

Message from the President Mohan Rao

2018 SWDSI Conference Recap



(L to R) Mark McMurtrey, president-elect, Mohan Rao, president, and Khaled Alshare, program chair

The 49th Annual Meeting of the Southwest Decision Sciences Institute (SWDSI) was held on March 7-10, 2018 at Hyatt Regency & Albuquerque Convention Center in Albuquerque, New Mexico. The conference brought together 140 attendees, including 27 students. Attendees came from several countries. The program chair himself, Khaled Alshare, came from Qatar. He has been a loyal member of SWDSI for a long time since he was a faculty in the United States. Despite being in Qatar, he worked hard to attract papers for the conference and communicate with his team members constantly. As a result, there were 140 submissions to 21 tracks, workshops and panels. Of those submissions, 46 were accepted as full papers, 77 as abstracts into 36 sessions. There were 3 workshops, 2 panels and one Doctoral consortium.

Southwest DSI continues to put a special emphasis on attracting new students and especially doctoral students. It spends a significant amount of money for the Doctoral Consortium Luncheon, fee waiver for doctoral consortium attendees and for the best student paper awards. The money is well worth it in the long term, not only for SWDSI but also for DSI. These students become the future leaders of our organizations. There are several examples. Despite financial issues faced by SWDSI in recent years, the policy of continued support for students is expected to continue in the foreseeable future.

The president of Southwest DSI, Mohan Rao, presided over the Executive Officers' meeting in the morning and the Business Meeting in the afternoon. The conference was a great success because of the team work. Besides the president, the leadership team included Mark McMurtrey, president-elect, Khaled Alshare, program chair, and Matt Lindsey, program chair-elect, who worked closely for the whole year. He pointed out the strengths and weaknesses of SWDSI and the opportunities that exist to overcome some of the challenges. SWDSI has very loyal, long-term members who have been serving the association for decades just for the love of it. SWDSI operates efficiently. It continues a great teamwork by which the incoming officers will not miss a beat when it is time to lead. The challenges

come from both DSI and FBD, the conference alliance partner of SWDSI. Despite protests from SWDSI, DSI imposed \$40 additional fee on Non-DSI members attending SWDSI conference. At the same time, FBD made SWDSI to be responsible for our own projectors. Both issues caused serious problems. The attendance also affected adversely. We have also pointed out that DSI started charging fees, but SWDSI has no representation on the DSI Board. It is a serious concern for the long-term relationship. We were pleased to have Johnny Rungtusanatham, President-Elect of the Decision Science Institute, who understood our challenges and concerns and indicated that DSI could find solutions. We have asked FBD not to abandon its primary role as a conference facilitator, which includes providing the projectors. For the \$100 fee that each attendee pays, FBD should not lose money if it prioritizes its activities properly.



(Above L to R) Khaled Alshare, Program Chair, Mike Hanna and David Douglas, Lifetime Achievement Award recipients, Mohan Rao, President of SWDSI, Johnny Rungtusanatham, President-Elect of DSI, Mark McMurtrey, President-Elect of SWDSI.

This year, the Business meeting overflowed the meeting room. The most enjoyable part of the meeting was recognizing the dedication and the hard work of members that make this conference successful year after year. All the committees worked hard and produced excellent results. They have identified the outstanding members of SWDSI for their dedication, service and achievement. Carl Rebman (right) received the 2018 SWDSI Outstanding Educator Award. David Douglas and Mike Hanna received the SWDSI Lifetime



Achievement Awards for 32 years and 36 years of service respectively. Southwest DSI has been truly blessed to have these outstanding individuals. We are going to miss David and Mike. We wish them well deserved rest in their retirement.

Our 50th Golden Jubilee Meeting will be on March 16-19, 2019 at Hyatt Regency Houston in Houston, Texas. Because of its significance, our leadership team is making an all-out effort to attract a huge turnout. We hope you will join us. For more information about SWDSI, please visit our website <http://www.swdsi.org> or contact the incoming Program Chair, Matt Lindsey, at lindseymd@sfasu.edu.

With Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mohan Rao". The signature is written in a cursive style and is contained within a white rectangular box.

Dr. Mohan Rao

President, 2017-18 Decision Sciences Institute, Southwest Region