

STATEMENT OF
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DIRECTOR
FEDERAL ACQUISITION INSTITUTE
U.S GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION
BEFORE THE
COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM
SUBCOMMITTEE ON TECHNOLOGY, INFORMATION POLICY,
INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS AND PROCUREMENT REFORM
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Good Afternoon, Chairman Lankford, Ranking Member Connolly, and members of the Committee. I'm Donna Jenkins, Director, of the Federal Acquisition Institute (FAI) which was established to facilitate career development and strategic human capital management in support of a professional federal acquisition workforce. I was appointed in February 2011, and upon assuming this role had 15 years of acquisition experience with, and the last six focused on, career management. I welcome this opportunity to appear before you today to discuss how FAI is working collaboratively to address the human capital challenges of the civilian agencies' acquisition workforce.

Taxpayers rely on the acquisition workforce to make critical business decisions that impact the lives of every American; from protecting the homeland to supporting the small businesses that fuel our economy. A skilled acquisition workforce is more critical than ever to deliver fiscally sound and innovative solutions from responsible contractors. This demands an agile workforce with a sophisticated and diverse set of skills to define requirements, make complicated trade-off decisions among competing alternatives, and manage projects within tight budget and schedule constraints.

While procurement spending more than doubled between 2000 and 2008, equally significant is the increasing complexity of what agencies buy to support their missions. Agencies have shifted from buying commodities, requiring a process-based procurement approach to the acquisition of complex services and technology, the success of which depends on a knowledge and accountability-based acquisition management approach. Our professionals must navigate an evolving commercial marketplace driven by rapid advances in technology, global supply chains, and emerging security concerns. Keeping the workforce's skills refreshed is key to our success.

Significant improvements have been made in the training and management of the acquisition workforce to meet these demands, but we still face three fundamental challenges:

1. The demographics of the acquisition workforce;
2. The availability of effective and shared workforce management tools and technologies; and
3. The need for improved collaboration across the acquisition community.

Although the retirement rate of contracting professionals slowed from 7% in 2009 to 4.7% in 2010, retirement eligibility within the next ten years remains almost constant at just under 50% of the workforce. However, the 11.7% growth in the contracting workforce in 2010 to a total of 35,048 members helps alleviate some of the immediate concerns related to our aging workforce. More importantly, the legislation requiring a college education and our recruitment efforts at colleges and universities is paying off. The number of college graduates in the contracting career field has increased from 59% in 2000 to an all-time high of 80% in 2010. However, even a more educated entry-level contracting workforce needs acquisition training and realigning skills to keep pace with the dynamics of the commercial marketplace.

While information on the contracting workforce has been collected since 1978, information collection and analysis for Contracting Officer's Representatives (CORs) and Project and Program Managers are relatively recent. FAI relies on agencies' annual Acquisition Human Capital Plans for this data. In FY-10, agencies reported a total of 47,959 CORs and 13,893 Project and Program Managers.

Civilian agencies have employed a variety of approaches to collect and analyze data on their acquisition workforce – not without struggle and with varying degrees of success. The absence of centralized tools and processes has resulted in a less than effective ability to collectively understand and manage the civilian acquisition workforce.

Just as agencies used a variety of processes to collect and analyze data on their acquisition workforce, they have also individually funded agency-unique training delivery and development programs. In many cases this has limited standardization, been costly and redundant, and stymied the ability to share leading practices across the workforce.

FAI's strategic focus on improving the workforce through shared use of resources and technology, positions it to lead the civilian workforce in meeting its challenges in this time of budgetary constraint.

Since assuming the role of Director eight months ago, I have focused the efforts of FAI on investing in and managing the workforce and improving communication and collaboration across the federal space.

Investing in the Workforce

- Recruitment efforts:

FAI is partnering with the Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP), the Chief Acquisition Officers Council (CAOC), and the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) to establish an acquisition track in the Presidential Management Fellows (PMF) program. In FY-12, FAI will establish a cohort style acquisition cadre of 24 PMF interns. FAI will provide acquisition certification training to level II, and other acquisition specific learning opportunities in addition to the PMF program training. This will foster collaboration and increased sharing of leading practices across federal agencies as members of the cohort participate in a 6-month rotational assignment outside of their host agency. In addition, it is reasonable to expect that incorporation of an acquisition track in such a prestigious program will drive colleges and universities to promote acquisition as part of their curriculum.

- Classroom Training:

In FY-12, FAI is providing training opportunities to reach more members of the acquisition workforce. Between FY-11 and FY-12, FAI more than tripled the number of locations offering classroom training nationwide, from 4 to 13 locations. For the first time, FAI is offering a curriculum-based program for Project and Program Management and COR training. In addition, FAI, through registration system improvements and process enhancements, has improved its course fill rate resulting in an average of over 94% capacity for the last six months of FY-11.

- On-Line Training:

From FY-10 through the first quarter of FY-12, FAI developed ten new and improved training modules in critical topic areas such as: Shaping Smart Business Arrangements, Buy American Act, Green Purchasing, Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS), Price Analysis, Combating Human Trafficking, and Preparing an Independent Government Cost Estimate.

Additionally, class enrollment for FAI sponsored online courses increased by 30%. In FY-10, civilian agency workforce members completed 2,249 courses and in FY-11 this number increased to 3,172. DoD students also completed over 5,100 FAI on-line modules in FY-11. Benefiting from the Defense Acquisition University (DAU)/FAI partnership, civilian agency workforce members completed nearly 87,000 DAU sponsored on-line courses.

- Training Satisfaction Survey Methods:

In the 4th quarter of FY-12, FAI will eliminate use of vendor managed, paper-based course surveys, and launch a standardized, cost-effective on-line survey form to provide immediate feedback after completion of both classroom and online courses. This will improve FAI's ability to conduct comparative analyses of the quality of training, student materials, instructors, and locations to better serve the workforce.

- Certification Programs:

We have established a repeatable methodology to map skills to agency missions so that professional certification programs reflect agency needs. The COR certification program was the first to be retooled. The COR plays a key role in ensuring program objectives are met through government contracts and is the front line in overseeing contractor performance. Effective January 2012, the new professional certification program for CORs combines additional training and experience requirements for the highest level of certification, ensuring training dollars are allocated using a risk-based approach that optimizes the government's return on investment.

Managing the Workforce

- The Federal Acquisition Training Application System (FAITAS):

In partnership with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), FAI has launched a comprehensive and robust workforce management system. The Federal Acquisition Training Application System (FAITAS) will eliminate duplicative systems across government and advance our ability to effectively manage the acquisition workforce. With its recent launch, FAITAS has already produced impressive results. Replacing four outdated and burdensome systems, FAITAS allowed FAI to cancel a \$28 million solicitation and will save an estimated \$1 million annually in operations and maintenance costs. More than 48,000 users have registered in FAITAS since its launch in May, which exceeds the number registered in the predecessor system after more than a decade of use.

FAITAS will provide agencies with the capability to centrally manage their workforce, certification, warrant, and training programs eliminating the need for duplicative systems across the government. By FY-13, agencies will use the system's business intelligence tools to analyze the demographics of their workforce, supporting more effective human capital planning. FAITAS will also serve as a platform for government-wide comparative analysis and oversight of the acquisition workforce and its management.

- **Webinar Technology:**

FAI invested in web-based technology to cost effectively expand training opportunities beyond the classroom. On November 4th, 2011 FAI and OFPP sponsored a webinar for the COR community. The event hosted speakers from FAI, DAU, DHS, National Aeronautics and Space Administration, and Health and Human Services. FAI reached over 5,600 workforce members world-wide in one session.

Improving Collaboration and Communication

FAI has worked with OFPP to re-energize the FAI Board of Directors ("Board"). With a quarterly meeting schedule, and an approved governance structure, the Board is empowered to guide FAI in meeting its statutory responsibilities to meet the needs of the federal acquisition workforce.

FAI chartered interagency working groups to promote two-way communication, guaranteeing FAI remains stakeholder focused. The new format for the Acquisition Career Managers Council fosters the sharing of leading practices in human capital planning and management across the civilian agencies. The Functional Advisory Boards (FABs) shape the certification and training programs for Contracting Officers, Program Managers and Contracting Officer's Representative.

Lastly, The Chief Acquisition Officers Council (CAOC) recently approved FAI to establish the interagency Training Consortium Board, to pool resources and collectively develop acquisition training. To validate the benefits of this type of collaboration, FAI is developing the Contracting Officer's Representative Level I Certification course, which will be available in January. This effort ensures the government invests only once in the fundamental training, while affording agencies the flexibility to add modules to meet unique mission needs. Such collaborative efforts will not only save time and money, but will promote consistency in training quality and a more mobile workforce.

Conclusion

With the support and leadership of GSA and OFPP, FAI has delivered innovative solutions, which demonstrate the value of cross-agency collaboration. I appreciate the Committee's attention to this critical issue and the proposals that would support smart investments in the acquisition workforce. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before your Committee. I'm happy to answer any questions you may have.



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Donna Jenkins is the Director of the Federal Acquisition Institute in the Office of Governmentwide Policy within the General Services Administration. She leads FAI in setting the strategic direction and identifying priorities for the training and development of the civilian acquisition force. Prior to joining FAI, Donna was with the Department of Homeland Security as a procurement analyst and the Director of the Acquisition Workforce. With 20 years of federal experience, she has held acquisition positions with the Department of the Navy, Department of the Treasury, and Missile Defense Agency. Donna received her Bachelor of Administration and her Masters in Acquisition Management from the University of Maryland, University College. She also completed the Senior Executive Leadership Program at Georgetown University and holds a commission in the U.S. Navy Reserves as a Commander.