
International Forum
Vol. 14, No. 1
April 2011
pp. 3-4

EDITORIAL

Building Corporate Identity in a Changing World

Papers presented at the Graduate School Forum
January 27-29, 2011

Quo vadis? Where are you going? This famous question of philosophers for centuries can only be answered by first establishing who we are. In a world of ever-changing opportunities, shifting priorities, and evaporating morality, clarity about one's identity and mission is crucial. And if identity is complex at the individual level, corporate identity is even more elusive. *Building Corporate Identity in a Changing World* was the theme of the Graduate School Research Forum held in January of 2011. This Forum provided opportunities for participants to look into the history and track record of different institutions, and to hear the internal interpretations from those who helped to create that history as they interpreted what had happened, what it meant, and what the future might hold for their organization.

This issue of *International Forum* contains several selections from the Graduate School Forum. As in the past, these presentations were invited and selected, so the peer review process for these articles was modified to include editorial suggestions only, not full peer review as in other issues. The issue begins with a short report on the organizational structure of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, by Lowell Cooper, one of the General Conference vice-presidents who is very involved in creating, maintaining and updating that structure.

This overview of denominational identity is followed by three papers about specific institutions—two looking at the Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies (AIIAS) itself, and its identity, and one about an Adventist High School in Japan. The first of these two papers, a large, collaborative study by Vyhmeister and colleagues, surveyed current and former AIIAS students, asking whether, and how, in the eyes of the students, AIIAS is meeting its stated goals. The results suggest that it is indeed meeting its goals, and the data give insight into the experience of being an AIIAS student. Suggestions for

improvement, as well as areas where AIIAS has done extremely well are noted in this mixed-method institutional study. The second AIIAS study, by Nasution, looks at AIIAS as a brand, and the process of building brand equity. The third study in this set is a qualitative analysis of San Iku Gakuin, a small Adventist school in Japan which has had striking success in its community. The stories give us all something to strive for as we see improvements we should make in our own institutions.

The last two papers look at things from entirely different perspectives—business and education. The article by García builds a model designed for enhancing organizational performance using knowledge management, now a common business approach. The final paper in the issue is a primary study by Ponyatovska, which looks at the hidden curriculum in schools, as seen from the perspective of the principal.

Identity can be observed, studied, and explained from multiple perspectives. These papers include the up-close and personal qualitative approaches, survey research on institutional goals, and structural equation modeling of organizational performance. Each study, whether institutional research, modeling, storytelling, or simple description of institutional structures and practices, helps us to see a piece of the puzzle that contributes to an understanding of corporate identity. Quo vadis? Where are you going? Where is your organization going? How do we see ourselves? Are we sincere about finding out how others see us? It is my sincere hope that this issue of *International Forum* will prompt you to ask these questions about the organization where you work, and to act appropriately, based on the answers you find.

Shawna Vyhmeister, PhD
Editor, *International Forum*