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President's Desk

Volunteerism Alive and Well

INFORMS President

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In the afterglow of the 2006 Annual INFORMS meeting in Pittsburgh, I can only marvel at the dedication and energy of the numerous volunteers in our community and the professionalism of our staff. At last count, we had a record attendance of 3,781 registrants. This represents more than one-third of our membership and is the largest operations research/management science meeting ever held. Michael Trick, the general chair, did a superb job of organizing what many people have told me was the "best INFORMS meeting I have ever attended."

The meeting included three spectacular general receptions, a revamped awards ceremony, six plenary talks, 30 tutorials, 55 parallel sessions, a hugely successful combined colloquium and high school teachers workshop, as well as countless business meetings and subdivision receptions. Special thanks are due to Jayant Rajgopal and Andrew Schaefer, the program co-chairs, who, together with their committee, organized the technical end of this outstanding meeting.

We are also indebted to Terry Cryan, our director of Meetings, and the entire INFORMS meetings staff, as well as to Rina Schneur, our VP of Meetings and the INFORMS Meetings Committee for the countless hours that they put into making sure that the meeting came off without a hitch. A great time was had by all! I look forward to seeing all of you at the practice meeting in Vancouver (April 29-May 1, 2007), the international meeting in Puerto Rico (July 8-11, 2007) and at next year's annual meeting in Seattle (Nov. 4-7, 2007).

The energy and enthusiasm of our community extends well beyond meetings. We publish 11 print/online journals and one online-only journal, all of which demand the dedication of numerous editors, referees and authors. Collectively, our journals publish approximately

600 high-quality papers each year. The strength of our journals continues to be noticed by the outside world. Three of our journals (*Information Systems Research*, *Management Science* and *Operations Research*) are used by *Business Week* in ranking business schools. These three along with *Marketing Science* and *Organization Science*, are included in the *Financial Times of London* list of top journals.

Within INFORMS we are working hard to enhance the value of our publications. We plan to disseminate queueing statistics for our journals so that authors can know more about the distribution of review times and publication queue times. We also plan to start discussion boards for papers at some of our journals, further adding to the richness of our publications. We welcome your ideas on ways of improving our publication offerings. Special thanks to all our editors, department and area editors, referees and authors, as well as to Pat Shaffer, our director of Publications, her entire staff and to our VP of Publications, Terry Harrison, and the INFORMS publications committee for their dedication and hard work.

Subdivisions or communities are at the heart of INFORMS. With 10 societies, roughly 20 technical sections, six fora, more than 30 geographical sections and more than 60 student chapters, there is something for everyone in INFORMS. Our subdivision officers and volunteers devote countless hours to making INFORMS a home for its 10,000+ members. Two activities deserve special mention. First, in celebration of its 25th anniversary, the INFORMS Roundtable, an organization of more than 50 industry leaders, has undertaken a nearly yearlong strategic review that resulted in 35 initiatives that will strengthen the Roundtable, INFORMS and the broader OR/MS practice community. I applaud them on this effort and look forward to working with them in bringing these initiatives to fruition.

Second, under the leadership of Sanjay Mehrotra, our VP of chapters and fora, the Subdivision Council is planning our first regional meeting to be held in Chicago this summer. This promises to be an excellent opportunity to meet students and faculty at nearby institutions. Additional regional conferences are also being planned.

About four months ago, I appointed an ad hoc committee on diversity within INFORMS. Chaired by Anna Nagurney, this committee has produced an excellent preliminary report. While the spirit of volunteerism is alive and well in INFORMS, the report clearly suggests that we can and should do more in recognizing the accomplishments of all our members and in including a broader spectrum of women, minorities and individuals of different ethnic backgrounds in leadership positions within the organization. I believe that the Women in OR/MS

officers provide an outstanding model for all subdivisions. WORMS elects a senior and junior vice president for most critical activities, thereby institutionalizing mentorship of our junior colleagues. I encourage all our communities to consider adopting this leadership model.

It has been a pleasure and an honor to serve as the president of this great organization. As my term comes to an end, I want to thank the many people who have made this a most rewarding year. I particularly want to thank the entire INFORMS staff, including Mark Doherty, our executive director, as well as our senior staff, Randy Chandler, Terry Cryan, Betsy Fruhling, Randy Kiefer, Barry List, Mary Magrogan, Pat Shaffer and Maria Staab. Your dedication and devotion to INFORMS is deeply appreciated! I also want to thank the members of our Board of Directors for the last two years who have given selflessly of themselves in trying to make INFORMS a better place for us all. Finally, I cannot say enough to thank the other members of the executive committee with whom I have served for the last two years: Mike Rothkopf, Dick Larson, Brenda Dietrich, Susan Albin and Don Kleinmuntz. Your friendship, guidance and wisdom have been invaluable to me. I thank you for all you have done for me and INFORMS.