

■ G. Keong Leong, Management Department, University of Nevada, Las Vegas

I can hardly believe that this will be my last issue as editor of *Decision Line*. Six years have flown by so quickly. I must say that I have enjoyed my time tremendously due to all the good people I had the pleasure to work with during this time period. A search for the new editor was conducted, and Professor Krishna Dhir, Berry College, has been approved by the DSI Board as the next editor of *Decision Line*. He is currently the feature editor for "The Deans' Perspectives" column. Krishna, congratulations and best wishes as you move forward.

During my tenure as editor, we have seen several changes. We lost Professor Andrew Vazsonyi, for many years the feature editor of the "Specialist with a Universal Mind" column. He is sadly missed. We added "The Deans' Perspectives" column, which has been very well received. Professor Krishna Dhir, Berry College, was kind enough to step forward and accept the challenge of being the first feature editor of that column. *Decision Line* is now available on-line in pdf format at the DSI website. This allows for faster dissemination of information to the members. However, we have not abandoned the print edition, which still makes its way to you via slow mail. The results of past surveys of DSI membership show that *Decision Line* is one of the most widely read DSI publications. All of this would not be possible without the valuable contributions of the feature editors. Thanks go to them for the time and effort they have invested in *Decision Line* over the years. I wish also to thank Hal Jacobs, managing editor, for his expert guidance and skill in getting the issues out on schedule. I also appreciate the untiring support from DSI Executive Director Carol Latta.

This issue of *Decision Line* provides information about the Institute's forthcoming meeting in Phoenix, as well as several interesting articles. In the President's letter, Professor Kenneth E. Kendall, Rutgers University, shares the preliminary results from the membership survey carried out in the summer.

These include the purpose of DSI, philosophy of the Institute, priorities, strengths of the Institute and recommendations. He presents the charges developed by the Board members at the first DSI Strategic Planning retreat this August in Toronto. He urges members to attend the Town Hall Meeting at the 2007 Annual Meeting (Sunday, November 18, 2007, 4:30-5:30 p.m., in Phoenix, Arizona).

The election for the Institute's officers is coming up at the end of the year. *Decision Line* has asked the two candidates for the elected position of president-elect (Professor Janelle Heineke, Boston University, and Professor Ram Narasimhan, Michigan State University) for their visions of DSI. Their write-ups are presented in this issue of *Decision Line*. We are hoping to continue this tradition of providing a forum for the candidates to present their views on the future of DSI.

In the Research Issues article entitled "Product Complexity: A Definition and Impacts on Operations," Professor Mark Jacobs, Michigan State University, discusses how product complexity has increased costs related to managing customer orders, purchasing, inventory, and delivery. He examines several different disciplines and offers a definition for product complexity that he hopes will establish consensus for researchers. He provides two theoretical perspectives that offer insights into the effects that product complexity will have on operations: Theory of Performance Frontiers and Transaction Cost Economics.

In the article on Ecommerce, Professor Clyde W. Holsapple, University of Kentucky, and Professor Haihao Jin, University of Memphis, observe that much research has been carried out linking e-commerce and supply chain management. However, collaborative decision making, another important research area, has not been well studied.

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and a PhD from the University of South Carolina. Professor Leong has held leadership positions in Decision Sciences Institute such as at-large vice president, Doctoral Student Consortium coordinator, Instructional Innovation Award Competition coordinator, and POM track chair. He has published articles in *Decision Sciences*, *Journal of Operations Management*, *Interfaces*, *Journal of Management*, and other journals. His current research interests include international operations, operations strategy, technology management, and supply chain management. Professor Leong has co-authored two books, won teaching and research awards, and received the Educator of the Year award from the Asian Chamber of Commerce in Las Vegas.

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mission, need for future growth, *better competitive positioning of the Institute* and providing superior value to our membership. The conferences—national and regional—must deliver value to **all** our members (researchers as well as those from teaching-oriented schools). Lastly, the institute serves its members via the placement service and facilitating networking with colleagues with similar interests. We can do more through innovative use of Web-enabled technology and redesigning our conference format to promote networking opportunities. DSI must leverage the loyalty of its membership in the face of stiff competition from other professional associations. A commitment to and emphasis on high quality in all DSI offerings will best position the Institute to serve its members in the future and strengthen our competitive position and stature among academicians.

DSI must continue to serve its members from both research and teaching schools through its commitment to *inclusiveness*. These two customer segments must be served effectively through our journals and conferences. We should strive to increase the involvement of scholars from top-tier schools in our journals and conference offerings. I will rely on the Institute's Fellows to further this objective. Greater (and strategically meaningful) involvement by the Fellows would enable us to leverage their reputations in their respective disciplines. Business schools are increasingly emphasizing teaching excellence. DSI should promote teaching excellence through additional teaching symposia, sessions on technology use and integration in teaching, and other sessions of interest to teacher scholars. These sessions will find support from deans and chairs. Our offerings must be actively promoted to deans and chairs so that attendance at our conferences—national and regional—is strengthened. We should include practitioner professionals in the decision sciences and actively seek their participation in our conferences and journals.

"*Cross disciplinarity*," a term coined by one of my colleagues, recognizes

multiple disciplines, and stresses an integrated approach to solving important problems that confront organizations and society. Cross disciplinarity could be pursued via invited sessions, by expanding the content of our sessions to include allied disciplines, special workshops and mini-conferences on cross-disciplinary research, and establishing special interest groups. Cross-disciplinarity-based initiatives will bring the added benefit of increase in membership and unique, high quality sessions at our conferences.

DSI must embrace the value of *transparency and responsiveness in serving its members*. It is essential to keep members informed of important initiatives of the Institute and to solicit member participation to ensure their success. It is important to involve the members in the implementation of key initiatives through committees, act on key recommendations of committees expeditiously, and develop forums for having open communication with members.

Lastly, I think it is important to *imburse the Institute with a global outlook*. DSI must actively seek the involvement and participation of scholars from abroad. DSI is uniquely positioned for such global reach through our international regions in Mexico, Asia-Pacific and the newly established region in India. Global outlook should be reflected in the composition of the editorial boards of our journals and the participation of international scholars in our conferences. I will work to actively promote joint conferences and collaboration with professional associations to increase the visibility and stature of DSI globally.

I do not profess to have all the answers. I have given considerable thought to DSI's future well-being and the need for innovation. I pledge my strong commitment to furthering these values if elected as your president. It can be done through the involvement and energy of the DSI family. Together, we can ensure DSI's future growth as a global institute dedicated to the advancement of the decision sciences.

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The authors suggest that researchers should focus their studies on collaborative decision making because organizations compete in a world characterized by "global/dynamic markets, network organizations, pervasive computing, continuous learning, mass customization, socio-political diversity, and frequent storms." They consider collaborative decision making in an electronic commerce context as well as in a supply chain context.

Professor Barbara J. Cargill, Trinity College, University of Melbourne, observes that business schools in Australia are facing stiff competition because of the high number of schools in the system. She develops a model of key organizational and managerial capabilities that are needed for an entrepreneurial university in Australia to compete in this tough environment. She finds "that most universities do more or less know how to be more entrepreneurial but many lack the key leadership to drive it." Consequently, deans are in the driver's seat and can be the primary enabler, or the primary blocker, of this entrepreneurial activity.

Professor Peter T. Ittig, University of Massachusetts, presents the findings from the final report of the Commission on the Future of Higher Education. He notes that several recommendations such as the demands for learning assessment and outcome assessment are currently being implemented. He also points out that as funding for higher education becomes tighter we will see increasing pressures for greater accountability, more evidence of student learning, and greater efficiency.

See you all in Phoenix soon! ■