

■ SCOTT M. SHAFER, Feature Editor, Babcock Graduate School of Management, Wake Forest University

Getting Back to Basics

Scott M. Shafer, Feature Editor

As we enter the dawn of the next millennium, I find myself reflecting on the value of this column. As I mentioned in my inaugural column, I chose the name "Membership Roundtable" to communicate my intention to use this column as a forum to discuss proposed initiatives as well as to keep members up to date on membership issues. Ultimately, my vision was to use this column as a way to establish a dialogue among members on important membership issues. Indeed, in several of my previous columns a companion Web-based voting form was created to enable readers to provide their input on issues discussed in the column.

As I evaluate the content of my previous columns, my conclusion is that the column has tended to focus more on the update aspect and less on the timely discussion of proposed initiatives. Therefore, in this column, I would like to return to my original vision for this column and use it to initiate a discussion on an important membership issue.

Having chaired and served on both the Development Committee and the Member Services Committee over the last several years, one topic that frequently arises is the issue of being an interdisciplinary society. The importance of this issue is clearly reflected in the Institute's mission statement and the "six goals" that were adopted by the Strategic Planning/Executive Committee in April 1999. For example, goal number three is to "increase membership and participation of all disciplines," while the sixth goal is to "expand interdisciplinary activities."

Prior to discussing how to accomplish these goals, it is certainly appropriate to

first consider whether being an interdisciplinary society is desirable. For example, the Institute's vision statement is "to be the premier professional organization of choice for business scholars." A question that naturally arises is can an interdisciplinary society effectively compete with the more focused discipline-specific societies and become the premier organization of choice? Complicating this matter further is an often heard debate among the membership regarding whether the Institute is truly an interdisciplinary society or in reality a multidisciplinary society. At any rate,

my point is not to resolve these issues, but rather to identify their existence for future discussions.

Returning to the issue of how to increase participation in all disciplines, John Anderson had an interesting suggestion during the Development Committee meet-

ing in New Orleans. Specifically, John suggested the creation and promotion of special "hallmark" sessions that would feature presentations of leading scholars in a variety of academic disciplines. One way to operationalize this would be to form a committee that would identify these speakers and invite them to participate in these hallmark sessions.

I would like to further elaborate on John's suggestion. To begin, I propose that as an added incentive to attract leading scholars to participate in these hallmark sessions, that they be honored with the distinction DSI Scholar. If this program is executed well, it is conceivable that the prestige associated with being a DSI Scholar may actually lead to a situation where interest in presenting at a hallmark session exceeds available slots. If this were to oc-



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Please visit the web-based form I created at www.mba.wfu.edu/faculty/shafer/dsi/roundtable.htm and provide your reaction to this article. I will summarize the feedback I receive in future articles and provide additional opportunities for your input.

cur, potential speakers could be asked to submit a proposal for their hallmark presentation. Then a committee could review these submissions based on the candidate's scholarly track record and the interdisciplinary merit of the submission.

Furthermore, I would suggest that these hallmark sessions be scheduled in such a way that they do not compete with other sessions. One reason is that members who are scheduled to present, serve as a discussant, or chair a session at the same time as a hallmark session would be unable to attend these sessions. Also, it does not seem desirable to put members in the position of having to choose between attending a hallmark session and attending a session that may be more closely related to their area of interest. In fact, larger potential audiences at the hallmark sessions due to the absence of competing sessions may create an additional incentive for leading scholars to participate as a DSI Scholar.

In my opinion there appear to be numerous advantages to creating these hallmark sessions and few drawbacks. First, while there is certainly no guarantee that these sessions will increase the participation of all disciplines, if nothing else these sessions will certainly increase the interdisciplinary offerings for those who do attend the meeting. Second, these sessions would increase the awareness of the Institute to a group of leading scholars in a variety of disciplines. Finally, these sessions would effectively communicate and reinforce the value the Institute places on being an interdisciplinary society.

Now it's your turn. Please visit the web-based form I created at

www.mba.wfu.edu/faculty/shafer/dsi/roundtable.htm

and provide your reaction to this article. I will summarize the feedback I receive in future articles and provide additional opportunities for your input. It is in this way that I hope to use this column to establish a dialogue among members on important and timely membership issues.

As a final note, I welcome your ideas and suggestions for future columns. Additionally, if you have ideas or suggestions that you would like to develop as a column in this space, I encourage you to contact me. ■

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President Lee J. Krajewski (University of Notre Dame) chaired the Board of Directors meeting that was held on Saturday, November 20, 1999, in New Orleans, Louisiana. The following is a report of the actions taken by the Board and matters brought to its attention. The Executive Committee also met on November 20. Its recommendations to the Board are included in the items reported below.

1. The minutes of the April 1999 meeting of the Board of Directors were approved.
2. The auditor's report for FY 1997-98 was accepted.
3. The financial statement for the period ended June 30, 1998 was accepted.
4. A financial statement for the period ended June 30, 1999 was presented.
5. A policy and procedures regarding Annual Meeting hotel room rebates were approved.
6. Information was presented about the current status of software acquisition for the Home Office.
7. A policy and procedures regarding retirement compensation for Home Office staff were approved.
8. FY 1999-2000 budgets for the Northeast, Southeast, Southwest, and Western regions were reviewed and accepted.
9. Proposals for the 2003 (Washington, D.C.) and the 2004 (Boston, MA) Annual Meetings were reviewed and approved.
10. The Institute's endorsement of the MSIS Model Curriculum for 2000 was approved.
11. The following reports were presented, reviewed, discussed and accepted:
 - a. 1999 Asia-Pacific Regional Meeting
 - b. 2000 Asia-Pacific Regional Meeting Call for Papers
 - c. Slate of nominees for the 2000 election of officers
 - d. Schedule and locations of the 2000 Executive Committee and Board of Directors meetings
 - e. Board representation at the 2000 annual regional meetings
 - f. (Oral) report on the 1999 Annual Meeting
 - g. Programs plans for the 2000 Annual Meeting ■

NAMES IN THE NEWS

CAROL LATTA, Feature Editor, Home Office, Georgia State University

Jack Meredith, Wake Forest University, was delighted with the festivities at the Wiley Booth in New Orleans helping him celebrate his big 50th birthday. Every year Jack's birthday comes during the annual meeting, so he never gets a birthday celebration. This year, his wife, Carol, and Beth Golub of Wiley planned a special celebration at the conference. They hope everyone enjoyed the champagne and cake, and have announced plans to do it again in 50 years! ■

DSI members can share their promotions, awards, publications, photos, and other news of interest to the membership by contacting:

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