

The Briefing

Newsletter of *Public Sector Operations Research*

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2024 PSOR Session Chairs

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Alican Yilmaz
Andrés González
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Andrew Arnette
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Auyon Siddiq
Charles Thraves
Christopher Zobel
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Felipe Aros-Vera
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Hessam Bavafa
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Michael Johnson
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Pengyi Shi
Peter Zhang
Scott Rodilitz
Shima Azizi
Xiaoquan Gao
Yichuan Ding
Zhili Tian

PSOR has had a good year! Thank you to each of our members for the work that you do. In this newsletter, we recap the INFORMS Annual Meeting, Best Paper Award, and Best Video Award and present the 2026 officer team.

INFORMS Annual

PSOR Cluster

Our cluster at the annual meeting was led by co-chairs **Christopher Zobel** (VATech) and **Gabriela Gongora-Svartzman** (CMU).

There was a strong showing by our membership with 26 sessions overall. Sessions focused on topics related to sustainability, redistricting, community resilience, and many more. There were co-sponsored sessions by the Health Applications Society, the Decision Analysis Society, and the Minority Issues Forum and a panel on Modeling Societal Challenges with OR.

Thank you to each of the session chairs and speakers.

Doing Good with Good OR

INFORMS Annual

Session Highlight

A panel discussion regarding Modeling Societal Challenges with OR moderated by the PSOR Member (Himadri Sen Gupta, The University of Oklahoma) was held at the 2023 INFORMS Annual Meeting in the PSOR track. The panelists were professors:

- **Andrés González** (University of Oklahoma), whose work included modeling of financial markets, logistics systems, and critical infrastructure.
- **Karmel Shehadeh** (Lehigh University), specializes in optimization under uncertainty, mixed integer programming, and fairness-promoting optimization with applications to healthcare, facility location, and transportation.
- **Senay Solak** (University of Massachusetts Amherst), whose research focuses on sustainable operations with applications in aviation and nonprofits.
- **Robert Curry** (University of Arkansas) whose research focuses on large scale models in defense settings including sensor networks and hyperphysical systems.

The session provided numerous insights and recommendations for OR roles in society and a diverse set of application domains, methods used, and participants. From PSOR, we thank the panelists for graciously serving on this panel.

Be on the lookout for next year's panel discussions offered in the PSOR track!

Business Meeting

The conference also hosted the PSOR business meeting and breakfast. Here is a link to the slides if you were not able to attend:

https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/7ae95zvmliqb79druo225/2024_INFORMS_Annual_Meeting_Subdivision-slides.pptx?rlkey=zurr1dydsinb365mqu7rgixb0&st=f8ncutc5&dl=0

We hope to see you at the next meeting in Atlanta, Georgia!



From the Section President: Renata Konrad

This year, PSOR launched a new initiative: **Contemporary Operations Management in Developing Economies**. The inaugural program aimed to connect researchers from developing economies who may not have the opportunity to attend INFORMS conferences in North America. This initiative provided a platform for researchers to showcase their work, gain insights into the challenges faced by industries and the public sector in developing economies, and foster meaningful collaborations. The program also highlighted research being conducted in these regions, enabling participants to learn from each other's experiences and perspectives.



Organized by Mahyar Eftekhari (Founder), Chris Zobel, and Renata Konrad, the program was approved in mid-March 2024. A framework for submissions and review was established, and within a month, over 50 submissions were received. A dedicated committee conducted a two-stage review process, selecting the top eight abstracts based on their relevance to challenges faced by domestic industries and the public sector. By October 7th, 114 participants had registered, marking a significant milestone in the program's outreach and impact. As part of the initiative Dr. Elliot Bendoly (Editor in Chief of *Journal of Operations Management*) held an engaging session, moderated by Drs. Rafael Escamilla and Amir Karimi, on Connecting Practice to Theory: What Do Leading OM Journals Expect from Authors. Dr. Christopher Tang held an informative session, moderated by Dr. Luyi Gui, Impactful Research in OM. We congratulate all authors who submitted an abstract. Videos from the 8 finalists can be found on the PSOR YouTube channel [\[link\]](#).

Congratulations to the winners of the Best Paper Award - The Need for Speed: Decoding Linkages between Fulfilment Time and Customer Satisfaction to Improve Online Food Delivery Performance by Maya Ganesh (IIM Bangalore), Debjit Roy (IIM Ahmedabad), and Daniel Abraham (Stanford University). Second place was awarded to Richard Boso (Center for Research Innovation in Supply Chain - Africa), Lily Liu (MIT), Karen Zheng (MIT) and Mahyar Eftekhari (Arizona State University) for their paper Using Behavioral Nudges to Reduce Food Waste: An Experimental Evidence from Ghana.

A huge thank you to Rafael Escamilla, Nadia Fatehi, Luyi Gui, Amir Karimi, Gemma Berenguer Falguera, and Divya Singhvi for volunteering to be part of this organizing committee. We would like to thank Arizona State University, the CARISCA program for their technical assistance in hosting the event. If you are interested in becoming involved with this event in 2025, please reach out to Mahyar Eftekhari.

Best Paper Competition

The paper competition was led by co-chairs **Auyon Siddiq** and **Jingwei Zhang**.

There were over 60 papers considered, and **5** papers were named finalists.

It was a very competitive field and we are proud of the great research being conducted by our membership.

Selection Process

There were 2 double-blind rounds with equally weighted selection criteria:

- Problem importance
- Results
- Writing
- Relevance to the public sector
- Overall recommendation.

First round: each paper was evaluated by two judges.

Second round: top five (finalists) were reviewed by each judge

Both rounds excluded judges with conflicts

Competition Judges

Arielle Anderer	Christian Kaps	Julia Yan	Setareh Farajollahzadeh
Agni Orfanoudaki	Elisabeth Paulson	Jingwei Zhang	Sheng Liu
Amrita Kundu	Yangfang Helen Zhou	Kashish Arora	Somya Singhvi
Ali Fattahi	Chamsi Hssaine	Long He	Vince Slaugh
Anna Saez de Tejada Cuenca	Ian Zhu	Luyi Gui	Weiliang Liu
Kate Astashkina	Maria Ibanez	Ali Aouad	Sytske Wijnsma
Auyon Siddiq	Yixin Iris Wang	Omer Karaduman	Xavier Warnes
Bhavani Shanker Uppari	Jinglong Zhao	Priyank Arora	Yao Cui
Christian Blanco	Jónas Oddur Jónasson	Scott Rodilitz	Eunae Yoo
Can Zhang	Jue Wang	Sebastian Martin	Zuguang Gao

Best Paper Competition Results

**Best
Paper**

Optimizing Health Supply Chains with Decision-Aware Machine Learning

Tsai-Hsuan Chung, Hamsa Bastani, Osbert Bastani, Jato Abdulai, Patrick Bayoh, Lawrence Sandi, and Francis Smart

Link: <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.4880140>



Congratulations! The winner with Jingwei Zhang and Auyon Siddiq (competition co-chairs) and Eunae Yoo (PSOR VP of Awards)

Best Paper Competition Results

Honorable Mention

The Dedicated Docket in US Immigration Courts: An Analysis of Fairness and Efficiency Properties

Daniel Freund and Wentao Weng

Link: <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.4785713>

Finalists

Search and Matching for Adoption from Foster Care

Vincent Slauch, Ludwig Dierks, Nils Olberg, Sven Seuken, and M. Utku Unver

Link: <https://arxiv.org/abs/2103.10145>

Improving the Equity and Efficiency of Cystic Fibrosis Screening

Hussein El Hajj, Douglas Bish, and Ebru Bish

Link: <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.4989947>

Redesigning Volunteer Match's Ranking Algorithm: Toward More Equitable Access to Volunteers

Akshaya Suresh, Vahideh Manshadi, Scott Rodilitz, Daniela Saban

Link: <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.4497747>

Congratulations to all!

PSOR Best Video Competition

The goal of PSOR's newest award is to showcase the amazing work of the PSOR community to a broader audience, for example students, potential members, or the general public Videos can be found in the [PSOR YouTube](#) channel.

Co-Chairs of the Best Video Competition: **Scott Rodilitz** and **Akshaya Suresh**

Top 4 submissions were named finalists.

Selection Process

There were 2 rounds with equally weighted criteria:

- Relevance to public sector OR
- Potential for impact to grow community, showcase work, etc.
- Clarity of content
- Quality and originality

First round: evaluated by judges

Second round: 50% judge vote, 50% PSOR member vote

Competition Judges

Asa Palley
Somya Singhvi
Gloria Urrea
Can Zhang

Popular Vote

PSOR members

Thank you to all who participated.

Doing Good with Good OR

PSOR Best Video Competition Results

Best Video

Technology Enabled Agent-Choice and Uptake of Social Assistance Programs

Rakesh Allu, Maya Ganesh, Sarang Deo, and Sripad Devalkar.

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OitpTux0qDg>



Honorable Mention

Search and Matching for Adoption from Foster Care

Vincent Slaugh, Ludwig Dierks, Nils Olberg, Sven Seuken, and M. Utku Unver.

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bq3cYSTRSxl>

Finalists

Workload Management and Human-Algorithm Collaboration in Child Welfare Screening

Yanhan (Savannah) Tang, Zoey Jiang, Alan Scheller-Wolf.

Link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qg9_yXG0ors

Reducing Food Waste in Production: A Field Experiment in Ghana

by Lily (Xinming) Liu, Mahyar Eftekhari, Karen Zheng, and Richard Boso.

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ewqclC-uuQ8>

2025 PSOR Board of Officers

Biographies



President Kayse Maass Northeastern University

I am an Assistant Professor of Industrial Engineering and Director of the Operations Research and Social Justice Lab at Northeastern University. My research focuses on advancing operations research methodology to address social justice, access, and equity issues within human trafficking, mental health, and housing contexts using a community-based participatory action approach. I am grateful for the opportunity to serve as the PSOR President-Elect and am looking forward to helping PSOR continue to raise awareness about public sector opportunities for its members, build relationships outside of academia, and provide valuable resources for the community.



Secretary/Treasurer Iva Rashkova Washington University in St. Louis

I am an Assistant Professor of Supply Chain, Operations and Technology at Olin Business School, Washington University in St. Louis. My research focuses on public health considerations in food and medical supply chains, such as distributing medicines to underserved communities and incentivizing the provision of safe and nutritious food. I am excited to be formally involved with the PSOR community as a Secretary/Treasurer and contribute to a thriving, growing INFORMS subsection.



Past President Renata Konrad Worcester Polytechnic Institute

I am an Associate Professor of Industrial Engineering at Worcester Polytechnic Institute. My research focuses on the application of operations research methodologies to vulnerable populations to improve the quality, timeliness, and efficiency of operations. This research includes using optimization and simulation to inform human trafficking awareness campaigns, to locate housing, to understand the relationship between illegal fishing and exploited labor, and to improve access to services for homeless youth. As President of PSOR, enjoyed working with the wonderful PSOR officers, developing our society, and supporting our membership.



Secretary/Treasurer Geri Louise Dimas, Bryant University

Dr. Dimas is an Assistant Professor of Information Systems and Analytics in the College of Business at Bryant University in Smithfield, RI. She is also the Director of the Stopping Trafficking and Modern-day exploitation Project lab (STAMP) at the Institute for the Quantitative Study of Inclusion, Diversity and Equity (QSIDE). Dr. Dimas earned her PhD in Data Science from Worcester Polytechnic Institute, her MS in Applied Statistics from Bowling Green State University and her BS and BA in Computer Science and Actuarial Science from Roosevelt University. Dr. Dimas' research focuses on applying data science and analytical methodologies to support operations and inform decision-makers in the public and nonprofit sectors. She is particularly passionate about leveraging data and her technical expertise to address social justice issues and the challenges faced by vulnerable populations, including those experiencing or at risk of human trafficking, the homeless or unstably housed,

2025 PSOR Board of Officers

Biographies



Senior Vice President of Programs Gabriela Gongora-Svartzman CMU

She is an Assistant Teaching Professor for Heinz College of Information Systems and Public Policy, at Carnegie Mellon University. My research interests revolve around societal impact and improving people's quality of life. This involves research ranging from resilience to disruptions in transportation services, using social media to assess equity in social movements or to measure social cohesion for disaster preparedness, all the way to developing ethical machine learning frameworks for decarbonization strategies. I have served as a Session Chair for the PSOR cluster (2018-2024), and a Judge for the PSOR 2023 Best Paper Award.



Junior Vice President of Programs Carolina Vivas-Valencia UTSA

She established the Healthcare Analytics (HEAL) Laboratory at UTSA in January 2023. She leads a multidisciplinary team focused on advancing precision population medicine for behavioral health through data analytics. Her research aims to improve treatments for autism and opioid use disorder, and she leverages real-world healthcare data to study health outcomes among pregnant and postpartum populations. Carolina is dedicated to making healthcare more accessible and inclusive, and she actively collaborates with the community to address health issues. She completed a postdoctoral fellowship at Harvard Medical School and Massachusetts General Hospital and holds an MS and PhD in Biomedical Engineering from Purdue University. Carolina is an active member of INFORMS, and since 2019, she has been a committee member of INFORMS DEI. Currently, she serves as the chair of the community building sub-committee. Carolina and providing initiatives to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion.



Vice President of Communications Karmel S. Shehadeh Lehigh

Dr. Shehadeh is an assistant Professor in the Department of Industrial and Systems Engineering at Lehigh University. Before joining Lehigh, she was a presidential and dean postdoctoral fellow at Heinz College of Information Systems and Public Policy at CMU. She holds a doctoral degree in Industrial and Operations Engineering from the U. of Michigan. Her research program aims to push the boundaries of the theory and applications of stochastic and distributionally robust optimization (SRO). She has a track record of designing, analyzing, and implementing innovative, computationally efficient, and implementable SRO methodologies for real-world problems in various application domains, including healthcare, facility location, and transportation.



Vice President of Awards Eunae Yoo, Indiana University

Dr. Yoo is Assistant Professor and Grant Thornton Scholar at the Kelley School of Business at Indiana University. My primary research interests are related to humanitarian and nonprofit operations, particularly in the role that technologies (e.g., social media, online volunteering platforms) play in supporting these operations. I look forward to serving as the VP of Awards and helping to showcase the best of PSOR research through our various competitions.

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