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EDITORIAL

As we come to the end of our first term and to the start of a second term, we wish to apprise you of some changes and directions for *Operations Research*. First, we thank you for the fine support and understanding that many authors have exhibited when faced with the tremendous backlog that *Operations Research* has, fortunately, had these past four years. We say fortunately because, while the backlog is a source of frustration to authors who need to get their work published with some currency, it is also a sign of the Journal's health.

Since the end of 1988, *Operations Research* has published on a regular schedule. This has partially contributed to an increase in the number of papers submitted for consideration. In turn, more papers have been accepted. As of this writing at the beginning of December, 99 papers have been accepted in 1991. (We accepted 111 and 112 papers in 1990 and 1989, respectively.) As a result, our backlog has gotten substantially larger than the usual two issues that every editor likes to maintain.

We have encouraged authors to make their papers more readable by including examples and more insights. This has resulted in somewhat longer papers. In 1989 an average manuscript had 24.2 pages, in 1990 it had increased to 26.5 pages, and the average for 1991, thus far, has increased to 27.5 pages. We will continue to try to strike a balance between readability and length without resorting to an arbitrary maximum page limit for a manuscript.

All of this resulted in a worsening backlog, particularly in three areas: **Optimization; Manufacturing, Production and Scheduling; and Stochastic Processes and Their Applications**. The wait to publish was well more than twelve months.

At the joint national meeting in Nashville in May 1991, the ORSA Council granted *Operations Research* permission to publish two supplemental issues in 1992 as a means to decrease the backlog. As a result, bundled with this January–February issue is our first supplemental issue. It contains articles that have been accepted in the area of Optimization (Jan Karel Lenstra, Eindhoven University of Technology, The Netherlands, Area Editor).

The second supplement will be published and mailed with the regular May–June 1992 issue. It will be devoted entirely to papers accepted in the area of **Stochastic Processes and Their Applications** (Shaler

Stidham, Jr., University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, and Ralph Disney, Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas, Area Editors).

The result of the two supplements is a backlog of 3 to 4 issues of accepted papers. If your paper is accepted to the Journal, you may now be assured of a more timely publication schedule.

Also notice that a new item begins in this issue. On the very bottom of each title page, right below the **subject classifications**, you will find a new line called the **area of review**. This is the name of the area in which the paper was reviewed for publication. We hope it will help authors who are doing similar research to know in which area their work fits, and thus, to whom they should submit their papers.

Those authors with papers in this issue and the supplement will have received their galleys with a fluorescent orange sticker on the first page. This is a notice that authors must return galleys to the Editorial Office at Georgia Tech (not to the printer) within 48 hours of receipt. Although this same message is given on the **Reprint Sheet and Proofreading Instructions** provided by the printer and on our **Galley Information Letter**, many authors still ignore the plea (from this and other journals as well) to return corrected galleys expeditiously. Many writers refuse to accept a deadline. Please believe it—galleys returned late or those that we have to hunt down to get returned will be moved to another issue.

Everything we do with our fine printer, Waverly Press, is done in accordance with a tight production schedule. If the schedule for the parts (manuscripts into galleys, into page proofs) breaks down, then our scheduled press run and release date will be changed. You will receive *Operations Research* late because we will have lost our reserved place on the presses.

So we appreciate your understanding and your conscientiousness in returning corrected galleys on time (and by express mail) even though, in this particular case, it has resulted in your Managing Editor being buried in galleys—close to 80 sets of galleys at one time—40 sets of originals and another 40 authors' sets for these two issues.

We published our first **Telecommunications Area** (Bezalel Gavish, Vanderbilt University, Area Editor) paper in November–December 1991 and will follow that with others that are scheduled for 1992. We continue to publish an **OR FORUM** piece in each

issue, and through the diligence of our area editor, Hugh Miser, we hope to continue this admirable record. We published nine **OR PRACTICE** papers in 1991 and will publish at least 10 practice papers in 1992. Thanks here go to Michael Rothkopf (Area Editor) of Rutgers University.

We are pleased to announce that beginning in 1992 the number of pages allocated to us for publication will increase. We will publish approximately 10% more editorial (text) pages a year. This action, along with the two supplemental issues for 1992, will significantly reduce the backlog of *Operations Research*.

We will make more stylistic and cosmetic changes to the editorial format that will fine tune our award-winning publication. What readers and authors may not notice, but we hope some do, has been our work toward a standard style and usage for *Operations Research*.

We will continue to work to decrease the time that papers are in review, knowing that sometimes the situation gets out of control. But we are aware of those instances, and can only promise to try to improve.

We wish to take this opportunity to thank all of the area editors, the associate editors, and reviewers for their *volunteer effort*. What a great job you do!

Also, we appreciate the continued support of our authors and for their fine submissions, and especially for the prompt and courteous manner in which they respond to sometimes myriad requests from the Editorial Office.

Finally, a request of our readers. If you have any concerns or suggestions for *Operations Research*, please write to us. We will respond.

H. DONALD RATLIFF, Editor

RONA A. GINSBERG, Managing Editor

Atlanta, Georgia, December 1991