



THE UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
3010 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-3010



ACQUISITION AND
TECHNOLOGY

13 JUL 1998

Dr. Gertrude Eaton
Chair, Board of Visitors,
Defense Acquisition University
2001 N. Beauregard Street, Suite 750
Alexandria, VA 22311

Gertrude
Dear Dr. Eaton:

← APR 21 1998

Thank you for your summary of recommendations from the February 26th, Defense Acquisition University's (DAU's) Board of Visitors (BoV) meeting. By copy of this letter and the enclosed assignment of actions, I am asking the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense Acquisition Reform to implement the BoV recommendations.

I share the Board's concerns about the level of participation of the acquisition workforce, barriers to recruitment and admission of new students, and the effectiveness of Individual Development Plans (IDPs). The key element of the new continuous learning policy is using IDPs to strengthen career development planning and ensure personnel get essential training.

Concerns about course access and workforce participation should be alleviated as courses transition to web-based delivery. By October, DAU will be offering six courses via the Internet. Also, your points on the DAU faculty talking to industry about DoD acquisition reforms are well taken and we are looking at ways to involve industry as advisors to boards and related activities.

The Fiscal Year 1998 Defense Authorization Act Section 912 (c) studies will review the entire acquisition workforce structure. I do not expect them, however, to be laborious. We plan to have them completed by the end of 1998 and will share our results with the Board.

Thank you for sharing the BoVs recommendations with me. I would welcome similar correspondence after each meeting.

Sincerely,

J. S. Gansler
J. S. Gansler

Enclosure:
As stated

CC:
DUSD(AR)
President, DAU



Actions to Address Board of Visitors Recommendations

Workforce Participation:

Comment: “The Board continues to express concern about the level of participation of the workforce and mentioned several barriers, possibly occurring in the recruitment and admission of new students and in the development of efficient and useful Individual Development Plans.... Establishing course pre-requisites and standards for performance—as set forth in the report of the Process Action Team—is clearly critical to the success of the educational enterprise.”

Response: Concur.

Action: 1) The President of Defense Acquisition University will establish a working group to develop options for strengthening prerequisite compliance. Recommendations will be received and acted upon by the Director, Acquisition Education Training & Career Development, President of DAU and the Commandant of the Defense Systems Management College.

Information Technology:

Comment: “The Board of Visitors (BoV) does not support establishing a separate functional board for information technology (IT). Knowledge of technology is central to all other functions that workers must perform. As a learning tool, information technology is best integrated throughout the educational program.”

Response: A charter establishing an IT functional board has not been submitted. An alternative to a separate IT functional board is to provide IT representation on existing functional boards and accommodate the IT acquisition workforce within the existing board structure. In any case, information technology as a learning tool will be pursued.

Action: The Deputy Under Secretary of Defense Acquisition Reform and the Director, AET&CD will meet with the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Command, Control, Communications and Intelligence) to address IT Functional Board issue.

Section 912 Reductions:

Comment: “The BoV believes that Sec. 912 reduction will be a laborious process, and perhaps, here is an opportunity for you to be proactive in overseeing its completion more quickly. One result of the present approach to reduction is that it provides no incentives for people to join the acquisition workforce.”

Response: It is difficult to maintain interest in a workforce that is downsizing. The Secretary of Defense’s Section 912(c) response stated that DoD will “Identify the Future Workforce,” its composition, its skills mix, and its education, training and career development needs. Fifteen related studies are currently under way that address major issues concerning this newly defined workforce.

The studies will address the following subjects:

- Streamline Science and Technology, Engineering and Test
- Design of Joint C3I Integrated System Development Process
- Reengineer Product Support Process to Use Best Commercial Practices
- Competitively Source Product Support
- Modernize through Spares
- Greatly Expand Prime Vendor and Virtual Prime Vendor
- Establish PM Oversight of Life-Cycle Support
- Design an Acquisition Process for Services
- Institutionalize Continuous Learning
- Review the Planning Programming and Budgeting System
- Recruit, Develop and Retain Technology Leaders
- Identify Future Acquisition Workforce
- Institutionalize Price-Based Approach to Acquisition
- Integrate Test and Evaluation
- Review the Requirements Process

These studies will review the entire defense acquisition structure and will result in a plan of action and milestones to meet the needs of an acquisition system for the 21st Century. The plan of action and milestones will be submitted by the end of 1998.

Action: DUSD(AR)/AET&CD pursue in accordance with Section 912(c) taskings.

Centralized Coordination of Training:

Comment: "Following discussion with representatives of Defense Acquisition Career Managers (DACMs), the Board recommended centralized coordination of all training in fields of acquisition. Training within the Services and Components does not need to be unique—to successfully fill the needs of workers."

Response: Increased coordination of existing and planned acquisition instruction sponsored by both component and Office of the Secretary of Defense organizations is essential. Currently the Services and offices within OSD, like the Defense Modeling and Simulation Office (DMSO), sponsor training that could benefit other segments of the Acquisition Workforce. Coordination with the Services will be emphasized to help reduce duplication of scarce resources and increase training opportunities for all AWF personnel.

Action: President of DAU continue current efforts to emphasize reduction of duplication in instructional programs. Continuing education requires special attention in this regard. Accordingly, Deputy Under Secretary of Defense (Acquisition Reform) has designated an individual to direct the development of a continuing acquisition education program and to ensure coordination with and among similar Component efforts.

Acquisition Reform Initiatives:

Comment: "The BoV feels strongly that DAU needs input concerning Acquisition Reform Initiatives, particularly in correlating them to corporate needs. It was suggested that there be industry representatives to serve on functional boards."

Action: The DUSD(AR) will provide periodic briefings to each of the existing functional boards to provide input on acquisition reform initiatives. While there are statutory constraints that preclude industry membership on functional boards, industry input should be sought as appropriate.

DAU Educational Program:

Comment: "Two recommendations were made with regard to the DAU educational program. First, the faculty should be held accountable to get out and talk with industry about its concerns with the defense acquisition process. Second, DAU should develop and sponsor a research agenda on critical acquisition interests, to carry out in parallel with industry participants and subsequently incorporated into curricula."

Action: The President of DAU will establish programs to increase its dialogue with industry including a DAU research program that involves industry and promotes academic participation in Defense acquisition policy issues.

World Class Indicators:

Comment: "The BoV urged that DAU provide on a continuing basis data that communicate through a small set of indicators how well the institution is fulfilling its goal to serve as a 'world class' university."

Action: The President of DAU will establish outcome metrics for measuring the attainment of its goals. He should periodically report to the Board on the University's performance.

August 20, 1998

Dr. Jack Gansler
Under Secretary of Defense
3010 Defense Pentagon
Room #3E933
Washington D.C. 20301-3010

Dear Dr. Gansler:

13 JULY 1998

Thank you for your letter of July 23rd describing actions that respond to the Board of Visitors' recommendations following the February 26, 1998, meeting. The Board met again on May 19, 1998, and I would like to share with you key points that were considered.

As with all institutions dedicated to training and education, adapting curricula to serve the needs of a number of constituencies, often within the same classroom setting, is a challenge. The Functional Boards, for example, have expressed concern about the need to do excessive remediation. The Board is concerned that current policies may not adequately support registration processes that provide for a thorough analysis of a student's prior experience and/or a faculty member's judgment that pre-requisites are required for successful completion of a particular course of study. One way to serve a diversity of students is through self-paced distance learning, and the Board expresses its full support for the excellent work of the DAU in this area. Members also noted that the DAU and the Functional Boards appear to work well in cooperative efforts to provide quality acquisition education and training.

To strengthen curricula and ensure their relevance to fields of acquisition, the BoV suggested that the DAU form partnerships with professional associations, for example, National Association of Purchasing Managers, to seek their participation in the development and evaluation of curricula. These associations will provide an objective overview of acquisition education and training activities and thus help to break down barriers that often occur between educators and practitioners. Perhaps the DAU might develop a concept paper for consideration by the BoV at its next meeting in September.

The Board of Visitors appreciated an up-date by the Transition Team on progress made in implementing recommendations included in the Process Action Team's report. There was strong consensus within the Board that the guiding principle of all acquisition education is, "Keep your eye on the student." Comprehensive knowledge of students' personal goals and career pathways supports building rational organizational structures

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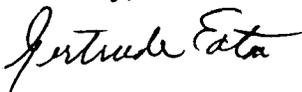
that will enable the DAU to respond effectively to acquisition reform. It might be helpful for the BoV to learn more about processes that guide the recruitment and assignment of students to training, and we shall ask President Crean to include this on a future agenda.

There was considerable discussion, generated by the Transition Team, about faculty qualifications and roles. Recruiting and retaining an eminent faculty continue to be major goals supported by the Board. Two points are clear: 1) faculty must be out in the field capturing "lessons learned" and incorporating said into curricula and 2) faculty must engage in technology enhanced learning. The BoV recommends, therefore, that performance in these two areas be included in all faculty evaluations.

The Board continues to express interest in DAU becoming a center for applied research into acquisition policy and acquisition training. Several points were agreed upon: 1) End-users of the research must be identified and involved in the research if it is to have substantial impact; 2) DAU has a responsibility to provide research that feeds back to both regulation and law; 3) DAU should be pivotal in defining best practices in fields of acquisition; 4) DAU should ensure that faculty who are proficient in research have the time to carry it out. To these ends the Board urges that DAU further define the scope and goals of the research program and develop accountability criteria that address strategies to improve the profession. It is my understanding that a restructured DAU research program is on the agenda for the September meeting and will permit us to discuss these issues.

Finally, the BoV gave careful consideration to the question, "What is a unified structure." They stated clearly that excellence must be supported wherever and however it appears and should not be limited by pre-established organizational structures. The BoV urges that the transition team follow as closely as possible the original recommendations in the PAT report. Hence the DoD leadership is urged to build a unified structure that is known by its pre-eminence, flexibility, and accountability. It is also anticipated that the Transition Team will brief us on their final report at the September meeting.

Sincerely,



Gertrude Eaton
Associate Vice Chancellor for
Academic Affairs and Chair
DAU Board of Visitors