

## Breaking News

### Journal Ranking Shenanigans Uncovered?

HATTIESBURG – It is a common occurrence here at USMNEWS.net that in response to a readers comment about one report, USMNEWS.net reporters uncover information that relates to another issue. This seems to have happened again recently, after a reader pointed out that former CoB management faculty, Vaidy Jayaraman, deserved a look in "the greatest ever" contest in the CoB's management unit. When that investigation began, it was discovered that some of Jayaraman's journal publications were A-level journals in the "Production & Operations Management" section of the CoB's mid-1990s journal classification system. However, under the new CoB journal classification system, produced by the 2007-08 journal ranking committee that was headed by *untenured assistant* professor of economics Sami Dakhli, these journals are either scattered all over the CoB organizational chart or altogether omitted.

To see what happened, USMNEWS.net reporters collected all of the journals from the "Production & Operations Management" section of the CoB's mid-1990s journal classification system. These are listed below in Table 1. Also included in Table 1 are each journal's mid-1990s classification and each journal's 2007-08 classification *and* location (i.e., CoB unit).

**Table 1**  
**Operations MGT Journal Classifications**

<b>Journal Name</b>	<b>mid-1990s Classification</b>	<b>2007-08 Classification</b>
Annals of Operations Research	A	---
Computers & Industrial Engineering	A	C (MIS)
Computers & Operations Research	A+	A (MIS)
European Journal of Operational Research	A+	B (MIS)
IIE Transactions	A	C (MIS)
Information Systems & Operational Research	A	---
Interfaces	A	B (MIS)
International Journal of Operations & Prod MGT	A+	A (MIS)
International Journal of Production Economics	A	C (ECO)
International Journal of Production Research	A+	A (MGT)
International Journal of Quality & Reliability MGT	A	A (MIS)
Journal of Business Logistics	A	A (MIS)
Journal of Operational Research	A	B (MIS)
Journal of the Operational Research Society	A	---
Journal of Operations Management	A	A (MIS articles)
Mathematical Programming	A	---
Mathematics of Operations Research	A	---
Naval Research Logistics Quarterly	A	B (MKT)
Networks	A	---
Omega	A	A (MIS)
Operations Research	A	B (MIS)
Production & Inventory Management Journal	A	U (MGT)
Production & Operations Management	A	---

Transportation Research	A	---
Discrete Applied Mathematics	B	---
SIAM Journal of Discrete Mathematics	B	---
The Total Quality Review	B	---
Optimization	C	---
Quality Progress	O	C (MIS)

This report begins with the mid-1990s A+-level journals. One of these, the *European Journal of Operational Research*, moved over into the MIS list, and it arrived there as a B-level journal instead of an A+-level journal. *Computers & Operations Research* and the *International Journal of Operations and Production Management* also moved into the MIS list, yet these two lost only their "+" designation in the journey. Finally, the *International Journal of Production Research* traveled to the MGT list, and it also lost its "+" designation.

Moving to the A-level journals from the mid-1990s classification, more egregious changes are found. Perhaps the most egregious change was that of the *Production & Inventory Management Journal*, which was downgraded from an A-level journal to a U-level journal (the fifth of five designations) in MGT. How does something like this happen? This is made even more interesting given the fact that the document circulated by Dakhliia and the committee shows that "Rawls" rates the *PIMJ* as an A-level journal.

Moving on, *Computers & Industrial Engineering* fell from an A-level journal to a C-level journal in MIS. The same change befell *IIE Transactions*, a journal that scores a "37" on the "R1" column of the 2007-08 journal ranking document, a figure that is about the same as that for *Economic Inquiry* on the ECO list, Dakhliia's home unit, which is an A-level journal. The *International Journal of Production Economics*, an outlet that is, despite its title, widely recognized as something other than an economics journal, fell from an A-level management journal to a C-level economics journal. *Interfaces*, the *Journal of Operational Research* and *Operations Research* all fell from A-level journals to B-level journals on the MIS list. Similarly, *Naval Research Logistics Quarterly* dropped from an A-level journal to a B-level journal on the MKT list. Other A-level journals were simply moved into MIS as A-level journals.



The journals shown above were all A-level journals in the "Production & Operations Management" section of the CoB's mid-1990s journal classification system. Now, they are absent from the CoB's journal classifications altogether. This group includes *Annals of Operations Research*, *Information Systems & Operational Research*, *Journal of the Operational Research Society*, *Mathematical Programming*, *Mathematics of Operations Research*, *Networks*, *Production & Operations Management*, and *Transportation*

*Research.* As indicated by the journal covers above, these journals are alive and well in the production and operations management world. Unfortunately for USM, that world no longer includes the CoB.



The first two journals shown just above were B-level journals in the "Production & Operations Management" section of the CoB's mid-1990s journal classification system, while the third was a C-level journal back then. Now, these journals are no longer found among the journals in the 2007-08 CoB journal classification system. A fourth outlet, *The Total Quality Review*, also fell from B-level to oblivion in the latest re-classification effort. In total, 12 of the 29 original "Production & Operations Management" journals are no longer considered viable production/operations management outlets. Of the 17 remaining mid-1990s journals, only two -- the *International Journal of Production Research* and the *Production & Inventory Management Journal* -- were moved into the MGT classifications. Most of the others were moved to MIS, and most were downgraded by Dakhli's committee.

Why make the point that these journals should now be found in the MGT section of the CoB 2007-08 journal classification system? The answer is simple, really. That's where the operations management course is located. That course is entitled "Operations Management," and it is known by most CoB students as "MGT 325." Because of the location of the operations management course, it would make most sense for operations and production management journals to be housed with other MGT journals. In the CoB's case, it makes even more sense given the push by CoB administrators for CoB faculty to research in the areas in which they teach. With "MGT 325" located in "MGT," wouldn't it be best for these journals to be in MGT? If not, the MGT 325 instructor of record could be fired for publishing in journals included in other CoB areas.

Having made these points, why would these journals have been moved into MIS or removed altogether? Sources say that answer is simple. According to the [Fall 2008 CoB Class Schedule Guide](#), MGT 325 is being covered by MGT's Wanda Fennell.



Fennell's individual CoB webpage indicates that she specializes in operations management. It also points out, however, that her highest earned degree is an MBA, and that she holds the rank of *instructor* in USM's business school -- a designation that means that Fennell is not expected to engage in academic research. Sources tell USMNEWS.net that Fennell is expected to be a part of the CoB for a long time to come, which means that MGT search committees usually do not even attempt to hire new faculty who specialize in operations and production management. Instead, the CoB generally sticks with MGT candidates who specialize in entrepreneurship, human resource management, and other areas.

According to sources, all of this means that the CoB's 2007-08 journal ranking committee could bleed the CoB's journal classification system of many (e.g., 12 of 29) of the mid-1990s system's operations and production management journals. The rest could be buried in other areas (e.g., MIS) as similarly- or lower-ranked journals. These actions allow the CoB's management faculty to upgrade some of the journals in management's other areas at no cost. In other words, B-level (C-level) management journals from other areas could be upgraded to A-level (B-level) journals without increasing the number of A-level (B-level) journals from the previous number (when MGT included operations and production management). Sources say this kind of activity is a way of life in USM's CoB.