

■ Barbara B. Flynn, Babcock Graduate School of Management, Wake Forest University



Barbara B. Flynn

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psychology from Ripon College, an M.B.A. from Marquette University and a D.B.A. in operations management from Indiana University. Professor Flynn has held leadership positions in the Decision Sciences Institute, the Academy of Management and The Institute of Management Science. Her publications have appeared in Decision Sciences, Management Science, Journal of Operations Management, International Journal of Production Research, and other journals. Her current research interests include quality, JIT and operations strategy. Professor Flynn's research has been funded by the National Science Foundation, the Center for Innovation Management Studies, the Japan-U.S. Friendship Commission and the U.S. Department of Education.

In this issue of *Decision Line*, we begin with a discussion by Karen Brown (Seattle University) and Clay Whybark (University of North Carolina) on the Global Manufacturing Research Group. In the 13 years of its existence, this group has conducted several massive operations management data gathering efforts, the latest including 1000 companies in 17 countries. In the International Issues feature, Brown and Whybark describe how membership in such a group can be fun and interesting, as well as allowing access to the sort of data which few of us would be able to gather individually.

In the Production/Operations Management feature, John Simon, of Sultan Qaboos University, discusses the use of simulation in teaching operations management. Although simulation packages have features designed for research, they may be intimidating to students who are unaccustomed to using simulation. He describes the use of common spreadsheet packages, with and without add-ins, to make simulation a useful and interesting tool for the classroom.

Lance Eliot, of Eliot & Associates, uses a medical analogy to discuss the need to an annual information systems checkup, in the Information Technology feature. Like

humans, many information systems receive professional help only when they begin to suffer an ailment. He describes a five-step process for performing an annual IT/IS checkup to determine what problems exist and how to remedy them before they become critical.

Vaidy Jayaraman and William Piper, of the University of Southern Mississippi, describe their experiences with distance learning in the Classroom feature. As universities strive to reach more geographically dispersed audiences, many are turning to distance learning. Professors Jayaraman and Piper describe both the benefits and pitfalls of using this technology in teaching.

Andrew Vazsonyi, of San Francisco University, presents an initial offering for the "Decision Sciences Picture Book," lamenting the lack of pictures in our publications. He invites your entries for future inclusion.

Finally, in the Bookshelf feature column, Andrew Ruppel, of the University of Virginia, continues the discussion of visual images. He reviews recent books dealing with pictures of favorite tools, how the mind creates mathematical images and graphical triumphs and failures. ■

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If you have questions about the list, or would like to suggest ways that it can be used, contact either Bob Jacobs, DSI Information Technology Coordinator at jacobs@indiana.edu, or Hal Jacobs at [hjacobsgsu.edu](mailto:hjacobs@gsu.edu). ■