

## 1. Letter from the President:

Greetings AAA-IS section members,

I hope everyone is having success in wrapping up their spring semester and the academic year.

I would like to begin my letter by recapping our mid-year meeting. We met in New Orleans, and as expected, the outside opportunities for dining and entertainment were superb. I hope that you enjoyed them. Scott Summers did a fantastic job organizing and coordinating the meeting. Uday Murthy and Bruce Dehning outdid themselves in coordinating the New Scholar's Consortium and *JIS* workshop. Additionally, numerous other IS section members played an active part in making our mid-year meeting the success that it was. I offer my thanks to all.

As those of you who attended the meeting know, we changed the format of the paper sessions. For the research paper presentations, discussants summarized the paper; authors followed with clarification comments; and the audience then queried the author. The goal of this format was to enhance audience participation. Judging by the sessions that I attended and the comments that I received, the goal of increasing audience participation was achieved. However, the transition to the new format was a little bumpy. Regardless, our intention is to continue to use the new format for research paper presentation, because it empowers and engages the audience. We will also continue with a "no discussant" format in the education research paper presentations. Again, our goal is to maximize audience participation with the authors. We will work hard at next year's midyear meeting in Scottsdale to smooth out the bumps, but in order to be successful we need everyone to come to the paper sessions ready to participate.

Judy Rayburn's speech was one of the most surprising and refreshing events at our midyear meeting. Judy is the incoming president of the AAA, and she directly addressed the dearth of IS papers in the AAA's national publications – with a primary focus on *The Accounting Review*. She bemoaned the lack of diversity in our national journals and suggested that diversity of research and opinion were needed for the health of the AAA and accounting academe. I can report that both Judy Rayburn and the current AAA president, Jane Mutchler, are committed to larger more diverse national level publications. This bodes well for the IS section. I encourage you to prepare and submit manuscripts to *Accounting Horizons* and *The Accounting Review*. With the leadership support that we now enjoy, it is important to make editors consider manuscripts that inform accounting through the lens of information and communication technology.

Other exciting news about the section concerns our changing Web presence. Terry Glandon is the new associate editor for Web services at *JIS*. That means that the *JIS* website is moving to the University of Texas at El Paso. Terry has been working closely with Brad Tuttle, the editor of *JIS*, to transition and enhance the journal's Web presence. We are also moving the IS section's website, which is currently being tested on servers provided by the AAA national organization. Many thanks to Terry Glandon for all her work on this, thanks to Ray Meservy our long time section webmaster, and finally thanks to Marilyn Prosch Greenstein and the Web advisory committee. An email will be sent to all section members announcing the completion of our website transitions. Also, we will redirect Web traffic to the new URLs to insure uninterrupted service for the membership.

The section's membership committee, which consists of Darryl Woolley, Antoinette Lynch, Arianna Pinello, and George Joseph, has identified everyone in the latest issue of Hassleback at an American university with a systems interest. I am happy to report that 80% of those identified are members of our section. The committee plans to contact those that are not members, and if they are members of the AAA, offer them a free one year membership to the IS section. Great job membership committee! On a similar note, Scott Summers has updated the membership database on the IS section Website. Members have the ability to modify their information as well as perform searches on the IS section membership. Thanks, Scott.

My last piece of section news concerns the education committee. They have collected and organized the sample syllabi for a diverse group of accounting information systems courses. These will be posted to our new website and should be available later this spring. Also, remember that our C<sup>3</sup> project is on an every other year rotation, which means that next year is a C<sup>3</sup> year. Begin considering assignments that you would like to contribute to our C<sup>3</sup> compendium.

On a sad note, Barry Cushing passed away March 1 after a long battle with cancer. Barry was 59. Barry was co-author of an extremely popular systems text that could be credited with defining accounting information systems from a survey perspective. He will certainly be missed as a leader and a scholar.

Following precedent, I finish this president's letter with opinion, and in this instance, I want to consider the health of our section and our area of accounting. From an external viewpoint, these are the best of times. Demand for accountants, in the face of Sarbanes Oxley, is the best that I have seen it in my twenty years as a professor. Ask almost any practitioner and they will tell you of the critical need for accountants to understand information systems technology. In fact, the "internal control audit" cannot be done in the modern era without significant input from someone trained as an IT auditor.

From an internal viewpoint, things could be better. It appears that one of the first areas to be outsourced in an accounting department is accounting systems. The danger in this is the trivialization of accounting systems as a discipline within accounting. The long-term health of our section is contingent on our ability to be mainstream members of the accounting faculty. I have no magic bullet that will insure that this happens. My belief is that there is only one thing that we can do, and that is to commit to excellence. We need to be the best teachers that we can be. We need to bring innovative materials and pedagogy to the classroom. Our scholarship needs to be at the highest level possible, and we need to submit it to the best journals. The purpose of the IS section is to aid your effort towards excellence – that is the reason we exist. Please use the section and its resources to achieve your own professional excellence. You will benefit, the area of accounting information systems will benefit, and the IS section will benefit.

All the best,

Chris Wolfe