

## Editorial



The partnership between the World Customs Organization and the academic world is a very important one, and the annual PICARD (Partnership in Customs Academic Research and Development) conference provides us with an ideal opportunity to get together, to share experiences and ideas, and to identify how we can make the most of this unique partnership.

This year's conference was held in Geneva, with the theme 'Promoting research-based knowledge to support customs decision making', a theme that was examined in the context of research that has been undertaken in a number of specific areas:

- Coordinated border management
- Performance measurement in the customs context
- Economic security and poverty reduction
- Integrity.

Several of the papers that were presented at the conference are published in this edition of the Journal, and we plan to publish more in the March 2012 edition.

While some very useful issues emerged during the course of addressing these issues, one very clear message for me was the need to ensure that our research remains demand-driven rather than supply-driven, otherwise it won't be valued or, worse still, it won't even be read by those who could potentially benefit from it.

In this regard, there is a need to monitor the effectiveness of what we do – to what extent is the theory being translated into practice? To what extent are academic efforts and activities found to be useful by the WCO and its member administrations? To what extent are research findings being applied in a practical sense? This is, in itself, a fertile area for future research.

On behalf of the Editorial Board, I'd once again like to thank all our contributors, and I look forward to seeing further evidence of ways in which the broad range of published research findings is helping to support customs decision making.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'D. Widdowson'.

David Widdowson  
Editor-in-Chief