Affairs Committee has provided an excellent foundation for moving us to the next era of the Institute's globalization.

### Opportunities for DSI

DSI truly has an international flavor. But is that enough, given all of the emerging opportunities? Should we chart a new course for expanding our global reach? Should our globalization strategies be one of responding to opportunities, or should we shape the direction of our international collaborations? Has the Institute been so successful that all that is needed is to stay the course? What priority should we place on the globalization of our activities compared to other initiatives in the long-term plan for the Institute? How do our regions grow in strength by maintaining their unique identifies and yet, integrate into DSI's shared vision and goals?

Expanding our global reach could take on many different forms. If we look to our industry partners for insight, we find that global value chains are often not centered on "one-size-fits-all" strategies, but rather are based on aligning the unique capabilities of the global partner with the broader objectives of the value chain. Along these lines, several business professional associations are pursuing partnerships and alliances as a means of developing their global capabilities. Through activities such as co-sponsorship of conferences and special journal issues, professional associations partners are learning from each other about the opportunities and challenges of globalization.

DSI's regional governance structure lends itself well to managing a broad-scale international association. Through our regional structure, DSI can leverage the unique capabilities of each of our regions while building shared common goals for the global Institute's endeavors. Along the way, it is important for DSI to carefully ex-

amine how to proceed in realizing our global partnerships. We need to understand how the Institute brings value to emerging regions, and how the emerging regions can strengthen the Institute's endeavors. The role of partnerships and alliances needs to be examined in our globalization strategy. DSI members have diverse global experiences ranging back from collaborations over the past two decades. How can the Institute continue to leverage these relationships and provide more global experiences for our members? Just as important, what type of infrastructure should the Institute build to enable our globalization efforts?

The Institute must build its strength from these tremendous opportunities and not pass by the windows of opportunity in front of us. The globalization of business colleges suggests that our mission must be expanded to leverage on the unique capabilities our international colleagues and their programs can bring to the Institute. As our Institute has built its past strength on innovation, I expect no less from us as we journey forward in defining ourselves in the dynamic global academic landscape. I look forward to our robust, interactive, engaging discussions about the globalization of the Institute! ■

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## DSJIE Seeks Research Relevant to Teaching and Learning Issues in the Decision Sciences

The *Decision Sciences Journal of Innovative Education* is a new peer-reviewed journal published by the Decision Sciences Institute. Its mission is to publish significant research relevant to teaching and learning issues in the decision sciences. The decision sciences is the union of the quantitative and behavioral approaches to managerial decision making, encompassing all of the functional areas of business, including (but not limited to) accounting, business strategy and entrepreneurship, economics, finance, international business and globalization, marketing, MIS/DSS and computer systems, organizational behavior/organizational design, operations and logistics management, quantitative methods and statistics.

Types of articles suitable for publication in the *Decision Sciences Journal of Innovative Education* include the following.

**An empirical research article** describes high-quality empirical research related to innovative education in the decision sciences.

**A case study research article** describes high-quality research related to innovative

education in the decision sciences that employs a class as a case.

**A conceptual/theoretical article** describes an approach to innovative education or a learning issue relevant to the decision sciences.

**A teaching brief** *briefly* describes an innovative approach for teaching in the decision sciences.

### Website

The *Decision Sciences Journal of Innovative Education* Website will contain abstracts of all empirical research, case study research and conceptual/theoretical articles, as well as teaching briefs in their entirety. It contains information for contributors and a site where authors can check on the status of articles in process. The Website also contains announcements about upcoming events related to innovative education in the decision sciences and a section for personal news about DSI members, such as news about winners of teaching awards. Please send your news and announcements to the editor, at the address listed above

For more information on the *Decision Sciences Journal of Innovative Education*, including the review process and submission requirements, see the website at <http://www.mba.wfu.edu/dsjie/>

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on-line to provide wider dissemination and also providing a clearinghouse for cases, syllabi, and other teaching materials.

### Professional Development Programming

Presentation and discussion of research will probably always be the centerpiece of the Institute's conferences. The needs of the membership, however, are diverse, and the interest in and need for professional development programming are growing. This is an area where DSI has been a leader, and we need to maintain that position. The curricular issues and professional development programs at the annual meeting must be

regularly reviewed and revised to insure fresh, relevant content.

### International Regional Organizations

The regional organizations provide a convenient mechanism for making the Institute more directly accessible to its constituency, and this can be especially true on the international level. The Asia-Pacific Region has been very successful. There has been substantial interest in a Latin American regional organization, which should be moved ahead. At this point, the Institute's presence in Europe is relatively limited. We should explore a collaborative relationship with an existing professional society in order to build a presence there.

### Challenges and Opportunities

The Institute faces significant challenges in becoming the premier professional organization for the global community of business scholars. But these are challenges the Institute is well positioned to meet. DSI's leadership position in supporting research and innovative education, its multidisciplinary orientation, and its strong regional organizations provide a solid foundation. Building on that foundation, the Institute can provide valued professional support for business scholars around the world. ■

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