

Preface

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This special volume contains expanded versions of a selection of the papers that were presented at the 8th International Conference on the Practice and Theory of Automated Timetabling which was organized in Montreal, Canada, from August 18 to 22, 2008.

The PATAT conferences are held every two years. The focus is on applications across all aspects of timetabling, including educational timetabling, personnel rostering, sports timetabling, and transport scheduling. The conference series emphasizes the multidisciplinary nature of the field. The overriding goal is to provide an international forum for timetabling research that crosses disciplinary divisions and aims to bring practice and theory closer together.

The conference in Montreal was an outstanding success. It brought together over 100 delegates from all over the world. We had 4 plenary talks, 73 presentations and 2 demonstrations. All presenters were invited to submit contributions to this special volume of the *Annals of Operations Research*. All papers have been through a rigorous process of review and revision. We are pleased to present such a broad spectrum of research activity across 26 articles.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all the people involved in the success of the conference. Particular thanks go to Louis-Martin Rousseau and Josée Vignola who worked extremely hard to put this event together. We would also like to express our gratitude to the Programme Committee who reviewed all the submissions to the conference and the papers for this special volume. Finally, thanks should go to all the authors and participants at the conference who contributed to such an enjoyable and stimulating event.

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