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From the Editor

Srinivas Bollapragada

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THE FRANZ EDELMAN AWARD
Achievement in Operations Research

From the Editor

Srinivas Bollapragada

General Electric Global Research Center, Niskayuna, New York 12309, bollapragada@research.ge.com

I am delighted and honored to be reappointed as the Editor-in-Chief (EIC) of *Interfaces* for a second three-year term. The journal was in excellent health at the start of my first term. Fortunately, over the past few years, we have seen consistent positive trends in key journal metrics, including number of submissions, time to first review, overall acceptance rates, pages published per issue, online subscriptions, issue backlog, expenses, and revenue. In 2012, the number of original submissions increased by more than 20 percent, expenses decreased by more than 10 percent, and revenues increased by a small fraction when compared with the corresponding metrics in the prior year. The average time to first decision has steadily decreased. The acceptance rate for original submissions is now around 14 percent compared to over 16 percent a few years ago. The percentage of submissions from authors outside the United States and Canada has increased over the past four years: in 2009, 50 percent of the original submissions were from international authors; in 2013, this metric stands at over 60 percent.

We have made a few changes during my first term. To encourage more practitioners to publish in the journal, we instituted the publication of “Practice Summary” papers, which are two to four pages long. Practitioners come across numerous interesting real-world problems. However, they are often unable to publish their work for confidentiality reasons or because they lack the time to write full-length papers. The goal of these papers is to bring forward such

work. I was pleased to learn from a recent survey that faculty members are finding Practice Summaries useful for both teaching and research; only the Edelman Award articles received a higher ranking in the survey. With the elevation of the Wagner Prize to an INFORMS prize from a subdivision prize and the marketing efforts of INFORMS led by Gary Bennett, the quality of articles in the Wagner Prize issue has further improved. We have also instituted outstanding reviewer awards to recognize the contributions of reviewers. The awards are based on the quality, quantity, and timeliness of the reviews.

Although *Interfaces* spotlights the practice of operations research and management science (OR/MS), the majority of contributions to the journal have been from the academic community. A large percentage of submissions and accepted papers originate at universities. More than half of our editorial board members and our reviewers are faculty members. Several reasons for a higher level of participation from academics in comparison to practitioners seem apparent. Faculty members usually are evaluated based on their publications and are encouraged to participate in journal-editing activities—practitioners usually do not receive such incentives. Confidentiality of the work performed, and lack of time for publishing could be other reasons for relatively fewer submissions from nonacademic authors.

Nevertheless, we have experienced an increase in contributions from nonacademics over the past several years. I am the first nonacademic to serve as EIC of the journal. We now have several practitioners on the

editorial board plus many others serving as reviewers. The papers from the Edelman Award and Wagner Prize competitions do an excellent job of unveiling OR/MS success stories from multiple types of organizations across the world. Yet, we still have room for much more practitioner involvement.

We offer multiple avenues by which OR/MS and other advanced-analytics practitioners may contribute to *Interfaces*. These include submitting regular papers, participating in the Edelman or Wagner competitions, and volunteering to review papers. Papers from *Interfaces* are used worldwide for learning. As practitioners, we come across numerous important real-world problems. Sharing our experiences through the journal brings visibility to our work while advancing our professional field. The actual process of writing clarifies an author's own thinking about the topic and may sometimes lead to improvements. Feedback from reviewers can provide useful insights. The resulting publication can be used as a recruiting tool to attract analytics talent, a learning vehicle for new hires, and

documentation of existing OR applications. I encourage practitioners to take advantage of *Interfaces* to bring greater visibility to their work while helping to advance the journal and our profession. Reviewing provides a learning experience. One of the fruits of this learning is that concepts applied to one problem could be transportable to another domain of interest to the reviewer. I encourage you to contact me if you are interested in volunteering for *Interfaces*.

In closing, I would like to thank my *Interfaces* colleagues who have recently left the editorial board. I deeply appreciate the long service of Karla Hoffman, James Lowe, and Dave Ronen as associate editors. I am grateful to Graham Rand for his excellent service as the book reviews editor over the past three years. Graham will continue in his current role until we find someone to replace him. We are all saddened by the loss of Saul Gass, a long-serving contributing editor of *Interfaces*. Fred Murphy's tribute to Saul is published in this special issue on the 2013 Edelman Award competition.