EDITORIAL

Letter from the Editor

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The purpose of this letter is to introduce this focused issue, outline the JIBS policy for focused and special issues and delineate the intent and structure of the JIBS paper development workshop at the AIB Annual Meetings.

This issue features the first JIBS focused issue on the theme '*Organizing Knowledge Processes in the Multinational Corporation*'. Focused issues may arise in several ways. On occasion individual papers under review in JIBS will share a common theme. On the basis of consultation with the Departmental Editors and authors involved, the papers in question may be published as a collection. The goal is to enhance the collective impact of these papers by publishing the collection as a focused issue.

Another example involves papers presented at a conference on a topic of potential interest to JIBS. The papers from such a conference could represent an opportunity for JIBS to highlight a particular theme and under certain conditions would be solicited for possible publication in JIBS. The key conditions to be satisfied are first, a determination that the theme is of interest to JIBS; second, that a JIBS Departmental Editor will serve as one of the guest editors; and third that the papers be reviewed consistent with the process and reviewing standards of JIBS. The origin of this first focused issue is the LINK Conference that was held on 1–2 November 2002, in Copenhagen, with the title '*Organizing Processes of Building and Leveraging Knowledge Building*'. It was determined that the theme was of interest to JIBS and the conference organizers Nicolai Juul Foss (JIBS DE) and Torben Pedersen were invited to serve as the guest editors. The Conference had approximately 80 participants and 36 papers were presented and discussed. The authors of the best papers at the conference that fit the theme were invited by the editors to submit their revised manuscripts for the JIBS Focused Issue. In total, 11 papers were submitted for publication. Of the original Conference papers only three were accepted for the JIBS Focused Issue and the other two papers were selected from papers that were submitted to JIBS following the conference. In my judgment, this issue represents an outstanding example of a theme of direct interest to JIBS and will stimulate research in heretofore insufficiently explored areas.

How are focused issues different from special issues?

Upon becoming Editor in Chief, a moratorium on special issues was instituted. The new strategy of JIBS is to limit Special Issues to the exploration of emerging themes in IB. Ideally, special issue themes will emerge from explorations at the JIBS annual Emerging Research Frontiers in IB Conferences (ERFIBC). The second ERFIBC will be hosted by the Michigan State University

CIBER (16–19 September 2004). The selection of a theme will be made after discussions with departmental and consulting editors participating in the conference. The process for JIBS Special Issues is different from that of focused issues as follows: (i) long lead times (8–10 months) for submission of papers. The intention is to allow sufficient time for authors to develop their paper and to counteract any perception that the review and selection process favor better networked scholars. (ii) The guest editor team for a special issue must include at least one JIBS Departmental Editor. This ensures that JIBS reviewing processes and standards will be enforced for special issues. (iii) The guest editors will be asked to assemble a special review board for the special issue. This is intended to augment and avoid overloading the regular Editorial Review Board. (iv) Authors of papers that have survived the first review cycle will be invited to a special paper development workshop. The guest editors and I will guide the paper development session and follow a process designed to provide authors collective feedback from one another, as well as guidance from the editors. This process also ensures that I have a deeper grasp of the nature of the special issue and can perhaps also provide some guidance while the papers are still in development. The paper development session should also serve to speed up the revision and maturation process of papers under consideration for the special issue. (v) At the conclusion of the workshop, the editors may further narrow the number of papers under consideration for special issue. (vi) At the conclusion of the second review cycle, the editors are expected to finalize the collection of papers to be featured in the special issue.

The entire process from discussions at the ERFIBC to publication of a special issue could require as long as 36 months. However, I wish to emphasize that the majority of papers published in JIBS would be submitted and reviewed in the usual and customary process. At steady state, JIBS could have a capacity of publishing one special issue per volume year and an occasional focused issue (at most one per volume year).

In summary, occasional focused issues give JIBS the opportunity to review and publish a high-quality collection of papers on a theme that is of interest to JIBS without requiring publication of widely communicated ‘call for papers’. Special Issues in contrast represent a strategic intent to explore an emerging research theme. It requires casting a very wide net and long lead times.

Both special and focused issues will adhere to the review standards of JIBS.

At the 2004 AIB meeting in Stockholm, 9–13 July, 2004, *JIBS* inaugurated the first ever *paper development workshop* at an annual meeting of AIB. This new *JIBS* initiative represented a collaboration between *JIBS* and the Program Committee for 2004 AIB meeting. It was, by all accounts, highly acclaimed and will become a regular feature of all future AIB meetings. The initial idea was proposed by Professor Tatiana Kostova and the inaugural workshop was coordinated by myself and Professor Kostova. I am pleased to announce that Professor Kostova has accepted my invitation to become the Coordinator of the JIBS annual paper development workshop.

The *JIBS* paper development workshop has three objectives. First, it is intended to establish and nurture collaboration between *JIBS* editors and IB scholars in a new developmental process of research papers that might ultimately appear in top-tier journals, hopefully *JIBS*. Second, the workshop is intended to further the identity of *JIBS* with the AIB community by directly involving *JIBS* editors and Editorial Review Board members with the publication efforts of AIB members. Third, it involves many *JIBS* editors and reviewers with the AIB annual meeting.

The workshop is designed to provide feedback and guidance to authors at different stages of their paper development. The expectation is that the feedback and editorial guidance will greatly enhance the ability of authors to revise their papers and significantly increase their chances to at least avoid a ‘desk reject.’ It also gives authors better information regarding the appropriateness of their paper for JIBS or other top-tier journals. Although more developed papers are likely to benefit to a greater extent from the workshop process, all authors within an editorial track experience intensive collective feedback from one another, as well as guidance from JIBS Departmental Editors. For most authors, the experience will speed up the revision and maturation process of their paper. Participation in the workshop, however, does not imply a commitment to subsequent publication in JIBS.

The workshop involves a unique structure. Papers accepted for the workshop are discussed within separate tracks reflecting the editorial structure of JIBS. Each track is guided by one or more Departmental Editors assisted, when appropriate, by one or more experienced ERB members. Tracks are

limited to 10 papers for each 1-day session. To maximize mutual feedback and learning, authors do not present their own papers. Each paper is summarized and critiqued by a lead discussant assigned to the paper from the authors in the track. All authors in a track are expected to have read each other's papers and offer their comments during the round table discussion that follows the opening presentation by the lead discussant. The Departmental Editor role is to summarize the discussion and offer guidelines where needed at the conclusion of the discussion. In short, the value added to each author depends on the diversity and quality of the collective feedback provided by the other

authors in the track and on the guidance of the JIBS Departmental Editor. The discussion of each paper averages one half hour.

Over 80 papers were submitted to the inaugural 2004 JIBS Paper Development Workshop. A total of 66 papers from 109 authors representing 25 countries were organized into 10 parallel sessions representing each editorial area of JIBS. It is expected that future JIBS paper development workshops could accommodate up to 200 papers with some editorial areas running two or more parallel tracks. Details regarding submissions for the 2005 workshop will be released in December 2004—watch out for it.