



## STUDENT INFORMATION SYSTEM

# THE UPDATE

Bimonthly

### Website Updates

★ The [Situation Room](#) provides more details on the revised project timeline.

★ New [In the Arena](#) Blog authored by Chloe Jackson, QA Analyst

★ New [PORTiCO Poll](#)



### The Update

The Update is the official bi-monthly newsletter for status updates related to the student information system (SIS) project at the Defense Acquisition University.

PORTiCO, the official name of this acquisition workforce initiative, is a commercial off-the-shelf (COTS) system that integrates critical capabilities including career training management, schedule development, DAWIA transcripts and reporting.

Select [More Updates](#) to view past editions of this newsletter on the PORTiCO website.

## GETTING TO SIMPLE IS A COMPLEX JOURNEY

At the Defense Acquisition University's January All Hands meeting, PORTiCO's Executive Program Director Mark White-side presented an update briefing on the PORTiCO project (aka student information system). The update was both a briefing on the state of the initiative and a testimonial on the challenges of complex projects. [Simple is Hard](#), the presentation title, was the essential message.

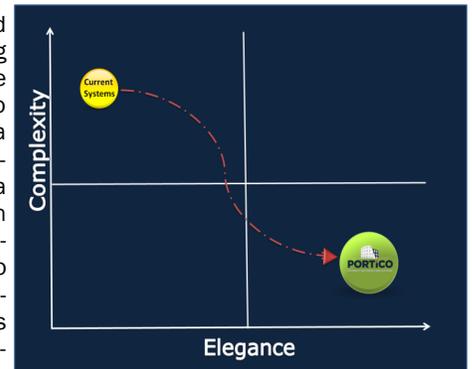
Since the inception of the PORTiCO project, the aim has been consistent: use 21st century technology to consolidate fragmented systems and create a powerfully simple user experience. It's always easier said than done. To highlight this point, a recent [blog](#) by Karsten Christiansen, the project's IT Lead, noted, "The SIS is not turnkey ... there are upward of 15 systems needed to fill the SIS with the essential information to identify and support the acquisition workforce user."

These many system inter-

dependencies would be challenging enough, but the project has also been impacted by a delayed procurement cycle and a rigorous information assurance accreditation process—to name a few dependencies. Nevertheless PORTiCO's goal remains the same: a user experience that simplifies access to training and career management.

While the prize remains constant, the project timeline does not. An end of year project review, performed by the ["team in the trenches"](#) took a fresh look at project dependencies and ultimately reassessed the feasibility and risks associated with project activities. The original deployment date (June 2012) was

Continued on page 2



PORTiCO's objective: the simple elegance of one destination.

## DYNAMIC DUO IN THE ARENA



Team Member Denise Naff's extensive experience bolsters PORTiCO's testing and training preparation.

The Update will take the opportunity to introduce you to PORTiCO team members on a periodic basis. These introductions begin with two critical contributors who provide essential support to PORTiCO's testing and training preparations: Denise Naff and Raed Muhsen.

Ms. Naff contributes a wealth of experience necessary to advance the ball on both the

Continued on page 2

## GATEWAY TO EXCELLENCE QUOTABLES...

*"Strengthening the government workforce [is] my highest-priority program ... and that will continue. I don't think there's anything more important for us, in terms of doing a better job, than having people who are more capable and qualified and ready to do the jobs they've been given throughout the acquisition community."*

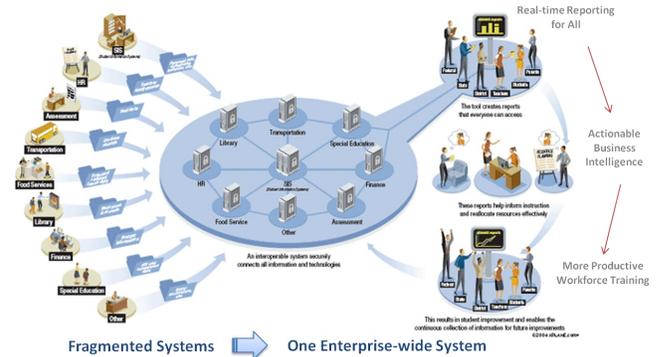
— Frank Kendall, Acting Under Secretary of Defense (AT&L)

# SIMPLE IS HARD

Continued from page 1

set to align PORTiCO's launch with the FY13 registration cycle. When project dependencies made this date untenable, the project team determined that closer inspection and adequate risk management required moving the project to Q2 of 2013. The assessment - now based on experience with the technology partner - enabled the project team to understand risks and opportunities with more granularity. It also enabled project managers to bolster planning for testing and training to ensure a stable system that users will embrace.

The late Steve Jobs said, "Simple can be harder than complex ... but it's worth it in



*From many to one.*

the end because once you get there you can move mountains." The project team is committed to this premise.

While many project members recall Mr. Whiteside referring to the initiative as equivalent to climbing Everest, the challenge doesn't

evoke images of the mountain's fabled "dead zone." Instead, the PORTiCO project team views its "Everest" as a great opportunity to demonstrate the power of teamwork - between DAU and the Components - to move even the biggest mountains.

*"Simple can be harder than complex ...but it's worth it in the end because once you get there you can move mountains."— Steve Jobs*

# DYNAMIC DUO

Continued from page 1

testing and training fronts. She reinforces the PORTiCO team with her 15 years experience as a project manager/professional services manager with Spectrum Human Resources Corporation implementing Human Capital Management systems across an array of industries. She also delivers five years of experience as a Product Support and Education Representative, providing technical support and training to end users on product functionality. Ms. Naff earned a Masters of Education degree from Wright State University.

Raed Muhsen is the other "impact player" contributing his extensive experience with integrated acquisition systems software testing and training, with specific expertise in supporting integrated acquisition systems. Mr. Muhsen graduated from George Mason University with a degree in Business Management. He enjoys sketching and graphic design in his spare time.



*Team Member Raed.Muhsen contributes his expertise in the testing of integrated, enterprise systems.*

For more information on PORTiCO information sessions, events and key meetings, please go to [website events calendar](#).

To keep abreast of PORTiCO's progress or to provide your feedback, visit the website at [www.dau.mj/sis](http://www.dau.mj/sis), read monthly updates, or contact your IPT representative.