

information technology organizations, and insurers. In its most basic form, the health-sector supply chain involves all of the activities and decisions made to move a product from the manufacturer to the patient's bedside. Despite the potential benefits of supply chain integration, the dynamic nature of the health sector may not lend itself to the success of supply chain strategies in other industries. Compared to other industries, the health-sector supply chain's functions and capabilities are more dispersed across intermediaries at different levels in the supply chain, and often involve the delivery of both products and information services.

This Special Topic Forum (STF) focuses on advancing decision-making research in the health-sector supply chain by publishing forward-thinking, rigorous research that stimulates future research on designing and managing healthcare services in today's rapidly changing environment. When consid-

ering the unique challenges of the health-sector supply chain, healthcare executives and managers recognize the importance of managing upstream and downstream relationships, and the roles that sourcing, marketing, information technology, operations, distribution, finance, product development, and customer service play in the efficient and effective deployment of the supply chain.

The STF encourages research examining different types of decision problems ranging from strategic to operational that occur in various forms, including inter-organizational, group-based, and technology-enabled. Health-sector research has, and will likely continue to draw from diverse academic disciplines such as operations management, information systems, marketing, strategic management, organizational behavior, technology management, and public policy.

Building on the refocused editorial mission of *Decision Sciences*, this STF seeks manuscripts utilizing diverse research approaches, such as theoretical, empirical, and analytical research methods. Articles published in this STF must meet *Decision Sciences'* high standards of research rigor and originality, while embracing managerial relevance, not only in the research problem studied, but also in their impact on enhanced decision making. STFs consist of a collection of three to five articles that are published in a regular issue along with other peer-reviewed articles.

Topics of interest include, but are not limited to:

- Information technology integration within and between organizations
- A data-driven analysis of EMR (electronic medical record) systems
- RFID adoption and implementation in the healthcare sector

See **DSJ CALLS**, page 28

NAMES IN THE NEWS

CAROL LATTA, Executive Director, Decision Sciences Institute



Ram Narasimhan, Michigan State University, was given the Distinguished Faculty Award for outstanding contributions to the intellectual environment

of the university by MSU. He was also appointed to John H. McConnell Endowed Professor.

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Bhaba R. Sarker, Elton G. Yates Distinguished Professor of Industrial Engineering at Louisiana State University, received the David F. Baker Distinguished

Research Award at the 2006 IIE Conference in Miami. The IIE Board of Trustees selects one individual each

year to receive the Baker Award, which "...recognizes significant contributions to the advancement and progress of the industrial engineering profession through outstanding research. It is given for a career of accomplishments that have broadly benefited practitioners, organizations or other researchers, rather than for a single activity or application..." in industrial engineering research. Earlier Professor Sarker made an unprecedented example by winning the *Best Doctoral Dissertation Awards* from DSI and IIE, and being runner-up in POMS'. He is currently serving on several editorial boards including *European Journal of Operational Research*, *IIE Transactions*, and *Computers and Operations Research*. He is a Fellow of IIE and members of DSI, INFORMS and several other organizations.

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Suresh P. Sethi, Ashbel Smith Professor of Operations Management and director of the University of Texas at Dallas's Center for Intelligent Supply

Networks, was honored by a three-day international conference on Management Sciences (May 20-22, 2006), recognizing his influence on the fields of operations management, operations research, marketing, finance and optimal control. Nobel Laureate Harry M. Markowitz delivered the keynote address, and 60 papers in four parallel sessions were presented. Qing Zhang of University of Georgia presented a book, *Stochastic Processes, Optimization, and Control Theory*, edited in Sethi's honor.

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In Memoriam
Ernest C. Houck
R.B. Pamplin Professor of Management Science
Department of Business Information Technology, Virginia Tech



Ernie Houck, R.B. Pamplin Professor of Management Science in the Department of Business Information Technology at Virginia

Tech, and Fellow of the Decision Sciences Institute, age 61, passed away on May 22. Ernie was a long-time and very active member of DSI. Ernie was Program Chair of the 1995 DSI National Meeting in Boston, and he served as a Vice President in 1990-92. Ernie served on sixteen different committees for DSI, including the Executive Committee. He chaired the Innovative Education Committee twice, in 1977-78 and again in 1997-98, and he was Coordinator of the Instructional Innovation Award Competition in 1997, and Coordinator of the Doctoral Dissertation Competition in 1984. He also chaired the Publications Committee, the Doctoral Student Affairs Committee, the Meetings and Programs Committee, and the Fellows Committee. In 1990-91, as Chair of an ad hoc Publications Production Committee, Ernie was instrumental in upgrading the Institute's computer and publishing systems, and the overall quality of the Institute's publications. He was also an active member of Southeast DSI serving as a Vice President on several occasions and on numerous committees.

Ernie grew up in Tuscaloosa, Alabama and attended the University of Alabama as an undergraduate where he received his B.S. in mechanical engineering in 1967, and was also a member of the men's varsity basketball team. He received a Master of Science in industrial engineering from the University of Alabama in 1969. He subsequently received the M.A. and the Ph.D. in sta-

tistics from Virginia Tech. In 1972 he joined the faculty of the College of Business at Virginia Tech, and in 1995 he was appointed R.B. Pamplin Professor of Management Science. From 1978 to 1982 he served as Director of the MBA Program in the College of Business, and from 1983 to the present he was Director of Graduate Programs in the Department of Business Information Technology. Ernie was well-known throughout his career at Virginia Tech as an outstanding educator, teacher and scholar. He received the College of Business Certificate of Teaching Excellence on three occasions. In 1976 he was the first faculty member from the College of Business elected to the University Academy of Teaching Excellence, and in 1977 he was the College's first recipient of the

university's prestigious W.E. Wine (Teaching) Award. In 2002 he received the Pamplin College's Doctoral Teaching Award. Ernie was the author of numerous research articles in leading academic journals, including *Decision Sciences*, *Management Science* and *Operations Research*. During his career at Virginia Tech he served on over seventy departmental, college and university committees, chairing many of them, as well as twenty doctoral committees.

Ernie was a loving husband and devoted father and grandfather. He was a good man, and a good friend and colleague to those at Virginia Tech and in DSI. He was loved, admired and respected by all who knew him, and we will all miss him. ■

(Contributed by Chuck Taylor, Virginia Tech)



Ernie (second from left) at the 2003 DSI Annual Meeting in Washington, D.C., with DSI Executive Director Carol Latta and Virginia Tech colleagues Terry Rakes, Larry Moore and Chuck Taylor. Ernie was program chair of the 1995 DSI National Meeting in Boston and served on 16 different Institute committees.