

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

I have recently returned from the International DSI meeting in Athens, Greece. It was great to see so many new faces from countries all over the world, as well as the familiar faces of DSI colleagues. The social events were great, too, including the Greek dancers of the Dora Stratou Theater at the opening ceremony and the farewell dinner at Microlimano Harbor. Many thanks to Steve Zanakis, of Florida International University, and Georgios Doukidis, of Athens University of Economics and Business, for organizing a great conference.

This issue of *Decision Line* opens with the President's Letter, in which Lee Krajewski describes the past, present, and future of the Institute on the occasion of its 30th anniversary. This year's annual meeting will celebrate the Institute's anniversary by being located in New Orleans, the site of the first annual meeting of the Institute (I particularly enjoyed reading about the \$5 registration fee at the first meeting!). In the past 30 years, the Institute has grown from a small organization of 350 business school faculty members with interest in quantitative methods to a group of 4,200 members worldwide. The current goals reflect both the enduring core values of the Institute, as well as the changes it continues to make in order to be the professional organization of choice for its members.

In the Research Issues feature, Lori Koste, of Grand Valley State University, and Manoj Malhotra, of the University of South Carolina, deal with the topic of manufacturing flexibility. Although it is a term which is used frequently by manufacturing researchers and practitioners, it has not been well defined in the past and the construct has been measured in many ways. This feature provides suggestions for where research efforts related to flexibility should be measured, including relating flexibility to strategy, supply chain management and cost benefit analysis, as well as longitudinal studies of flexibility in different organizations. It serves as a good starting point for researchers seeking to work in this interesting area.

Andrew Vazsonyi, of the University of San Francisco, takes on the issue of uncertainty versus determinism in the Real-Life Adventures of a Decision Scientist. In the Bookshelf feature, Andrew Ruppel, of the University of Virginia, reviews three new or revised textbooks that reflect new approaches for teaching quantitative methods. These include the influence of spreadsheet software, including optimization and simulation add-ins to Excel, and curriculum reform, focused on the combination of topics previously covered in separate courses.

In the Doctoral Issues feature, Julie Kendall, of Rutgers University, describes the Doctoral Strategic Plan session offered annually during the DSI Doctoral Student Consortium. Originally developed as a junior faculty selection tool by Bob Mockler of St. John's University, this approach has been refined for use in the doctoral consortium by Julie Kendall, Bob Mockler, Ken Kendall, of Rutgers University, and Dorothy Dologite, of Baruch. The workshop uses senior faculty as mentors to small groups of doctoral students, providing guidance in formulating a research and publication plan for their first years as faculty members. As the students put their plans on paper, they are forced to confront and discuss important issues, including development of research streams, choice of publication outlets, and authorship issues. I have participated in this workshop as a mentor in the past, and have found it to be very interesting and useful for the participants.

We close with the thoughts of Scott Shafer, of Wake Forest University, in the Membership Roundtable. Scott continues to report on the results of the membership survey. Because this was a web-based survey, the response rate was higher than past surveys of the membership. The results are sorted by teaching responsibility in this issue, showing the membership needs and interests of members whose primary teaching responsibility is undergraduate students, graduate students, or mixed. ■



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