

■ Barbara B. Flynn, Babcock Graduate School of Management, Wake Forest University

In this issue, we begin by featuring a description of the 1997 winning submission to the Decision Sciences Institute's Instructional Innovation Award Competition. **Peter Arnold** and **Anil Khurana** describe the innovative approach they use in Boston University's junior-level integrated core. A broad-based, semester-long product development project is used as the vehicle for integrating learning in finance, marketing, operations and management information systems, while providing students with experience working in high performance teams. Part of what makes this especially effective is the detailed thought put into developing the integrated syllabus, as well as support materials.

Dan Dalton (Indiana University) and **Joe Pica** (Educational Benchmarking, Inc.) describe their findings in a survey of over 12,000 business students. They measured student satisfaction in undergraduate business and MBA programs, particularly of students in decision sciences, operations management and information systems. Although they found the usual array of factors which were important to student satisfaction, what is interesting about this article is the set of factors which were **not** related to student satisfaction, contrary to what many of us believe. These "noncritical success factors" included class size, quality of the classroom facilities, availability and access to computer facilities and student grades.

In the International Issues feature, **Elsa Lai-Ping Leong Koljonen** and **Richard Reid** (both of the University of New Mexico) provide an illustration of the use of a structured approach to performance assessment in an international application. Using a Hong Kong law firm as an example, they demonstrated the use of the Walk-Through Audit, which allows assessment of customer perceptions of the service creation and delivery process.

Interesting issues regarding assessment of faculty research productivity are raised by **Tor Guimaraes** of Tennessee Technological University in Research Issues. Periodically, we have all read articles about research productivity in our functional areas. Various methods are used to assess research productivity of individual faculty members, and, by implication, of

their universities. **Tor** points out some potential pitfalls to watch out for in both defining top journals and defining research productivity.

Like last year's cinematic ticklers? Want more? In the Production/Operations Management feature, **Karen Brown** (Syracuse University), **Nancy Lea Hyer** (Vanderbilt University), **Dwight Smith-Daniels** (Arizona State University) and **Linda Sprague** (University of New Hampshire and Cranfield University) update their set of innovative ideas with even more cinematic ticklers, as well as new tips and ideas for their use in the classroom.

Lance Eliot (Eliot & Assoc.) describes the results of IS internal process gone berserk in the Information Technology feature. As internal IS process problems proliferate, users get distracted from their work and become, in effect, mini-IS developers. He provides a model for IS process redesign, to improve the effectiveness of internal IS processes.

Rick Hesse, Pepperdine University, traces the progress of spreadsheet approaches to teaching MS/OR over the last 15 years. In addition to taking out the drudgery for both students and teachers, he describes how the use of MS/OR spreadsheets allows moving the course to a focus on problem solving and analysis of results, rather than something resembling "math appreciation."

Need to visualize algorithmic problem solving? Check out **Andy Vazsonyi's** Decision Sciences Picture Book.

In From the Bookshelf, **Andrew Ruppel** (University of Virginia) describes a number of recent books written by consulting firms. Represented are books by representatives of Arthur Andersen, Booz-Allen & Hamilton, Price Waterhouse, the Boston Consulting Group and KPMG. Each provides strategic perspectives from a variety of sources, including CEO's, top-level managers, consultants and academics.

In this "Year of the Member," it is appropriate that we close with the inaugural Membership Roundtable feature. **Scott Shafer**, Auburn University, the Institute's new member services coordinator, presents an overview of his strategic membership plan for the next few years. ■



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