

Since the publication of the last issue, we have lost another one of the original founders of the Decision Sciences Institute. Claude McMillan, Jr., Professor Emeritus of Management Science and Information Systems at the University of Colorado, passed away in Boulder, Colorado, on May 20th, 2008. His passing marks yet another milestone in the history of our Institute.

This is the season of the Olympics—the season that inspires humanity to reach for its greatest achievements. In her DSI President's Letter, Norma Harrison of CEIBS, China, refers to the relevance of the Eastern thought and experience to the times we live in. Not everything we know in the West is new under the sun. As we confront new challenges and search for new paradigms, we would do well to heed her advice and become more aware of things beyond our ken.

We begin this issue with a comprehensive introduction to the information systems education in Taiwan by Clive Sanford of National Cheng-Chi University. Dr. Sanford describes Taiwan as being in "nascent stages of development" as it seeks "to become more international." Nevertheless, already "nearly 80 percent of the notebook computers worldwide are produced through [its] well-developed supply chains...." Dr. Sanford provides an excellent sketch of the Taiwanese profile and offers strategies for continued improvement of information system education in that country.

As an educator, Bih-Ru Lea of Missouri University of Science and Technology, our feature column editor for the "In the Classroom" column, gives considerable thought to strategies that will ensure that our students "retain what they have learned, apply [their learning] to new situations, build upon that learning to develop new perspectives, and continue the learning process." In this issue, Dr. Lea describes her experience with Clickers, a radio frequency device that allows students to respond interactively to classroom proceedings through

a small hand-held remote keypad. She finds that by using Clickers her students show increased levels of motivation, attendance, preparation, and focus. She reports that "the use of clickers creates higher interactivity and active learning environment...."

Dayna Simpson of Oregon State University and Feature Editor Danny Sampson of the University of Melbourne explore the role of supply chain processes in improving environmental performance and impact. In the "Production/Operations Management" feature column, they provide an overview of developing strategies for green supply chain management and offer an excellent agenda for further research. They remind organizations to involve "suppliers and third parties in the greening process early" to ensure "a sustained competitive advantage...."

In the "Deans' Perspective" feature column, Dan Dalton of Indiana University revisits the issue of business school governance with the question "whether a business school should be managed as a business." He offers an exciting framework to examine various characteristics of an enterprise and examines how a business school relates to these characteristics. So, are business schools a business? For the answer, you will have to read Dr. Dalton's fine essay.

In the "Doctoral Student Affairs" feature column, Feature Editor Xenophon Koufteros of Texas A&M University and George Marcoulides of the University of California–Riverside observe that "a number of doctoral students will never complete their dissertation work or ever begin publishing in scholarly outlets." Of those who do, a number will never make tenure as members of a faculty or will stop publishing after being tenured. In their outstanding essay, Drs. Koufteros and Marcoulides discuss issues that require our attention to enhance the success of doctoral students as researchers *throughout* their academic careers. Their

See **EDITOR**, page 19



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product choices (size, color) versus less; larger inventory versus less inventory; more conservative sales terms and conditions versus less conservative terms and conditions.

This scenario provides an example of perhaps the toughest reality that a presiding officer faces. As we learned from Garrett Hardin in the *Tragedy of the Commons*, it is simply not true that all people/units/teams acting in their own best interests necessarily serve the interests of the larger collective. In this case, policies that clearly maximize the results of the units—production, marketing/sales, finance—do not serve the overall interests of TanMerits.

It is fascinating, then, that the CEO does not *really* want the units to be the best they can be. Instead, the CEO wants these units to be the best they can be under a set of objectives that, in concert, best serve TanMerits, that is, reasonable product choices, reasonable inventory, reasonable terms and conditions.

Back to the B-School/University

Senior university administrators often suggest that their role is for all of its schools to be the very best they can be. That is almost certainly not possible. As Donald Kennedy, a former president of Stanford University, observed: “Here at Stanford, we can do anything, but we can’t do everything.” Certainly, some enterprises can do more great things than others, but not all at the same time. This returns us to priorities.

EDITOR, from page 3

mentoring is of critical importance to our profession. Our success depends on theirs. They “need to see and experience...the life of a research endeavor from conception to completion. [They] cannot do it alone.”

In the “From the Bookshelf” feature column, Beheruz Sethna of the University of West Georgia reviews Pankaj Ghemawat’s book, *Redefining Global Strategy*, in which Ghemawat takes issue

Reality Check on the Difference Between “Outstanding” and “Strategic”

Another difficult issue for university presidents and their stewards is that “outstanding” may not be “strategic.” Consider a university with, by acclamation, the best Muggle Studies Department (hypothetical) in the world. That does not mean that it would rise to the top three or four initiatives that will propel the university to the level it seeks. It is possible that a unit/activity/initiative is really warranted to celebrate that “we’re the best” would not move the metaphorical needle for top university priorities.

Conclusion

Mark G. Yudof, chancellor of the University of Texas system, comprised of 15 institutions and some 185,000 students, recently observed, “There is no activity in humankind that can’t be subjected to accountability or efficiencies ... the fact that you can’t measure everything [on campus] doesn’t mean you shouldn’t measure anything” (Davidson, 2007). This challenge is facilitated, however, when we focus on those relatively few initiatives that are absolutely fundamental to the future of the enterprise—public, private, business, education, profit-seeking or otherwise.

Reference

Davidson, A. (2007). The ivory tower: Economics 101. *Forbes*, November 12: 142-149. ■

with Thomas Friedman’s contention that the world is flat. Dr. Sethna describes Friedman’s book as “a good wake-up call” to the Americans and other Western countries, and Ghemawat’s book as “an excellent strategic guide book for corporations....”

We hope you will enjoy this issue of *Decision Line* and look forward to your suggestions and comments. Happy reading! ■

Submitting articles to *Decision Line*

Members are invited to submit essays of about 2,000 to 2,500 words in length on topics of their interest, especially articles of concern to a broad, global audience. Please send essays (including brief bio and photo) to either the respective feature editor or to Editor Krishna Dhir.

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