

**Defense Acquisition University Board of Visitors Meeting
DAU Headquarters, Fort Belvoir, VA
September 14, 2016**

Welcome: VADM Dave Venlet, USN, Retired, BoV Chair

VADM Venlet opened the meeting by welcoming everyone and introducing the industry members in attendance. He explained to the board and DAU leadership team that he had spoken with the industry guests in advance and asked them to think about three specific topics with regard to the Defense Acquisition Workforce: risk aversion, critical thinking abilities, and understanding of industry. These are areas the board is continuing to address as persistent criticisms of the Defense Acquisition Workforce.

Discussion with Industry Members

VADM Venlet began the discussion by asking each of the three industry members to provide their perspective of the government/industry relationship. Using VADM Venlet's three topic areas as a framework, the members took turns relaying trends they are noticing within their organizations and from their experiences.

Understanding Industry:

The comments highlighted the importance of good communication between the government and industry teams. The two teams have never been more integrated than they are today, yet there continues to be a noticeable lack of communication and understanding from both sides. The discussion included concerns over the transition of the government-industry relationship away from a partnership to that of a "buyer-seller" relationship.

There was a consensus on the Defense Acquisition Workforce's need for better general understanding of business strategy, how industry financials work, and what incentives can be leveraged to produce better results. The industry members also expressed the need for both sides to have a better understanding of the Federal Acquisition Regulations and the permissive nature of the document.

Critical Thinking:

Better Buying Power has good ideas and is well crafted, but it still requires the application of critical thinking. Contracting officers should be encouraged to find the best contracting solution for a given scenario, not automatically default to a FAR preferred solution.

Many aspects of the acquisition process, such as determining best value, require judgement. When workforce members lack the expertise to make a good decision, they should be encouraged to ask questions or seek help. The acquisition community should be trained to ask deeper questions for better understanding.

Risk Aversion:

Both government and industry teams are recognized as being risk averse. There is currently no advantage, benefit, or incentive for taking risks. One observation was that each deal is more likely to be seen as "high-stakes" so people are not rewarded for being innovative, they are rewarded for not being protested and for either making profit (industry) or for getting the lowest price (government).

Discussion:

Further discussion led to conversations about culture/leadership and innovation. The culture/leadership intersection in the acquisition community—both government and industry, affects risk aversion, critical thinking and innovation. Presently it has negative systemic impact. DAU should explore its ability to influence culture/leadership and innovative business thinking. Deans can work with acquisition leaders in their areas and DAU leadership can discuss with the senior leaders across service material commands and PEOs.

Innovation is not a skill, it is an outcome. Innovation should be purposeful –driving toward something specific, meeting a need. What are the rewards or even evaluating factors and goals for innovation in the acquisition community?

VADM Venlet asked the board members to assess the discussions with industry members, functional leads, and acquisition commands that they've had during the past year and send their thoughts to him and Mr. Woolsey.

Enabling the Classroom: Bob Mosher, Chief Learning Evangelist, APPLY Synergies

Mr. Mosher spoke with the DAU leadership team the previous day about ways to enable the classroom. During the BoV session, Mr. Mosher offered the board members a recap of that discussion. With more information to teach and less time to teach, strong workflow learning tools and online learning assets are more important than ever. This supports the performance-based learning approach where there is context for the knowledge, making it more valuable to the learner because it helps them at the point of need.

The Acquisition Requirements Roadmap Tool is an example of how DAU has been moving in this direction. It is a tool that faculty introduces in the classroom so students understand it and how they can use it on the job. The challenge is to create and encourage integrated learning systematically.

Recognizing that the Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act (DAWIA) certification construct does not directly align with performance-based learning, Mr. Mosher suggested DAU pilot an integrated learning experience on a small scale with a non-DAWIA course.

DAU Update: Jim Woolsey, DAU President

Mr. Woolsey reviewed the types of comments that repeatedly come up in discussions with stakeholders: critical thinking; understanding industry; culture/leadership; workflow learning; cyber; training is too generic; power of mission assistance; and leadership training for civilians. He then illustrated ways critical thinking is incorporated in our courses and shared comments from the American Council on Education (ACE) related to recently evaluated courses.

Mr. Woolsey updated the board about progress DAU has made in workflow learning, understanding industry, cybersecurity and leadership training. He also announced that DAU has just reinstated access to learning assets for industry members without a Common Access Card (CAC). Performance learning is a growth area. Demand for classroom training has decreased, which allows the university to spend more resources on performance learning and workflow learning assets. DAU developed new workshops this year including source selection simulations, critical thinking workshops and acquisition strategy development. Mr. Woolsey recapped the May discussion related to potential changes that could result if the 2017 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) is passed.

Scenario-based Planning: Joanne Schoonover, DAU Vice President

Mr. Schoonover reviewed the outcome of the BoV's scenario-based strategic planning session from the May board meeting. She explained the strategic planning process DAU uses and how scenario-based planning fits into it. She provided a timeline that DAU is working toward from kick-off in July to definition in February. The scenario planning team includes people from across the enterprise and at different levels within the organization. The team has completed stakeholder feedback from three groups: BoV, Cubic, and Acquisition Insights Group (AIG).

Ms. Schoonover reported that the planning process has expanded the scope with regard to the types of issues DAU is considering. Comments related to the potential scenario of who delivers acquisition training in the future will help university leadership think with more of a business mindset instead of only a regulatory one. It also helps DAU prepare for major disruptors related to content areas (e.g. cyber, services). To date, common themes that have emerged as potential disruptors are: economic, political, competitors, customers, and internal. Customization, personalization and integration of learning assets should be goals for DAU.

Transition Planning: Jim Woolsey, DAU President

During this session, Mr. Woolsey asked board members what specific things DAU should be doing or preparing for given the pending change of administration and the potential reorganization if the USD(AT&L) position is eliminated in favor of a new Under Secretary for Research and Engineering.

Final Thoughts from the Board

VADM Venlet asked board members to submit their thoughts on the session with industry, as well as any additional thoughts about transition planning. He also asked them to think about what group they want to hear from next (e.g. operators, requirements generators, etc.).

For the next meeting, Mr. Woolsey asked that board members suggest specific things that DAU could do to further promote better understanding of industry. He also asked that members—especially those from Defense industry, talk about DAU in their organizations. The more DAU can engage with industry, the more the university can help promote dialog between the groups.

BoV members and candidates present:

VADM David Venlet, USN, Ret.
Ms. Caroline Avey
BGen Michael Brogan, USMC, Ret.
Mr. Gene Fraser
Maj. Gen. Erwin Lessel, USAF, Ret.
VADM Walter Massenburg, USN, Ret.
Mr. Bob Mosher
LTG Bill Phillips, USA, Ret.
Ms. Anne Reed
Dr. Allison Rosset
Mr. Charlie Williams

Industry guests present:

Doug Belair, BAE Systems
John Bird, Orbital ATK
Lorraine Martin, Lockheed Martin

Minutes prepared by:

Christen Goulding, Designated Federal Officer, Defense Acquisition University Board of Visitors

Minutes approved by:

David J. Venlet, Chairman, Defense Acquisition University Board of Visitors

Signature:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David J. Venlet". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "D".

Date: 7 October 2016