

Dear Colleagues,

What a year it has been! As I pen this last note as DSI President, it is fitting to reflect on where we are today versus a year ago. This time last year we were only beginning to grasp the realities of the coronavirus. Little did we know the impact it would have on society or higher education. A year later, we have seen the toll that COVID has taken but also that when we come together and use science, technology, and data driven decision making, we can find solutions to challenging problems. For all the loss and suffering, we have also seen resilience, innovation, and a commitment to supporting others. I am proud of our members' efforts to be a positive influence during these times.

DSI has made significant strides this year. We successfully moved to the virtual world - our annual conference, the programming of several regions, and Board deliberations did not miss a beat. Two new journal editors were seated and have embraced their responsibilities and the challenge to elevate our journals. Two new international chapters joined the DSI family, the culmination of the efforts of many over several years, and providing the Institute with new opportunities. We weathered the storm financially, emerging from the year better than expected. All in all, there is much to celebrate.

At the February Board Meeting, several important decisions were made. Recognizing our members potential challenges with funding and travel, the Board made the call for the 2021 annual conference to again be virtual. This also provided the program team maximum time to plan and execute. Despite a short runway, the 2020 conference was better than hoped for. Expectations will be higher this year, and we want to fully leverage what we learned last year in meeting if not exceeding them. Staying virtual also lets us continue learning about the realities of virtual conferences and how we can incorporate technology in future programming.

The Board took several steps to continue strengthening our governance and operating practices. These include the formalization of annual review processes for our editors and Executive Director, updating expectations regarding committee membership and functioning, clarifying criteria for award nominees, and formalizing processes for creating new units of the Institute. We continue to improve in ways that reflect a commitment to accountability, transparency, and respect.

On the subject of governance, in recent years the Board established an operating framework and set of shared expectations to ensure that all units of DSI are treated equitably, and that we move forward in a mutually supportive, sustainable manner. It has been clear for some time that the interests and objectives of Indian Subcontinent DSI leadership no longer align with those of DSI, making it necessary to bring the curtain down on ISDSI. We thank all that contributed to their success over the years.

The work of the Institute continues. The discovery phase of our brand analysis is complete, and we look forward to the next phase, developing a brand guide and revising our brand positioning. Kathryn Zuckweiler has accepted the invitation to serve as founding editor of our new professional development publication. Kathy is a former feature editor of *Decision Line*, annual conference Associate Program Chair, and Board member. I am excited to see the launch of the publication and to see it thrive under Kathy's leadership. Rebecca Duray has accepted an invitation to serve as Program Chair for our 2022 Annual Conference. Rebecca is also a long time DSI member with a record of service including as Associate Program Chair for the 2020 annual conference and past Board member. I look forward to Rebecca leading us back to the world of in person conferences!

Last May I challenged the Board to act decisively, look to the future and not be constrained by the past, and embrace the responsibility that comes with being on the Board. Their working as one and being

ready to analyze, discuss, and act has helped us move forward. Without their efforts we could not have made such progress this year. I am delighted to turn the reins over to Joy Field. Joy has a deep commitment to DSI and has served the Institute in numerous capacities. She will provide outstanding leadership as we continue building on the progress of recent years.

It is thirty years to the month since my first encounter with DSI, at the 1991 MWDSI meeting in Indianapolis. DSI has been an important part of my professional life, serving as President has been a highlight of it. I thank you for the trust you placed in me and for working with me to make us better.

Vijay R. Kannan
President