

April 21, 1998

Dr. Jack Gansler
Under Secretary for Defense (A&T)
3010 Defense Pentagon
Room #3E933
Washington, DC 20301-3010

Dear Dr. Gansler:

The Board of Visitors of the Defense Acquisition University held a meeting on February 26, 1998. It included presentations by the DACMs and a discussion of issues important to the education of the acquisition workforce. I am pleased to share with you several of the Board's recommendations that most directly affect the future of the Defense Acquisition University.

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 students and in development of efficient and useful IDPs. In addition, the necessity to employ appropriate pedagogy in all areas of training, whether for generalists or specialists, was emphasized, particularly with increased use of distance education technologies. 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.

The BoV does not support establishing a separate functional board for information technology. 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.

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. In addition, there must be greater understanding of what the acquisition workforce is. What is the right size? Is there a future for employees? It is the sense of the Board that the DoD should develop different strategies to enlist new talent and to produce a competent, quality workforce.

Following discussion with representatives of the 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—neither in its focus nor pedagogy—to successfully fill the needs of workers.

Dr. Jack Gansler
April 21, 1998
Page 2

The BoV feels strongly that DAU needs input concerning the Acquisition Reform Initiatives, particularly in correlating them with corporate needs. Private corporations will play a major role in moving the acquisition workforce from a regulatory system to one that demands more individual and informed judgments. The challenge is to bring commercial thinking into "lean" thinking. It was suggested that there be industry representatives to serve on the functional boards.

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 be carried out in parallel with industry participants and subsequently incorporated into the curricula.

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. It is particularly critical that the Board be able to form judgements over time through these data.

Finally, the BoV wanted to publicly commend the DAU staff for its superb conference, "Log On DAU; Education Moving Toward the 21st Century." The conference clearly places the DAU in the forefront of distance education and faculty development in technology enhanced learning.

Our next meeting will be held on May 19, 1998. I speak for all members of the Board of Visitors in thanking you for the opportunity to participate in a truly innovative Defense Acquisition University.

Sincerely,



Gertrude Eaton
Associate Vice Chancellor for
Academic Affairs, and
Chair, Board of Visitors, Defense Acquisition University

cc: Members of the Board of Visitors
Mr. Stan Soloway, Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition
Mr. Tom Crean, President, DAU
Dr. James McMichael, Director, AET&CD, OUSD (A&T)