EDITORIAL

Letter from the Editor

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The second annual JIBS/AIB Conference on Emerging Research Frontiers in International Business Studies was hosted by the Michigan State University Center for International Business Education and Research (CIBER), September 16–19, 2004. This year's theme was 'Advancing IB Theories, Constructs, and Methods.' Program details can be found on <http://aib.msu.edu/events/frontiers/>.

The purpose of this letter is to review the goals that JIBS and AIB had for this conference and share some highlights and plans for the third annual JIBS Frontiers conference.

The *Frontiers* conference is intended to advance cutting-edge research in International Business Studies broadly defined. Most academic peer-reviewed journals are not proactive in directing attention to under-explored or emerging research areas (the prevalent model is to review and select papers from among those received 'over the transom'). JIBS and AIB, with the support of 29 CIBERs, are intent on evolving the *Frontier* conference into a unique venue where a group of IB scholars will have an opportunity to interact, share insights, and engage in stimulating and genuine dialog in an environment free of the limitations and constraints typical of traditional professional society conferences. The goal is to facilitate open discourse, legitimize exploration of new research domains, redirect or shut down 'tired' themes, and build a community of IB research scholars from across the social sciences and the functional areas of IB.

The second *Frontiers* conference was unique in many ways. More than half of the presentations were selected from proposals received in response to the call for papers. Other sessions had their origins in the steering committee's own initiatives. The conference made a special effort to feature presentations from up and coming next generation IB scholars, as well as engaging in potentially important topics, such as the role of countries and institutions (nine presentations) and empirical research strategies (eight presentations). It was also most gratifying that over 60% of the participants were new attendees (the goal is that at least 50% of participants must be first time participants).

Important outcomes of *Frontiers* conferences are publications and future Special Issues in JIBS. During the 2004 volume year JIBS is publishing five Perspective papers that were originally discussed at the first *Frontiers* conference held at Duke University. This issue, for example, features the Perspective paper 'The Importance of Nongovernmental Organizations (NGOs) in Global Governance and value Creation: an International Business research Agenda' by Hildy Teegen, Jonathan P Doh and Sushil Vachani. Although the

first collection of Perspective papers were invited, they are all peer reviewed and not all were ultimately accepted for publication in JIBS. I expect that the second *Frontiers* conference will also result in the publication of Perspective papers, and that in future, scholars will propose or submit such papers unsolicited. As a rule, Perspective papers are expected to advance theory, combine, and recombine extant research on a theme and provide a new synthesis and open agendas for IB research. An innovation following the second *Frontier* conference is the publication of summaries and discussions of papers on the MSU CIBER web site. Finally, an edited volume of JIBS Perspective papers and other invited chapters will be published in the new Palgrave/JIBS IB series on Advancing *Frontiers* of IB Research. The first volume in the series has been forwarded to Palgrave.

Another hoped for outcome from *Frontiers* conferences is the emergence of one or more themes that could form the basis of a future Special Issue of JIBS. The theme of 'Institutions, Firm Identity and IB' has emerged as a topic for a special issue because of the second *Frontiers* conference. Once the editorial team has been appointed, the 'Call for Papers' will be widely disseminated. It is the policy of JIBS to require that (i) at least one JIBS Departmental Editor serve on the guest editor's team, (ii) the minimum interval for submission of papers will be 10 months, and that (iii) all papers will be reviewed in accordance with JIBS reviewing process. Authors of papers invited to revise and resubmit their papers after the conclusion of the first review cycle will be invited to a special paper development session with the objective of

maximizing feedback to authors and speeding up the maturation process of each paper.

The *Frontiers* conference, however, also aspires to attract social science scholars in economics, political science, sociology, social psychology, and others, whose research informs IB and can be informed by research in IB. Attracting social science scholars outside of IB to JIBS and AIB is a worthwhile challenge. I believe that the *Frontiers* conference is well positioned for attracting these scholars and can serve as the first step for involving them with JIBS and AIB. The second annual *Frontiers* conference only attracted one non-AIB scholar, a record that I hope will be greatly exceeded in future *Frontier* conferences. In addition, the *Frontiers* conference needs to attract participation of IB scholars from around the world. Although the second *Frontiers* conference attracted 22 scholars from outside the USA, many international scholars find it very difficult to attend conferences held in the USA. Moreover, AIB as an international society must take concrete and credible steps to reinforce its international aspiration. Therefore, with the support of the AIB board, the *Frontiers* conference will be convened in a venue outside of the USA every third year. I am very pleased to announce that the third *Frontiers* conference will be hosted by the Rotterdam School of Business, Erasmus University, Rotterdam, The Netherlands. Dates, overarching theme and the Call for Proposals will be released and widely promoted by November 15, 2004. The co-chairs of the steering committee are Professors Henk Volberda, Erasmus University, and Xavier Martin, Tilburg University. Upwards and onwards.