

The two candidates for the position of DSI president-elect—Krishna S. Dhir of Berry College and Marc J. Schniederjans of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln—provide their vision statements for this year’s election of officers.



Krishna S. Dhir

Year after year, successive presidents and boards of directors have emphasized a consistent set of issues confronting the Institute. Tom Callarman, as president during 2005-2006, pushed the Institute to become “an international organization rather than an organization with international members” (*Decision Line*, 36(3), p. 29). Mark Davis, 2006-2007 president, recognized that in our academic environment, “teams have replaced the individual; trans-disciplinary has replaced disciplinary; global has replaced national” (*Decision Line*, 37(5), p. 48). The Institute took a giant stride towards its internationalization when Norma Harrison became the first president (2008-2009) elected from outside the United States. She encouraged us to “stretch the art of decision sciences into areas... that ultimately... improve the social fabric of life” (*Decision Line*, 39(5), p. 59).

Ken Kendall, 2007-2008 president, and Ram Narasimhan, our current president, responded to members who sought a multi-disciplinary focus and collegiality within the Institute, while returning to the time-tested values of inclusiveness. Additionally, our members identified openness in communication, opportunities for participation, and quality of services as important values. President-elect Keong Leong looks to enhance the Institute’s reputation through improved international engagement, quality publications, annual meetings, and applied technology (*Decision Line*, 39(5), pp. 4-5).

These issues continue to be the key factors shaping our Institute today. They require ongoing, diligent attention of our officers and members. The call of the day is for consistency of action. We need to stay the course and emphasize continuity. Making of an international, trans-disciplinary and cross-functional,

collegial and mentoring, and value-creating organization requires continuity of vision and strategy over time. Let me elaborate.

International issue—Providing a global view. Globalization of the business education industry is having a profound impact on business schools, irrespective of the scale of operation. At one end of the spectrum, business schools are going into partnership with their counterparts across the globe to offer students opportunities to travel and experience the international scene through immersion in-situ. At the other end of the spectrum, programs are being designed to serve place-bound students in far-flung geographic locations, with business schools establishing campuses in their neighborhoods. Many faculty members manning the entire spectrum have been educated in the United States. It is common for universities throughout the world to recruit in the United States. Yet, our members have had limited exposure to these emerging trends. I see an opportunity for us to prepare our members to meet these challenges of globalization.

Trans-disciplinarity and cross-functionality issue—Redefining decision sciences. Problems facing decision makers usually transcend disciplines. However, we in the business of analyzing decision-making processes have not taken advantage of the wide range of disciplines available to us. Meanwhile, concerned with the impact of decisions on human condition, some corporate CEOs contemplate recruiting liberal arts graduates in preference over business administration graduates. Increased emphasis being placed on cross-functionality in the business curriculum has generally remained within the boundaries of business schools. We need to increase our involvement in liberal arts and humanities, as well. The diversity emerging from such openness has been at the heart of the Institute’s success

from its inception. A trans-disciplinary approach to the human condition allows individuals of different preparation, training, and traditions to collaborate in a complimentary manner. The Institute can offer an overarching synthesis of ideologies drawn from various liberal arts disciplines to broaden the analytical base of decision sciences.

Collegial and mentoring issue—Going back to the basics. Recently, Clay Whybark voiced concern about the prevalent approach to business education: “We may end up like law schools. We need to evolve more like medical schools” (*Decision Line*, 39(3), p. 6). Our members need to develop a balance between their academic skills and clinical competencies so that they may instill the same in their students. However, in the early stages of their careers, our members experience tremendous pressure to quickly develop a strong research agenda that promises a steady flow of mainstream publications in highly rated, specialized journals. Our success depends on their success. Their appropriate mentoring is of critical importance to our profession. For instance, emphasis on multi-disciplinary research might make more sense for academics in the post-tenure phase of their careers, with newly qualified academics concentrating on their primary disciplines of specialization. I would like to see our Institute re-dedicate itself to mentoring its members through various stages of their respective career-cycle.

Value proposition—Enriching and promoting our members. As the Institute moves to enhance value to members through international engagement, quality publications, annual meetings, and applied technology, we should re-define the role of research to include enhanced visibility of scholarship, teaching to include learning, and service to include professional practice. The Institute should be a forum for:

DHIR VISION STATEMENT, see page 9



Marc J. Schniederjans

My vision statement is a function of my 29+ years of experience with the Decision Sciences Institute. My current position on the DSI's Board of Directors has revealed some challenges that need to be addressed. For example, in the last 10 years DSI has lost membership, while other competitive organizations have increased theirs. The current leadership of DSI has recognized this and other problems, and is moving our organization toward a more successful direction, but much more needs to be done. Many of the problems we currently face and many of the goals the DSI Board of Directors have set can be addressed by growing our membership.

My vision is to create an environment where membership in DSI is valued, sought after, and prized above all other organizations of which our faculty or practitioners may be members. It should be an organization that motivates faculty to want to be members, come to meetings, and participate in leadership roles. I am a lifetime member in two other academic organizations, but DSI is the one I am active in and whose meetings I attend. I would like to see DSI be the "go to" organization when important decisions are to be made, not just in areas of management information systems or operations management (which represent about 90% of our membership), but decisions in broader areas of business, healthcare, government, and education.

To accomplish this vision, I would seek to guide DSI to undertake a substantial marketing/promotion effort. The DSI Board has recently begun to view marketing/promotion as a strategic goal. We need to implement this goal aggressively, both internationally and regionally. The Decision Sciences Institute needs to use its influence to help elevate decision making to a science equal to any of the behavioral or quantitative sciences. This in turn will help broaden DSI membership in underrepresented fields, such as accounting, finance, marketing, and in relatively non-existent represented fields,

like economics, engineering, mathematics, psychology, or other behavioral disciplines. Any area where decision making is undertaken should be viewed as a potential market for inclusion in our organization. My vision of inclusion in this regard is limitless. This will enhance DSI's own vision statement that claims we are an interdisciplinary organization. The DSI Board has recently established a strategic goal of developing Special Interest Groups (SIGs) that may attract additional members. Opportunities to cooperate (e.g., joint meetings, mutual SIGs, etc.) with other academic organizations in underrepresented fields could also be a method to attract new members and further advance decision making as a science. The fact that Decision Sciences Journal is one of the highest ranked journals in business is but one feature of excellence that DSI offers that can be leveraged to attract the best scholars' research and their membership. In my vision of DSI and its potential, there are thousands of faculty who, if they only knew about our organization and we would encourage them to join, would do so with enthusiasm.

In a global context, governments, as well as businesses, are desperately seeking to find excellence in decision making from interdisciplinary sources of knowledge. DSI can be that source if we choose to make our capabilities better known. Key to promoting our role is both of our journals and our U.S. annual meeting, as well as the international and regional meetings. The leadership role of the president requires many tasks, including guiding the DSI Board of Directors and members to achieve greater notoriety for the organization in academic and professional environments. The goal of enhanced attention is to make membership desirable by increasing the prestige of DSI as "the" source for high quality decision-making research and knowledge. To accomplish this, the president should have extensive knowledge of DSI, knowledge of external competitive organizations, and experience in board meeting leadership.

My experience with DSI includes my years of membership and numerous positions I have held. I have served as the program chair for the annual meeting and program chair for a Midwest regional meeting. I am currently a vice president at large and have served as a vice president in the Midwest and Western regions, as well as a DSI board member. I have also served in a variety of differing roles, including track chair, coordinator, and committee member positions for both the annual and Midwest meetings.

External to DSI, I have also served as co-program chair for the 1992 and 1996 Production and Operations Management Society (POMS) annual meetings, and as a vice president, and member of various committees for that organization. I have also served on the program committee for the Information Resources Management Association (IRMA) international conference. Other external experience relevant to heading the DSI board meetings includes having been elected to and served as chairman of the board for both public and private organizations.

My priorities would be: (1) develop a long-term strategic marketing plan to promote DSI annual meetings (both international and regional) and enhance the quality of the meetings; (2) develop a long-term strategic plan to expand all efforts to increase membership and prestige of DSI; (3) develop tactics and operational plans to increase awareness of the quality of all DSI journals and implement other long-term strategic plans.

We have much to be thankful for from those prior faculty who built up DSI during the early years. They have given us a great foundation to build on, and I know we all appreciate what they have given us. It is up to the rest of us now to be more than caretakers; we must grow this organization into the greatest decision making society in the world. Regardless of who is elected, if we all work together, we can make DSI the "go to" organization for decision making. ■

in the process of incorporating carbon emission estimate methods and environmental stewardship into several of our courses, this process will take some time to fulfill.

Top Line, Bottom Line

Lastly, do not rely solely on university funds to fund curriculum redesign efforts. The U.S. Department of Education and other federal agencies offer grants to modernize curriculum. A good example is the National Science Foundation project to introduce Lean/JIT practices into Industrial Engineering curriculum nationwide. This grant provided printed education materials, simulation and software for demonstration and practice by students and faculty, and travel

funds for program promotion, training, and research. Using external grants to design and implement new curriculum allows for greater flexibility and leverage to incorporate elements the faculty feel are vital to excellent rigorous curriculum, provides the necessary research funds to support it, and somewhat insulates the effort from university politics. To this end, the supply chain management faculty at URI were awarded competitive external grants exceeding \$700,000 to design and equip the new major, and have applied for another \$400,000 to continue the effort. When partnering with international faculty and universities for case development, the faculty received an additional \$92,000 in foreign government support.

A Perfect Ten?

The journey described in this article was somewhat risky, expensive, time consuming, and took many years to develop. It was visionary and required a great deal of patience and support on the part of the Dean Mark Higgins, Associate Dean's Shaw Chen, and Deborah Rosen to allow it to develop. URI's supply chain faculty were innovative, creative, and surprisingly collaborative in reaching agreement on almost all major issues. This could easily be characterized as the 11th lesson, and probably the most difficult to achieve considering the plethora of agendas that exist in most universities. ■

DHIR VISION STATEMENT, from page 4

- Research and scholarship of theoretical and applied nature through integration of the art and science of managerial decision-making across functional disciplines, and an international forum for dissemination of this research through presentation and publication. I would like to see us venture into social sciences as well. We traditionally rely on analytic treatment of the decision-making processes. However, as we address the broader consideration of human condition, we stand to benefit from subjective approaches of social sciences as well. Also, we need to ensure that

our journals continue on the path of ongoing improvement.

- Teaching and learning through focus on instructional innovation including curriculum design and delivery, and by recognition of teaching excellence. For instance, showcase videos of the innovative instructional presentations and best paper presentations at conferences could be posted on the web for retrieval by members and others at will.
- Professional practice support through exchange of ideas between leading professional practitioners and educa-

tors and a focus on decision systems. We have a variety of technologies available to us for this purpose, including Facebook, LinkedIn, Podcasts, Webcasts, Webinars, etc.

Ultimately, our Institute is about its members. I am delighted by the prospect of giving back and serving the Institute. As stated before, I believe we need to stay the course by emphasizing continuity of value-creating vision and strategy, providing a global perspective, promoting trans-disciplinarity and cross-functionality, going back to the basics, and enriching and supporting our members. ■

NOMINATIONS, from page 1

The 2008-09 Nominating Committee, chaired by Kenneth E. Kendall (Rutgers University) has completed the slate of nominees for the 2010 election of officers. The Nominating Committees for the regional subdivisions are also compiling the names of nominees who are running this year for the office of vice presidents elected by the regional subdivisions.

Ballots will be sent in January 2010. Additional nominations may be made by November 30, 2009. Each additional nomination must be made by petition signed by at least five percent of the members and submitted to the Institute's Secretary, c/o the Institute's Home Office, 35 Broad Street, Atlanta, GA 30303.

Additional nominations for vice presidents elected by the regional subdivisions may be made upon petition signed by at least five percent of the regional subdivisions' members.

Please be sure that the DSI Home Office (dsi@gsu.edu) has your current email address! ■

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