

We are witness to history. Erstwhile Senator Barack H. Obama has become the 44th President of the United States of America. Eloquence in telling of a story helps its understanding. Moved by the weight of history, U.S. Representative John Lewis, an associate of Martin Luther King, Jr., said that it was too much to contemplate. "What is happening is going to change America forever. I see this as a significant down payment on the dream of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.," he said.

We are upon a season of renewal. Our Institute will soon elect new leaders as well. In her letter, President Norma Harrison takes an informal measure of the Institute membership on such basic issues as the state of the Institute today, what has been accomplished, and what are the potentials and possibilities. Discovering a preference for risk avoidance, she urges the Institute to be daring, take risks, and nurture self-motivators who would "make a difference to the economy and to the welfare of the global society."

Once again, we offer our readers a set of excellent, thought-provoking essays by experts. Jay Heizer of Texas Lutheran University, Barry Render of Rollins College, and Kevin Watson of University of New Orleans collaborate in the feature column, In The Classroom, to discuss the use of web-based software to aid and assist instruction. They find that these web-based systems improve student learning and enrich teaching experience as well. In the feature column on Production/Operations Management, Ceyhun Ozgur of Valparaiso University and J. Randall Brown of Kent State University discuss "obstacles that limit the application of quantitative scheduling techniques." They suggest strategies and ideas on how to overcome these obstacles.

Kenneth Kendall of Rutgers University, in the feature column on Ecommerce, uses the sports metaphor to drive home lessons of disaster planning. Through disaster preparedness and recovery

planning, companies "can diminish the potential for loss of assets and maybe even prevent the loss of entire business." For The Deans' Perspective, Saleha Khumawala presents a model for microfinance-supported education program. She suggests that "there is a need to combine the work that has been done in microfinance business efforts with educational development." In the Doctoral Student Affairs feature column, Michael Hitt of Texas A&M University, Parthiban David of the University of Oklahoma, and Tim Holcomb of Florida State University offer their views on what it takes to succeed in a doctoral program of study.

Have you contributed essays to *Decision Line* lately? Please consider sharing your ideas with other members of the Institute. Send us your essays of about 2,500-word length to either Hal Jacobs, respective feature column editors, or me. In the meantime, happy reading! ■

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