



CELEBRATING  
A DECADE OF  
LEARNING,  
LEADERSHIP,  
OPPORTUNITY

OFFICE OF ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

November 16, 1998

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

Dear Dr. Gansler:

The Board of Visitors of the Defense Acquisition University met in September, and I am pleased to share with you their views about the current accomplishments and future directions of the DAU.

The Board continues to believe that there is a serious disconnect between the assessment of students' work experience and previous education and their placement in acquisition courses. Apparently 66 percent of enrollees are unprepared to successfully complete the coursework. The faculty member, it appears, has two choices: fail students or lower the standards. Because there is such pressure for the DACMs to meet APMC course quotas, and because decisions about the preparation needed to enroll in particular courses are not made by DAU, there appear to be few opportunities for students to learn which skills are pre-requisite. It is the Board's sense that moving forward with a modular, on-line, performance-based curriculum is the best way to provide to the acquisition workforce information on the curricula and high quality training. Further, I believe that the BoV wishes to convey their sense that conflicts among constituencies within the DoD, which result in "dummying down" courses, is bureaucratic and will require your strong attention.

The BoV was very pleased with the briefing on the DAU External Research Program. There has been an allocation of \$500,000 from DAU for FY' 99; it appears that the Services might be willing to supplement that amount. The consensus was that the research should not be designed to gain credibility within universities but to suggest practical solutions to acquisition problems that presently affect the success of DoD program managers and their superiors. Jim Gallagher has agreed to serve as the BoV's liaison to a proposed peer review board to implement the research program.

The BoV received a briefing on the Transition Team Report; however, members asked for more time to review the proposed structure before endorsing its accompanying strategies. The BoV expressed its appreciation for the hard work and carefully detailed

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recommendations of the Transition Team. Two areas appear to need further attention, faculty and administrative accountability and technology enhanced learning and pedagogy. I have asked the President, DAU, to articulate these goals and to brief the BoV on them. Specific issues identified by the Board follow.

- Why is the president a long term civilian, and the provost is a military officer? Isn't it expected that the provost remains in the position for an extended period of time?
- Will either the president or provost be steeped in acquisition reform?
- How will authority be delegated to the Deans? Will they serve on the DAU Executive Board? What will their role be?
- Is it anticipated that faculty will have long-term expectations to work within the DAU? How will they be promoted, or retained?

Finally, the BoV would find it helpful to hear from the Service Acquisition Executives who will be affected by the transition plan.

As always, the BoV sends its warmest regards and expresses continued support for moving forward with the goals of acquisition reform.

Sincerely,



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

cc: Members of the Board of Visitors  
Mr. David Oliver, Jr., PDUSD(A&T)  
Mr. Stan Soloway, DUSD(Acquisition Reform)  
Mr. Tom Crean, President, DAU  
Dr. James McMichael, Director, AET&CD, OUSD(A&T)