

# Systems Acquisition for Contracting Personnel Course Draws to a Close

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Recently, as I prepared to make a presentation to the last Systems Acquisition for Contracting Personnel Course (SACPC) at the Defense Systems Management College (DSMC), I realized that a decade had passed since DSMC first originated the course, and that the College could now count over 2500 contracting professionals as graduates of this level III course. Since this was the only course for contracting personnel that DSMC offered, the faculty will miss the opportunity to exchange ideas and opinions with this concentrated contracting target audience.

## Background

In December 1986, DoD Directive 5000.48, established training requirements for all contracting personnel (DoDD 5000.52 replaced 5000.48 in 1988). In January 1987, Eleanor Spector, [then] Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Procurement, directed that DSMC develop a course to satisfy a level III requirement for those contracting personnel working on major weapon systems.

The goal was to provide contracting officers, contract negotiators, contract administrators, procurement analysts, and pricing analysts an overall understanding of major systems acquisition and management as well as advanced application of contracting competencies. Since most of their contract education and training centered on contracting competencies, DSMC's SACPC afforded contracting professionals the opportunity to broaden their appreciation and understanding of the other functional disciplines involved in the acquisition process.

Under Spector's direction, the course was designated as *mandatory* for con-

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tracting officers within one year of assignment to a major program and *desirable* for all others.

In the summer of 1989, the College conducted a pilot offering with scheduled offerings starting in 1990. Due to

the high demand for this course and the backlog, DSMC began offering two 30-person classes, seven times a year.

## Transition

During the summer of 1996, Army Brig. Gen. Richard A. Black, DSMC Commandant, proposed to Spector the idea of including the Intermediate Systems Acquisition Course (ISAC) as a certification requirement for those contracting personnel working in major systems.

This more active participation of the contracting community, in what DSMC considers as the flagship course for Integrated Product Teams (IPT), would not only enhance the professional development of the contracting students but would also enrich the course for the other students. Spector's subsequent acceptance of this proposal negated the need for continuing the SACPC.

## Reflections

The SACPC has gone through numerous changes over the years but never lost sight of the original intent of broadening the acquisition systems perspective of contracting personnel. The College would like to thank the distinguished guest speakers for supporting this course, the various course directors that ensured its success, and all the graduates that made it an enjoyable learning experience.

**Editor's Note:** Summers is currently the Contract Management Department Chairman, Faculty Division, DSMC. First assigned to DSMC in 1986, Summers previously served as a Contract Management Professor, Course Director, Department Chairman, and Associate Dean, Academic Programs Division.