

■ G. Keong Leong, Management Department, University of Nevada, Las Vegas

With the Institute's annual meeting in San Diego just around the corner, this issue of *Decision Line* provides last minute information plus a bumper crop of interesting articles. We welcome two feature editors, Professor Subhashish Samaddar, Georgia State University, and Professor Peter T. Ittig, University of Massachusetts, writing their first columns on Information Technology and From the Bookshelf, respectively. In the President's letter, Professor Tom Jones of the University of Arkansas thanks the program committee and all other members involved in putting the conference together.

Professor Johnny Rungtunsatham, feature editor for the international issues column, approached the two candidates nominated for DSI president to present their views on the role of the Institute within the larger global community of scholars and scholarship. Professor Gary Ragatz, Michigan State University, discusses the challenges and opportunities facing the Institute in an environment characterized by rapid technology change and globalization of business and business education. Professor Vickie Smith-Daniels, Arizona State University, analyzes the threats to DSI as a result of the changing environment of business schools and suggests investigating the use of global partnerships and alliances for greater outreach.

In his feature article on information technology, Professor Sub Samaddar, Georgia State University, notes that the developments in information technology (IT) has the "potential of altering, redefining and continuously reshaping" the problems of interest not only to the traditional business disciplines but also disciplines in the Arts and Sciences. He stresses that IT is a "multidisciplinary phenomenon that manifests itself in an interdisciplinary manner."

Professors Jagannathan Iyengar, University of Wisconsin-Whitewater, Walt Truszkowski, NASA Goddard Space Flight Center, and Pam Clark, NASA Goddard Space Flight Center, present conceptual framework for "understanding characteristics and activities of spacecraft/instrument agents and agent communities in the open-ended problem-solving environment of

space exploration." This article provides interesting reading about NASA's use of Intelligent Software Agents for future space explorers.

In the Production/Operations Management column, Professor Richard J. Schonberger, University of Washington, uses data from a longitudinal study of 585 companies in 18 countries to assess "lean-ness" performance as measured by trends in inventory turnover. One of the surprise findings is that Toyota, the originator of lean manufacturing, had a failing grade, while Ford, GM, and Chrysler have made significant strides and each company scored an 'A'. Toyota's inventory turnover has fallen steadily from the 60-80 times range in the late 1970s to 12 in 2001.

Professors Hyo-Joo Han, New Jersey Institute of Technology, and Rosalie Ocker, Temple University, in their article on Ecommerce, present a study investigating the worthiness of university students as targets for on-line businesses. Their research finds that students who are comfortable using computers and spend a fair amount of time on-line are best candidates for marketing success.

In the Specialist with a Universal Mind column, Andy Vazsonyi, suggests decision scientists can be a big help in alleviating the problems in the healthcare industry. Andy urges more collaborative research on specific industry applications to transform the "healthcare jungle into an effective system benefiting all."

Professor Peter T. Ittig, University of Massachusetts, reviews three publications on global warming: *The Skeptical Environmentalist* by Bjørn Lomborg, *Climate Action Report 2002* of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the 2001 report of the U.S. National Research Council (NRC), *Climate Change Science*. Global warming is a hot topic of discussion and has become the dominant environmental concern today. There is still much uncertainty regarding the real causes of global warming and the solution to this important problem.

I look forward to seeing you in San Diego! ■



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sity of South Carolina. Professor Leong has held leadership positions in Decision Sciences Institute such as at-large vice president, Doctoral Student Consortium coordinator, Instructional Innovation Award Competition coordinator, and POM track chair. He has published articles in Decision Sciences, Journal of Operations Management, Interfaces, Journal of Management, and other journals. His current research interests include international operations, operations strategy, technology management, and supply chain management. Professor Leong has co-authored two books, won teaching and research awards, and received the Educator of the Year award from the Asian Chamber of Commerce in Las Vegas.