

A Challenge for Our Discipline and Some New Editorial Initiatives

It is my privilege to be appointed as the next Editor of *AICHE Journal*. On a personal note, when I was an assistant professor back in the 1980s, I aspired to publish in the Institute's named research archive. To now lead the *Journal* and follow in the steps of some of the great scholars of our day—Morton Denn, Matt Tirrell, and Stan Sandler, to name a few, I am humbled. I will hold fast to Stan Sandler's goal for the *Journal* to set high standards of relevance and quality. With your help, we can bring back a passion to publish in the *Journal*, especially among those just starting their academic and industrial research careers.

As I assume the role of Editor, at least three new Associate Editors are joining the ranks. They include Peter Cummings (Vanderbilt), Rodney Fox (Iowa State), and Sotiris Pratsinis (ETH Zurich), as Nicholas Peppas, Phil Savage, and Sankaran Sundaresan end their tenures. I thank Nicholas, Phil, and Sundar for their efforts. I am fortunate that George Stephanopolous is staying on to lead *Perspectives* and that Jennifer Curtis, Ignacio Grossmann, and Abraham Lenhoff will continue in their editing roles. I am counting on the Associate Editors for their expertise and counsel and look forward to working with the competent staff at the John Wiley & Sons publishing house.

During these exciting and challenging times, the chemical engineering discipline has shown remarkable resilience and adaptability—from the maturation of the commodity plastics age by the 1970s, to the emergence of the digital age and modern biotechnology in the late 1990s, to globalization and sustainability efforts of the chemical process industry in more recent years, and finally to the unabated march to the nanoscale. The *Journal* has experienced effects of these changes, including the declining domestic research activity in the traditional petrochemical and polymers industries and its attendant adverse impact on publishing, offset in part by growing global research activities, the surge of specialized subdisciplines and their own journals, and the internet revolution with its dramatic effect on all phases of publishing. As a generalist publication for our discipline, the *AICHE Journal* has held its own in the face of these forces, but we can do better. It is incumbent on all of us in the chemical engineering research community to *reestablish the AICHE Journal as the premier archived journal for the chemical engineering profession and the most prestigious and influential journal in which AICHE members publish*.

To achieve this vision, as Editor I will take proactive steps to enhance the editorial content and responsiveness of the *Journal* to the Institute and its members. To this



Dr. Michael P. Harold, the M.D. Anderson Professor of Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering at the University of Houston, becomes the 7th editor in the *AICHE Journal's* 56-year history. With expertise in reaction engineering and catalysis, Harold is the author of more than 110 papers and has given over 230 presentations and invited lectures. He has served as a consulting editor for the *AICHE Journal* and on the editorial advisory board of *I&EC Research and Reviews in Chemical Engineering*, and is secretary for the **ISCRE Board**. He is the founder and principal investigator of the University of Houston's Texas Diesel Testing and Research Center, established in 2003.

A Pittsburgh, PA, native, Harold received his Bachelor's degree at Pennsylvania State University

end, changes will be made—some measured, others aggressive—with the following goals in the forefront:

- to attract and publish frontier, high-potential impact research findings;
- to educate the chemical engineering community about past and present scholars in our field;
- to enhance the experience of reading the *AIChE Journal*; and
- to inspire new ideas and innovative research tools that will promote advances in our field.

In the coming months, I will communicate details of several editorial initiatives. These will include:

- *Initiating Rapid Communications.* To meet keep pace with the rapidly evolving specialties, a conduit for focused, high-impact papers will be established. In the short term, this will address the manuscript backlog; in the long term, this will bring back the researchers who currently publish exclusively in specialty journals.
- *Enhancing the Perspectives Series.* Since the late 1990s, led by its founding editor Julio Ottino, *Perspectives* has provided the community with cover commentaries about the exciting research activities being conducted in and pervasive issues facing our discipline. We will expand the scope of this series to honor some of the intellectual leaders of our profession, both past and present.
- *Prioritizing Manuscripts.* The editorial team will fast-track the best contributions to attract a larger fraction of the top researchers in our field.
- *Reinvigorating a Comprehensive Reviews Series.* This objective counterpart of the *Perspective* provides the much-needed archive of problems that chemical engineers pursue.
- *Encouraging Shorter Manuscripts.* We would like to see shorter papers as a rule and longer papers as an exception.

The success of our discipline has been our ability to solve problems spanning the molecular scale to the business enterprise scale, to define dynamic interfaces with other engineering and science disciplines, and in so doing meet the pressing needs of society. However, this success has led to a loss of identity, to a less cohesive core. The *Journal* can provide the venue to communicate our scholarly contributions, and in so doing strengthen the long-term foundation of our great discipline.

Therefore, the editorial team is counting on you for your support and suggestions, your help in critically reviewing manuscripts, and most importantly, your best works published in the *AIChE Journal*.



Michael P. Harold

and his PhD from the University of Houston. He joined the faculty at University of Massachusetts at Amherst in 1985 where he became Associate Professor. In 1993, Harold joined DuPont Company, where he held several technical and managerial positions. In 2000, Harold returned to the University of Houston where he became the Dow Chair Professor and Department Chair, a position he held for 8 years. In 2010, Harold was named the M.D. Anderson Professor. His honors include the Fluor-Daniel Outstanding Faculty Award from the University of Houston, the Abraham E. Dukler Distinguished Engineering Faculty Award from the University of Houston Engineering Alumni Association, and the American Chemical Society's Fuel Division Richard A. Glenn Award.