

THE HISTORY OF THE WESTERN DECISION SCIENCES INSTITUTE

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ABSTRACT

The one and only Helen Beaver, along with six of the 33 individuals who have served as President of the Western Decision Sciences Institute, trace the history of the Institute's evolution.

INTRODUCTION

The first Western Regional Conference of the American Institute of Decision Sciences (AIDS) was held during May 6-7, 1971 in Sacramento, California. It was organized by the Western Region's first President, Manfred W. Hopfe, and his colleagues at Sacramento State College, Michael J. Dottarar, Arthur N. Jensen, and V. Paul Jeppesen. Registration fee for members was \$10.00, and for non-members, \$16.00. The program included the first President of AIDS, Dennis E. Grawoig of Georgia State University, still in office, and the first President-elect, George W. Summers of the University of Arizona as speakers. Institutions represented by the participants included California State Polytechnic College - Pomona; Colorado State University; Stanford University; University of California, Los Angeles; University of Southern California; and, of course, Sacramento State College.

Today, we know Western AIDS as the Western Decision Sciences Institute (WSDI). Over the past 33 years, its conferences have continued to bring together academicians and business professionals from all over the world to share information and research with respect to all aspects of education, business, and organizational decisions. In this Special Session, we trace the history of the Institute. We review the key developments, issues, events and personalities that have shaped the Institute over the years. Through the decades, the Institute has seen a number of innovations in its operation and conference planning process. These innovations have been in response to growth and changing profile of the WSDI membership. Various forces including advances in technologies, internationalization of its membership, and globalization of the decision sciences discipline interests, have shaped the Institute. The Institute has devised various strategies to adapt to its changed environment, and cope with the demands of its membership. A major milestone for WSDI is its adoption of internet-based systems for communications through out the Institute, spanning the globe. WSDI2003 marks the first time a full deployment of internet-based systems made through all aspects of conference management. How far have we come? Through this session, we take a look back. Where will we go from here? Through this session, we explore the possibilities.