

May 7, 2007

To: Keong Leong  
Chair, Operations Management Division

From: Karen Golden-Biddle, Boston University  
Chair, DIGR Committee

Cc: DIGR Committee Members:  
Steve Armstrong, Hull University Business School  
Margie Peteraf, Tuck School Of Bus. At Dartmouth  
Anne Smith, U Tennessee  
Eleanor Westney, MIT  
Tom Lee, U of Washington (Ex Officio-Board Exec. Committee Liaison)

Re: Feedback on OM's 5-Year Report

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Congratulations! We are pleased to recommend the renewal of the Operations Management Division for another five years.

In reviewing each of the division reports, committee members were asked to identify what they see as the division strengths, challenges or concerns in going forward as well as efforts underway that lessen these concerns, and finally, recommendations. In this letter, I detail these comments for your consideration. Before moving into these areas, let me first share that we are unanimous in our high regard for your team's preparation and presentation of the 5-year division report. Particular comments include:

I liked this division's report. In August, they had completed the survey and were well on their way to collecting all data. It has a lot of information that was well-organized.

This is an extremely well presented report. I did notice that an additional section had been added outside of the standard AoM template (section IV entitled key activities).

The OM Division has made substantial progress in the last five years, and the Report is very well-organized and presents this progress most effectively.

I find it difficult to be critical of anything in this report. It is well researched, well written, well constructed, and identifies an appropriate path forwards for the development of the division based on appropriate research data.

This report is presented in a very clear manner, making it easy to find what the OM Division has accomplished during the past 5 years since the last report.

We hope our feedback will help you continue to build on the strengths of OM and help accomplish our shared goal of a relevant and well managed Academy.

Thank you again for your very thoughtful report and your team's contribution to this endeavor.

## ***STRENGTHS***

### **“Technologically savvy division” with good communication with its members**

- Website was ‘superb’ and ‘excellent.’ Well designed and had much added value in terms of links to other sites, upgrades, etc.
- Noted that division has good communication with its members through an active newsletter (whose number of issues has been recently increased).

### **Successful membership recruitment efforts, both in terms of growth and internationalization of membership and in Academy conference participation**

- As one committee member noted, “The Division’s growth rate (41.5% over the five years) substantially outstrips the AOM rate, and the Report provides valuable insights into how this was accomplished.” There has also been a healthy growth in membership which includes a rich mix of international members representing 48 different nations.
- Calling it “very proactive and innovative,” we were also impressed with the personal membership recruitment initiative in 2005 resulted in a 79% increase in conference submissions vs. 25% for AOM as a whole. The steps taken to increase the number and focus of submissions to the annual meeting are “interesting and creative, and other divisions would benefit from learning about this.”
- The reviewer database as well as the number of reviewers outside the US has grown significantly. In 2002, 15% of reviewers were international; in 2006, this grew to 35% from 26 countries.

### **Novel focus of doctoral consortium for mid-career students**

- The “innovative format and high value” of the research incubator to help mid-career doctoral students with their dissertations. Members liked its development, incorporation of doctoral student research feedback, and securing sponsorship to provide financial support for doctoral students to attend.

### **Linking with other AOM Divisions**

- Successful in collaborating with other divisions, in particular the substantial increase in number of PDWs co-sponsored with other Divisions (15 in 2006).

### **Other strengths**

- Hard working, high-quality leadership. “I was especially impressed with the leadership efforts over the last 2 years to increase student participation, the number of joint PDWs, and international and overall member levels.”
- Showing value of AOM paper presentations to eventual publication - well over half of the papers presented at the OM Division have been subsequently published in top OM journals. Clever series of articles about where the presentation papers were published. Nice selling point for the division.
- The Ambassador-at-Large positions designed to provide more formal links with external associations is excellent idea, from which Divisions who share the OM pattern of members having extensive affiliations with other professional societies could learn.

- Good financial support in addition to AOM support. It is encouraging to see that in the face of increases in social hours and awards over the past 5 years, the executive committee has responded by securing external funding from a wide variety of sources.

## **CHALLENGES**

### **Size**

Size is a major concern. Committee members noted how critical it seems for the division to have a good chair/team. Some worry that if the division had a few years of poor leadership, its growth and forward momentum could be hurt. The issue of burnout of leaders came up in both the 2002 and 2007 reports.

- Current leaders recognize this challenge in their continued efforts to recruit high-quality leadership.

### **Different pulls on OM member participation in AOM**

Some noted that AOM is not necessarily the #1 conference for these OM division members. We agree with the report that AOM competes with a lot of conferences, many focused particularly on OM research issues. This is a pull on OM division members' time and resources. In light of so many competing societies, the OM Division and more generally, AOM, has to have a very distinct image/reward for attendance.

### **Other areas**

- Limited overlap of research interests with other divisions. Limited opportunities for cooperative efforts as a result. Yet, see division moving more towards empirical research with strong opportunity for theoretical cross-fertilization with other divisions. Some topics among best papers fit into theoretical streams in OMT and OB divisions, as well as BPS division (where there is already substantial member overlap).
  - This challenge is identified in report. Division incorporates widening collaboration with other divisions as part of action plan. There is already active seeking of cooperative ventures with other divisions, especially via PDWs. As well, leadership is focused on quality of research
- Lost control of finances a bit during this period, though mitigated by addition of a Treasurer
- I wonder about the specific intellectual contribution to AOM journals in addition to close ties to non-AOM journals, such as J of Operations Mgmt.
  - Most of actions proposed on pp. 35-36 are goals (“promote high quality empirical research”, for example), rather than actions.
  - There seemed to be substantial number of practitioners who completed survey. The comments reflected tension between division becoming more empirical/theoretical (with need to increase ties to other divisions for theoretical flows into OM) and making more practitioner (with more high-profile practitioners speaking). Again, this tension might reflect mix of members who

completed survey, but it did highlight that division may be serving different/distinct needs.

- I would have liked more discussion of how OM handles awards process. For instance, do JOM editors decide on three best papers? How are OM Scholars nominated? I think process related to all the OM awards needs to be very transparent.

### ***RECOMMENDATIONS***

- This division has a great opportunity to bring in more AOM academics who have one foot in the logistics/supply chain area. This is a growing area and could further boost membership.
- I notice there is a lot of teaching oriented sessions in the division and it may be worth the division striking up an alliance with the MED Division especially with regard to jointly sponsored symposia.
- Perhaps yearly provide an account of where AOM presentations are published (maybe a 2 year lag). I think adding some qualitative accounts of this publishing process could be fascinating learning for doctoral students in terms of the time, type of revisions, and other aspects of the publishing process. Maybe start this for the PDW doctoral feedback sessions – start tracking the doctoral projects from the PDW to presentation to publication?
- Consider holding a winter executive committee meeting where financial report is reviewed, nominations done with whole executive committee, etc.
- Continue to promote strong scholarship dimension of OM division.
- Clarify policies, procedures, and process for the division awards in order to make the process transparent (as is possible) and understandable to membership.