

Dear Colleagues,

As summer turns to fall (or winter to spring for those in the southern hemisphere!) business schools across the globe continue to navigate the challenges of COVID-19. It is a source of inspiration to see colleagues adjust courses and pedagogies to fit the circumstances while remaining responsive to student needs. It is equally rewarding to see how they are balancing additional teaching demands resulting from the pandemic with the need to remain productive in scholarly pursuits. Out of a crisis we are seeing individuals rise to the occasion and show what can be done under challenging conditions. This is also apparent in the efforts of many within DSI as we strive to keep moving forward.

I am delighted to announce the addition of two new international chapters to the DSI family. Conversations that began more than a year ago have culminated in the DSI Board approving China DSI and Qatar DSI chapters. Thanks to the efforts of Antony Paulraj (Nottingham University Business School China) and Khaled AlShare (Qatar University), we are starting a new page in DSI's international engagement. I am excited about the opportunities that lie ahead in building DSI's presence in China and Qatar and in becoming the organization of choice for decision science educators there.

Things are shaping up well for the first virtual DSI annual conference. A total of 867 submissions were received, an exciting number considering submission numbers for recent physical conferences have typically been in the 850 - 1,050 range. At the time of writing, 684 registrations have been received for the conference and an additional 134 for the Doctoral Consortium. One of the innovations from taking the conference virtual this year is that the consortium is a standalone event the day before the main conference. Now these attendees can participate in the consortium, and should they choose, register for the conference as well to take advantage of all three days of the main event.

The main conference will have all the usual elements including more than 260 regular and award sessions, 19 professional development workshops, and 3 keynote sessions. The keynotes will feature tech industry leaders Sudhi Ranjan Sinha and Michael Casale on 'Reimagining Business with AI' and 'Training with Virtual Reality Technology', respectively, and an interview with President and CEO of AACSB International, Caryn Beck-Dudley, on 'Business Schools in Transition'. In a featured panel, '*State of Academia in Business Schools*', Deans Sanjay Gupta, Manoj Malhotra, Amy Hillman, Stephen Mangum, and Paul Pavlov will discuss the impacts of the pandemic on the decision sciences community. A working group is also developing a program of social activities and virtual site tours. I encourage you to let colleagues outside DSI know about the conference and nudge them towards registering for what will be an excellent event.

On the subject of conferences, conversations have been taking place regarding region/division conferences in the spring of 2021. NEDSI will hold their virtual conference in March, MWDSI is planning a spring virtual event, and EDSI is moving forward with plans for their conference in May. Given uncertainties regarding the pandemic and budget restrictions, WDSI will not hold their conference in 2021, and SWDSI is still to make a final decision.

As mentioned in the July letter, DSI is undertaking a comprehensive brand analysis. While this has been discussed by prior boards, it is the first time in recent history that we have moved forward in critically assessing the DSI brand, the effectiveness of our messaging, and the alignment of the brand and organizational identity with our strategic plan and stakeholder interests. Many of this year's committee charges were designed to provide insights which, when coupled with the results of the brand analysis, will inform future decisions about service offerings and communication in a holistic manner. An RFP

yielded several proposals that are currently being evaluated, with a recommendation and decision anticipated next month. Expectations are that the analysis will be completed in early spring and provide input to committee charges for the 2021-2022 board year.

This is indeed an exciting time for DSI. We continue to make progress on several fronts and to build an increasingly sound foundation for the future. Despite the challenges around us, I am confident about the direction we are headed and optimistic about what is to come, starting with our annual conference next month. I look forward to 'seeing' you there.

Vijay R. Kannan
President