

■ SCOTT M. SHAFER, Feature Editor, Department of Management, Auburn University

Which Membership Issues Are Most Important?

Scott M. Shafer, Feature Editor

My inaugural column appearing in the May 1998 *Decision Line* focused on the future by overviewing my vision and goals for my term as your new member services coordinator. In this issue, I would like to return to the present and provide a summary of the results of the membership survey conducted during the 1997 annual meeting in San Diego.

The response rate to the survey was a little disappointing with under 140 surveys returned representing 10 percent of the conference attendees. The vast majority of the surveys were returned by faculty members (82.5%) followed by academic administrators (14.6%) and doctoral students (5.8%). Fifty-six percent of the respondents indicated they had tenure. In terms of teaching, 41% of the respondents indicated they teach primarily undergraduates, 19% primarily graduates, and 49% an even mix of undergraduates and graduate students. Forty-one percent of the respondents indicated their institution had a doctoral program and over 99% indicated they had a masters program. Approximately 27% of the respondents earned their Ph.D. in operations management followed by MS/OR (21%), MIS (17.4%), management (6%), statistics (5%), finance/economics (4%), and strategy (3.5%).

Regarding conference attendance, 6% said they never attend national conferences (which is somewhat amusing given that the questionnaire was distributed at a national meeting), 19% attend sometimes, and 75% said they usually attend national meetings. Turning to regional meetings, 28% indicated they never attend, 45% said they sometimes attend, and 27% usually attend. In terms of international meetings, 71% indicated they never attend international meetings, 23% said they sometimes attend, and 6% usually attend international meetings. Finally, INFORMS was the most frequently mentioned other conference

attended followed by POMS, the Academy of Management, ICIS, and AIS.

Moving on to the wonderful world of technology, 75% of the respondents indicated a preference for replacing the *Proceedings* with a CD-ROM. Consistent with this overwhelming support, 85% of the respondents felt replacing the *Proceedings* with a CD-ROM would not impact their funding. In terms of DSI's Web page, 12% of the respondents indicated they never visit it, 71% visit it occasionally (less than once per month) and 16% regularly visit it (at least once per month). Respondents provided a number of suggestions for the types of information that should be included on the Web, including links to member home pages, the membership directory, links to regional sites, links to other organizations, conference presentation schedules, chat rooms, forms to renew memberships and register for conferences, faculty vitas, campus representative contacts, and links to faculty course home pages, to name a few.

An important part of the survey asked respondents to indicate the level of importance 21 items play in a successful DSI annual meeting. A seven point scale was used with "1" indicating very little importance and "7" indicating very high importance. Of the 21 items listed, the top five items for a successful DSI annual meeting were opportunity to interact with colleagues in your field (6.19 out of 7), desirable meeting locations (5.61), to learn about innovative teaching techniques (5.58), to learn new curricular and teaching innovations (5.55), and the job placement center (5.52).

In addition, respondents were also asked to evaluate how well they perceive DSI is doing on these 21 items on a similar seven-point scale. In terms of the top five items for a successful DSI meeting listed above, opportunity to interact with colleagues in your field received a score of 5.87 (the fourth highest score of the 21 items).



Scott M. Shafer

will be joining the Babcock Graduate School of Management at Wake Forest University in the Fall of 1998 as an associate professor of management. His current research interests are in the areas of cellular manufactur-

ing, operations strategy, business process design, and information technology. Dr. Shafer is the current Member Services Coordinator of the Decision Sciences Institute, is a former member of the Board of Advisors of SOLE - The International Society of Logistics, and is certified in Production and Inventory Management (CPIM) by the American Production and Inventory Control Society.

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Desirable meeting locations scored 5.91 placing it second. To learn about innovative teaching techniques scored 5.35 (9th place), to learn new curricular and teaching innovations scored 5.34 (10th place), and the job placement center scored 5.89 (3rd place). The item that scored the highest in terms of how good a job DSI is doing was opportunity to view book and software exhibits with a score of 5.94.

Respondents were also asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed with a number of statements on a seven point scale with "1" indicating strongly disagree and "7" indicating strongly agree. The scores on these statements were as follows: my

membership provides good value (5.72), DSI meets my expectations as a professional society (5.63), the DSI annual meeting is a good value (5.71), the job placement directory should be mailed to all members (4.59), the *Decision Sciences* journal is a valuable membership benefit (5.61), the *Decision Line* news publication provides useful information (5.55), and DSI is my preferred professional society (5.38).

In summary, although making generalizations based on this survey is somewhat limited by the low response rate, the results do provide valuable insights. After studying the results, my personal take is that overall DSI seems to be doing a pretty good

job at meeting the needs of the membership, but there is certainly room for improvement. Thus, perhaps the best use of these results is to use them to stimulate a dialogue among members on what the important membership issues are. In addition, the Membership Committee will evaluate and make recommendations to the Board based on the many suggestions respondents provided regarding member services DSI could provide that it is not, and the biggest improvement they would like to see DSI make. ■

DSI REGIONS

Southeast Region

by Susan Rebstock Williams, Georgia Southern University

The 29th Annual Meeting of the Southeast Region will be held February 24-26, 1999, at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Savannah, Georgia. The deadline for paper submissions is September 7, 1998. If you need further information, or would like to volunteer to serve as a reviewer, discussant or session chair, please contact Program Chair Lance Matheson at (540) 231-5804 or email: lance@vt.edu.

Request...

The Southeast Region is in the process of updating its mailing list. If you are a member, and have not already done so, please

forward your current address, phone number and email address to Susan Palocsay (palocssw@jmu.edu).

Other Announcements...

SE InFORMS will hold its 34th Annual Meeting October 1-2, 1998, in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. For more information contact Program Chair Dinesh Dave (daveds@appstate.edu).

Albert L. (Al) Harris, Appalachian State University, has been appointed acting chairperson of the Department of Information Technology and Operations Management (ITOM) for the 1998-99 year.

In the last issue, **Tim McClurg** was listed as a candidate for the position of VP of Publications for SE DSI. (Please note the correct spelling of the last name, as opposed to what appeared in the last issue). Tim recently accepted a position with the University of Wisconsin and has asked to be withdrawn from the proposed slate of nominees. ■

Reviewers needed for *IJOPM*

THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF OPERATIONS AND PRODUCTION MANAGEMENT (IJOPM) Special Issue on "The Impact of Environmental Pressures on Operations Management" needs reviewers from now through the Spring of 1999. If this is your area of expertise or interest, please contact the guest editor: Dr. Linda C. Angell, *IJOPM* Guest Editor, Management Science & Information Systems Department, Smeal College of Business Ad-

ministration, The Pennsylvania State University, 337 Beam Business Administration Building, University Park, PA 16802-1913, 814-863-2645, fax: 814-863-2381, e-mail: lca2@psu.edu.

Please provide the following information: name, organization, address, work phone/fax, home phone/fax, and e-mail address. Also indicate whether you are a faculty member, doctoral student, or industry professional.