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This issue brings you the inaugural letter from our new president, Norma Harrison of CEIBS, China. Norma has the distinction of being the very first president of our Institute from outside the United States. Her election marks an exciting milestone in the evolution of the Decision Sciences Institute. In her letter, she outlines the goals and objectives that will guide the Institute during her tenure at the helm.

Our Institute has come a long way since 1969, when 16 visionaries, spearheaded by Dennis E. Grawoig of Georgia State University, created the American Institute of Decision Sciences. This issue brings you a lively conversation between Clay Whybark of the University of North Carolina–Chapel Hill and Natasa Christodoulou of California State University Dominguez Hills. This interview gives us a sense of what motivated the founders of our Institute to come together and create this fine association of academics and practitioners. It reminds us of the motivations and vision of the founders, and describes the early culture of our Institute. It is appropriate to reflect on these things as a new team takes charge of the leadership of the Institute.

We include in this issue the paper that made Thomas Triscari, Jr., of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute a finalist for the 2007 Instructional Innovation Award. Triscari describes developing decision-making capacity through an experiential and engagement coaching (EXEC) approach. He states, “Where some traditional approaches to teaching “quantitative methods for decision making” begin at problem solving, the EXEC approach seeks to complement problem solving by empowering students to confidently approach, identify, define, and solve problems through immersive, experiential, engagement exercises. . . .”

In the January issue of *Decision Line*, Research Issues Feature Editor Miles Nicholls of RMIT University provided us with a glimpse of various challenges associated with managing academic

research in Australia. In the current issue, Brian Lehaney of Coventry University and Steve Clarke of the University of Hull describe the management of research and research funding in the United Kingdom.

Our Institute has finally appeared on Wikipedia! In the Ecommerce feature column, Feature Editor Ken Kendall of Rutgers University describes how he developed an article on the Decision Sciences Institute on Wikipedia and also offers helpful suggestions to our readers for creating their own articles.

In the Deans’ Perspective feature column, Bin Jiang of DePaul University reports on his findings that firms with former business school professors in executive positions perform better than those that do not have such executives. This is especially the case in smaller firms. Jiang states, “Whereas professors lack the generalist orientation of a CEO, . . . VPs and professors are similarly specialized. It is worth noting that in practice, VPs frequently guide and counsel CEOs. They serve as sounding boards, give focused insights, and help CEOs make better management decisions.” He discusses implications of his finding for doctoral education.

In the feature column, In the Bookshelf column, Eric Olsen of California Polytechnic State University reviews Richard Schonberger’s latest book on lean best practices.

We hope you will enjoy this issue of *Decision Line*. Please let us hear from you with suggestions and comments. Happy reading! ■