OMT Chair's Message, Jerry Davis, University of Michigan

Jerry Davis, University of Michigan, gives us OMT news in his usual informative yet humorous fashion....

OMT is a thriving community today, with over 3600 members from a wide range of academic and cultural backgrounds. The OMT division serves as an intellectual crossroads within the Academy of Management. Thus, while more than a quarter of us are members of OB, another 36% are members of BPS. OMT also has one of the highest proportions of non-US members in the Academy. As our identity statement puts it, “We stand at the intersection of micro and macro, providing a context for mutually-beneficial intellectual engagement across disciplinary and other boundaries.” At its annual meeting in February, the OMT executive committee discussed how we could make the most of this diversity and how the division could better serve its members. One of the themes that emerged strongly was the value of expanding OMT’s role in the curriculum. The changing nature of organizations—from bureaucratic to more extemporaneous—has meant that courses traditionally taught by OMT members, such as organization design, have lost some of their relevance. But we have yet to generate a set of robust alternatives for a world where “organizing” often predominates over formal “organization.” This is a place where OMT can provide a great service to the field.

A new priority—OMT in the curriculum

The OMT division has great strengths in research and theory, and we hope to build a stronger bridge to teaching and practice. The teaching committee (chaired by Kelly Thomson) and the practice committee (co-chaired by Majken Schulz and Andy Hoffman) will be central to this effort. As a first step, we are considering a set of initiatives to secure a more solid place in the business curriculum for OMT topics. We welcome your input on this; indeed, you will be receiving a member survey later this year to help us gather more systematic information and feedback. Some proposals include:

- An OMT teaching award, to help honor and publicize the teaching of Organization and Management Theory
- A Wiki for OMT teachable topics, with links to syllabi, cases, and other materials
- A cluster of short PDWs for teaching specific OMT courses (e.g., “Network analysis for organization design and change,” “Managing turnarounds,” “Growing the organization,” “Organizational tools for consulting,” “Institutional entrepreneurship”)
- An advisory council to help guide choices about applications of OMT
This is still at an early stage, and we welcome your input. Are there other, or better, ways for OMT to better link theory to practice and teaching? We are particularly interested in volunteers for the teaching and practice committees who can help bring this about. Stay tuned for more!

**Philadelphia story**

The annual meeting in Philadelphia will be the grandest yet, with more PDWs, more papers, more symposia, and more exhausted reviewers than ever before. Here I highlight some of OMT’s beloved annual events and sacred traditions.

**Professional development, from dissertation to new faculty life**

The OMT division sponsors three flagship professional development events during the pre-conference. The [Dissertation Proposal Workshop](#), which takes place Sunday morning from 9-12, is aimed at doctoral students who have been admitted to candidacy but have not yet defended their dissertation proposals. This year six OMT Distinguished Scholars will work with small groups of students to help develop their ideas into passable proposals. The [OMT/MOC/ODC Doctoral Consortium](#), organized this year by Pablo Martin de Holan, Tim Pollock, and their counterparts in the co-sponsoring divisions, is oriented toward students who are completing their dissertations and moving toward the academic job market. From Friday evening until Sunday morning, the consortium features discussions with veteran faculty at various career stages about managing the dissertation, the job market, teaching, and launching a research career. The [OMT Junior Faculty Consortium](#), organized by Marc-David Seidel and Marvin Washington, is for faculty in the early years of their careers. Distinguished faculty panelists share their insights about teaching, research, publishing, and how to balance all this with having a life. The informal structure of the event helps create connections among peers that last well beyond the meeting. For more details on pre-conference activities, see Henrich Greve’s article in this newsletter.

**OMT Events in Philadelphia**

Willie Ocasio served as program chair for 2007 and was blessed with a Biblical flood of submissions, mercifully matched by an equally formidable posse of reviewers. See [Willie’s article](#) on the program here. We have three can’t-miss events at this year’s meeting. Meet OMT, on Saturday from 5:30-7:30, is a chance to meet your OMT officers and fellow members over grown-up refreshments. (OMT reviewers get first dibs on the drink tickets.) The Welcome Breakfast and Distinguished Scholar talk, on Monday 8:30-10:20, provides both physical and
intellectual nourishment. This year Ron Burt is the OMT Distinguished Scholar, and his
penetrating insights into structural holes will be a perfect accompaniment to the structural holes
in the bagels. And the OMT Business Meeting and Social Hour, on Monday at 5:30-7:30, will
Munch
mix business, pleasure, and
-influenced artifacts—come early, stay late!

Elections

Last year the Academy launched a centralized on-line election system for the divisions, which
allows easier participation from nominations to voting. As a consequence of this new system,
and a very strong slate of candidates, OMT had by far the highest election turnout in its history
last year. This year Kim Elsbach, OMT’s Division Chair-Elect, is organizing the elections for
OMT officers and recruiting volunteers for our three committees (Practice, Research, and
Teaching). Thanks to those who took the time to make nominations or volunteers. And please
vote when you get the call—OMT is your division, and this is a chance to help shape its future.