
Welcome to the Southeastern InfORMS Conference

On behalf of the council, officers, and program committee, I would like to welcome you to the 44th Annual Meeting of the Southeastern Chapter of the Institute for Operations Research and the Management Sciences (SE INFORMS). I hope this year's meeting is a pleasant and worthwhile experience for you. It has been my pleasure to serve as your 2008 Program Chair and I thank the Council for their confidence in appointing me.

The energy surrounding our annual meeting comes from the ability to renew old acquaintances and to meet new colleagues from universities, governments, businesses, and other organizations. I encourage you to pursue these connections, but also to encourage other colleagues to join us in future years.

Everyone is invited to attend the business meeting which is scheduled from 5:00 to 6:00 p.m. on Thursday. This inclusive meeting provides a forum for you to both learn more about the operations of SE INFORMS and present your opinions regarding our future direction. The meeting is followed by the President's reception at 6:00 p.m. Here you can socialize and relax with colleagues in a collegial environment while enjoying a variety of fine foods and drinks. Our luncheon on Friday will conclude this year's meeting. Please plan to attend and help me recognize the many individuals who assisted in bringing this meeting together. Awards will also be given at this time to the winners of the student paper competition and to the authors of outstanding papers.

As always, many individuals and organizations have provided the support necessary to ensure that this meeting will be a success. I would like to thank my fellow officers Tim Burwell, Barry Wray, and George Lowry and Chris McCart who have answered many questions and provided important advice and assistance; the track chairs who have provided all of the necessary support to bring you well thought-out, organized tracks; and the judges in the student paper competition who contribute significant time and energy reviewing and judging papers and presentations. I also want to thank all of you who have developed and presented special sessions. These sessions give all of us a chance to explore new ideas and discuss our own thoughts and ideas with colleagues.

Many generous organizations provided the financial resources necessary to make this conference comfortable and enjoyable. I would like to start by thanking my institution, Roanoke College for providing me the support necessary to perform my duties as Program Chair as well as providing staff to help with daily registration duties. Finally, I owe many thanks to Al Avery and John Eatman for their help with the conference management system and web site.

Numerous other schools and organizations also provided financial support. You can find a list of our sponsors on the pages of this program. Their support makes it possible to offer travel scholarships for all student paper competition entries and generous cash prizes for the top student authors. In addition, this support helps us keep down the registration costs associated with the meeting. Please take a moment to personally thank our sponsors.

Finally, I would like to thank you, the individual participants, who actually make these meetings happen. I urge you all to sit in on as many sessions as possible and to participate in the meeting to its fullest. If you learn something new, renew an old acquaintance, or meet some new colleagues by the time you leave, the conference will have been a success.

Enjoy the conference!

Yours sincerely,

Ali Nazemi, 2008 Program Chair
