

It is an honor to be following Keong Leong as the editor of *Decision Line*. I have thoroughly enjoyed being a part of his editorial team. Through his vision and that of his predecessors listed here, *Decision Line* has become an effective voice of the Institute and the glue that binds the Institute together as an organic whole. Following in their footsteps, I hope that through this publication we will continue to collectively explore the emerging and prevailing trends shaping the education of business administration and the practice of decision sciences.

### Past Editors of *Decision Line*

William R. Cornette, Southwest Missouri State University, 1975-1976

William R. Darden, Louisiana State University, 1976-1978

V. Thomas Dock, University of Wisconsin – Eau Claire, 1979-1981

Bernard W. Taylor, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, 1982-1987

K Roscoe Davis, University of Georgia, 1988-1993

Terry R. Rakes, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, 1994-1996

Barbara B. Flynn, Indiana University, 1997-2002

G. Keong Leong, University of Nevada - Las Vegas, 2002-2007

### An Invitation

I invite you to use *Decision Line* to channel your insights, opinions, philosophies, and conjectures regarding issues that interest you. Please send your essays of up to 2,500-word length to the respective feature editors, or me at [kdhir@berry.edu](mailto:kdhir@berry.edu), or Managing Editor Hal Jacobs at [hjacobsgsu.edu](mailto:hjacobs@gsu.edu), at any time.

### The Editorial Team

*Decision Line* offers a number of feature columns manned by an outstanding team of feature editors. John Davies of Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand, is joining the editorial team as the editor of the International Issues column. Miles G. Nicholls of RMIT University, Australia, has agreed to oversee the Research Issues column. Daniel A. Samson of the University of Melbourne, Australia, will cover the Production/Operations Management feature column. Vijayan Sugumaran of Oakland University is the new feature editor of the Information Technology column. Xenophon Koufteros of Texas A&M University has agreed to become the new feature editor of the Doctoral Student Issues column starting in March. At that time, Bih-Ru Lea of the newly renamed Missouri University of Science and Technology (erstwhile University of Missouri – Rolla) will become the new feature editor for the In The Classroom column.

I am grateful to Manoj Malhotra of the University of South Carolina and Rick Hesse of Pepperdine University for their generous assistance with transitions in Doctoral Student Issues and In The Classroom columns, respectively. Xenophon Koufteros of Texas A&M University has agreed to become the new feature editor of the Doctoral Student Issues column starting in March. DSI Membership Roundtable Feature Editor Gary Hackbarth of Northern Kentucky University, From The Bookshelf Feature Editor Peter Ittig, Ecommerce Feature Editor Kenneth Kendall of Rutgers University, and yours truly with the Deans' Perspective will continue in their respective features.

It is our good fortune that Managing Editor Hal Jacobs, with his extensive experience with *Decision Line*, continues to serve on the editorial team. We enjoy the unstinted assistance of the



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is the Henry Gund Professor of Management at Berry College in Mount Berry, Georgia. He earned his PhD from the University of Colorado at Boulder, MBA from the University of Hawaii, MS in chemical engineering

from Michigan State University, and a BTech from the Indian Institute of Technology – Bombay. He has published in numerous journals, including *Applied Mathematical Modeling*, *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, *Decision Sciences*, *IEEE Transactions on Engineering Management*, *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, and *Journal of Information and Optimization Sciences*. He has received various DSI awards, including *Best Theoretical/Empirical Research Paper Award* at the 1993 Annual Meeting in Washington, DC, and *Best Application Paper Award* at the 1999 International Meeting in Athens, Greece. The Penn State Harrisburg awarded him its 2001 James A. Jordan Jr. Award and 2000 Provost's Award, both for Teaching Excellence.

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**Channels for Interaction:** Students must take the initiative to create enduring structures that enable knowledge transfers and provide other necessary support required to complete coursework and dissertations. In our experience, cultures of completion are characterized by these kinds of formal or informal groups. For instance, we have seen seminar study groups where students get together physically or virtually to discuss papers before the discussion in class. These groups constitute an opportunity to reflect on, not learn, course material and constitute a launching point for building “bonds” within cohorts of students. Similarly, we have seen student writing groups, where doctoral students peer-review papers for courses, conferences and journal submissions. Often, students can offer comments that would

be devastating coming from a faculty advisor. Also, during post-comps, when coursework ends, students lose anchors that gave their daily lives rhythm and required them to interact. At this stage, informal meetings that allow students to exchange ideas on dissertations and other problems they might be facing can provide both cognitive and emotional support that is of a different flavor than what comes through faculty-student interactions.

### Conclusion

Doctoral programs are difficult and many students falter. By fostering a culture of completion characterized by a general awareness of processes, forward-thinking orientation, high level of collegiality and clan control, optimism, and a constant sense of urgency, an en-

vironment that makes it difficult to flounder can be cultivated. However, to do this well, program elements must provide structure and allow for flexibility, while creating realistic expectations and limiting teaching responsibilities. Faculty must create structures that allow for open communication and clear demarcation of dissertation responsibilities in order to prevent slippage. Also, students themselves can create channels of interaction that can nurture successful outcomes. While these guidelines are not novel, it is their conscious fostering and institutionalization that yields outcomes that go beyond completion of doctoral degrees to instillation of values that lead to career success. ■

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Institute’s Executive Director Carol Latta, who also covers the ‘In the News’ column.

### Articles in this Issue

This issue begins with the President’s Letter, “Renewing DSI: Simplicity is a virtue,” in which DSI President Ken Kendall of Rutgers University commends the virtues of simplicity as a value. While heeding Jim Horning’s caution that nothing is as simple as we hope it to be, Ken suggests strategies for incorporating simplicity into the Institute’s design, structure, and procedures.

There are various models of research administration around the worlds. Australia offers a dynamic and shifting environment for research administrators. In the Research Issues column, Feature Editor Miles Nicholls of RMIT University provides us with a fascinating glimpse of the challenges associated with managing academic research in the evolving academic scene in Australia. The Classroom column offers ideas for creating a cohesive classroom community in an article en-

titled, “Class Photo Album Using Office 2007,” by Maurie Lockley of the University of North Carolina, Greensboro. Maurie calls on the instructors to make personal connections with the students and facilitate the process of networking through emerging technologies.

Sameer Verma, San Francisco State University, presents “The Law of Code” in the Ecommerce column. The essay is rich in ideas and implications, and covers a broad spectrum of highly relevant issues pertaining to the business of software. In the Deans’ Perspective column, Sarah Bower visits us again with an essay on the challenge of balancing between publishing, teaching and service. She explores the dilemma as it is faced by those in the initial stages of their academic career and shares distilled insights filtered through broad experience and deep maturity. She tells it like it is: “Most people in the world are not as educated as we are, but that does not make them less than we. . . . Avoid absorbing poor culture habits. . . .”

Varun Grover and Jason Thatcher, both of Clemson University, discuss “Building Cultures of Completion in

Ph.D. Programs” in the Doctoral Student Issues column. They suggest fostering a culture that is process-oriented, proactive, collegial, optimistic, and urgent. In The Bookshelf column, Craig Seal of Niagara University draws our attention to Gerd Gigerenzer’s *Gut Feelings: The Intelligence of the Unconscious*, an exciting book on reason and decision-making. In the DSI Membership Issues column, Gary Hackbarth, Northern Kentucky University, reports on the recent survey of the Institute members, providing new insights and shattering many myths about who we are. Also, in this issue, Chetan Shankar of Auburn University, the new editor of the *Decision Sciences Journal of Innovative Education*, shares his vision for the journal.

I look forward to feedback from our readers. Happy reading! ■