



Operations Research Society of South Africa



Category IV Recognition Award

(To an upcoming member of ORSSA
of age 35 or below for excellence
in operations research practice)

Margarete J Bester

Citation. *By Jan van Vuuren, on behalf of the Executive Committee of ORSSA.*

Margarete Joan Bester (nèe Louw) was born in Bellville on May 21st, 1979. After matriculating from Hottentots Holland High School in 1997, she enrolled for a bachelor's degree in the mathematical sciences at Stellenbosch University in 1998. She obtained this degree, majoring in mathematics and applied mathematics, in 2000, and went on to obtain an honours degree in applied mathematics *cum laude* from the same institution in 2001. Her honours year project entitled *Finding Good Nursing Schedules* won the best project award in the ORSSA national student competition of 2002 and was subsequently published as a case study in the authoritative Journal of Scheduling. The same year she enrolled part time for a masters degree in operations research at Stellenbosch University, a qualification she received *cum laude* in 2006 based on a thesis on production scheduling and facility floor layout optimisation.

In the meantime she started working as a scoring analyst at Processing Integration Consulting, or PIC Solutions in Cape Town in 2004, moving to Metropolitan Life in 2006, where she was a senior data miner. In 2007 she moved back to PIC Solutions, this time holding the position of scoring consultant. It was in 2008 that she founded the operations research consulting company Oprecon in Bellville together with her husband, Francois. She remained a managing member of Oprecon, which had major clients in the credit risk, forestry and supply chain industries, until the company was incorporated into the larger XTranda last year. Margarete is now Operations Director at XTranda in Cape Town, where she is responsible for product research and development.

While previously at PIC Solutions and Oprecon, and also now at XTranda, Margarete has been involved in a large number of exciting and very successful operations research consulting projects, often taking a leading role. These projects include the development of a model of automated harvest scheduling for large players in the forestry sector, the design of decision support systems aiding in floor layout planning and production scheduling for production facilities, and the design of a decision support system for duty scheduling of nurses at large hospitals in the Western Cape. Margarete has also adopted a mentoring role with respect to new operations research recruits at all three these companies and her passion for guiding and training young talent has seen her making a very valuable contribution towards nurturing a new generation of operations research practitioners in the Western Cape.

In addition to her seminal involvement in all of the above-mentioned capacities, Margarete joined ORSSA in 2001 and served on its Executive Committee as chairperson of the Western Cape Chapter of ORSSA during the period 2004 to 2012. She has also coordinated the ORSSA national student competitions for a number of years and has been a member of the South African Statistical Association since 2004.

In recognition of the excellent quality of the operational research projects in which she has been involved since 2004, as well as the leading roles she has played in the operations research consulting companies Oprecon and XTranda, Margarete Joan Bester is, on this 17th day of September 2013, duly awarded a Category IV ORSSA Recognition Award. I call on the President to confer the award.