

FAI NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 4 SPRING FY 2014 | FAI QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

From the Director



Donna Jenkins,
Director, FAI

Have I officially become a technology 'geek'? Since the beginning of my tenure at the Eisenhower School (formally known as the Industrial College of the Armed Forces), my base of knowledge has expanded in many ways. My largest and most recent take-away is the importance of information technology (IT) both today and in the future. I am not speaking in terms of the actual technology bits and bytes, but about the increasingly important role of non-IT personnel making decisions on technology products and services. This realization was shaped by a series of events.

1. Two guest lecturers came to the school to speak about IT. One belongs to the uniformed service and the other is a civilian, but both cited that more than 70% of corporate executives are personally involved in critical decisions regarding technology today. This is a significant shift from just a few years ago. One lecturer discussed that Chief Information Officers (CIOs), which were once viewed as back room positions, are now sitting at the board table.

2. I am just guessing, but I think that the CEO of a major retailer wishes they had not cancelled their chip-based anti-theft credit card program

now. Their system was recently hacked and profits fell 46% in the fourth quarter of 2013.

3. The third event came while visiting a local tug and barge company as part of my transportation industry study. The owner of this privately held, 100-year old plus company stated that their technology capabilities were a huge component of their success. This was not exactly what I expected to hear from a tug boat company. After seeing the operations and how they manage through technology, I was duly impressed.

The reason that I am sharing this new found insight is to urge everyone to get tech-smart. I am not suggesting that we should all run out and take a class about how to write code or design IT architecture. I am merely urging each of you to understand the basic concepts, and at a minimum, how they affect you, your role, and your customers.



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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Congratulations to the 2014 Chief Acquisition Officers Council Awards Program Winners!

Please join us in congratulating the winners of the 2014 Chief Acquisition Officers Council (CAOC) Acquisition Excellence Awards! The Acquisition Excellence Awards recognize outstanding achievement and excellence by individuals and teams in effective acquisition partnering, risk reduction in acquisition, and small business utilization. The awards were presented at the 2014 Acquisition Excellence Conference on March 20 by Lesley Field, Acting Administrator, Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP). Thank you to all who submitted nominations for this year's awards! For more details regarding each award winner's outstanding contributions to the federal acquisition field, please visit our [CAOC Awards Page](#).

**Acquisition Excellence Team Award:
Department of Homeland Security (DHS)
Strategic Sourcing Program Office**



Pictured (left to right): Stephen Mark Leslie, Cheryl Bernhard, Peter Ko, David Campbell, Joseph Harris, Anthony Bell

**Small Business Excellence Award Winner:
Crystal Ober, Deputy Director of
Small Business
Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) Aviation**



Pictured (left to right): Lesley Field (OFPP), Crystal Ober

**Strategic Sourcing Award:
Leontine Thompson,
Naval Supply Systems Command,
Fleet Logistics Center San Diego
(NAVSUP FLCSD)**



Pictured (left to right): Lesley Field (OFPP), Leontine Thompson

FEDERAL ACQUISITION CERTIFICATIONS

Revisions to the Federal Acquisition Certification in Contracting (FAC-C)

On May 7, 2014, the Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP) issued a revision to the FAC-C program ([FAC-C \(Refresh\)](#)). A very much appreciated “Thank You” goes out to all of the individuals who shared their ideas and suggestions to ensure the revised certification requirements arm our acquisition workforce members with the skills, business acumen and experience to deliver successful mission outcomes.

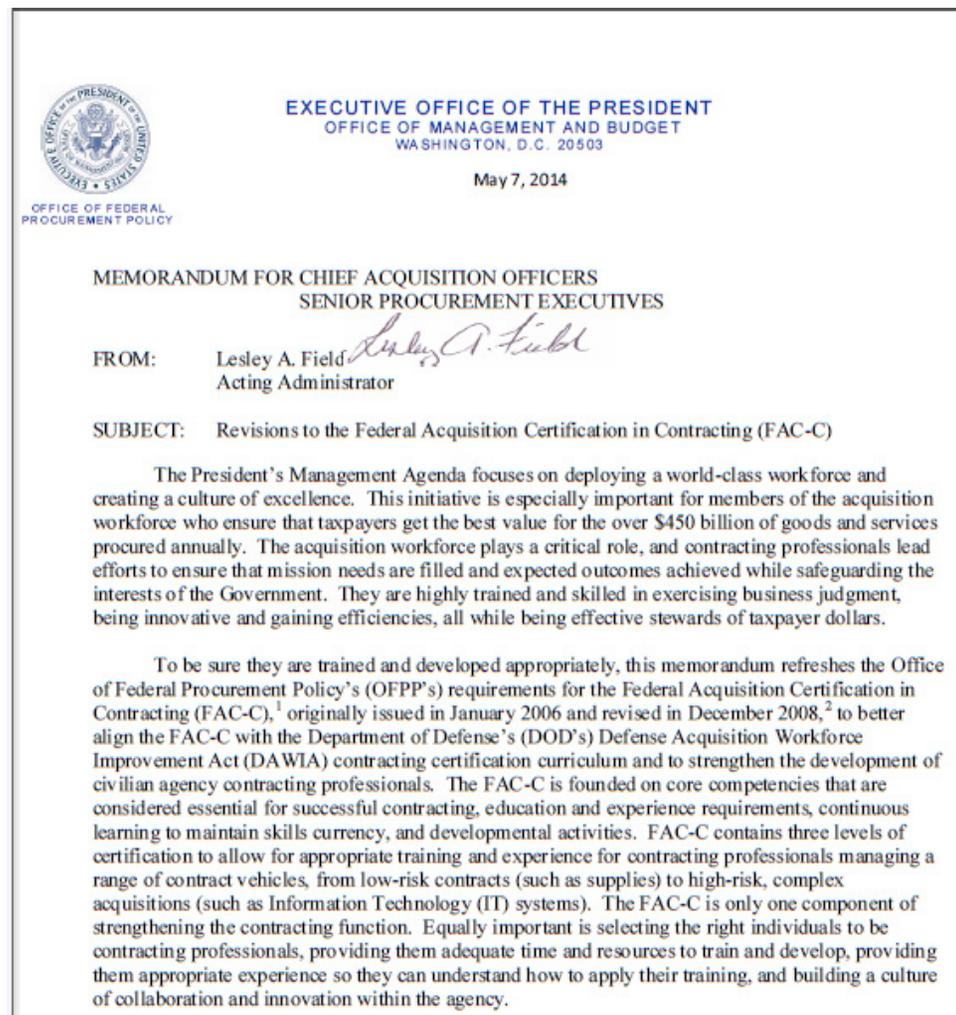
The FAC-C (R) program is based on the current DoD DAWIA Contracting Certification Program. Because DoD’s program is competency based, the FAC-C competencies are the same as the DoD competencies.

The implementation date for FAC-C (R) is October 1, 2014. Individual agencies may allow workforce members to start the FAC-C (R) program now. Individuals should check with their Agency Acquisition Career Managers (ACMs) as to how FAC-C (R) is being implemented by their agency.

The FAC-C (R) allows for a sixteen month transition. Courses in the legacy FAC-C, but not in FAC-C (R), cannot be used for certification after September 30, 2015. FAC-C (R) courses must be taken in order, there will be no waivers. For certification purposes, a course taken from a vendor, school, or government organization must have been determined to be Defense Acquisition University (DAU) equivalent. FAC-C students taking classroom courses directly from DAU, must meet all DAU course pre-requisite requirements.

The FAC-C (R) program contains no changes to the current FAC-C education and experience requirements.

FAI is in the process of developing an outreach and communication plan to assist agencies in successfully implementing the FAC-C (R) requirements. Outreach activities will include “Town Halls”, webcasts and other virtual venues as well as agency visits. The details of the FAC-C (R) program, as well as any changes and updates to the FAC-C program, will be posted on the fai.gov website under [Certification/Contracting \(FAC-C\)](#).



FEDERAL ACQUISITION CERTIFICATIONS

Program and Project Manager (FAC-P/PM) Update

December 16th, 2013 marked the day much hard work, collaboration, and consensus building across the entire Federal sector came together when former OFPP Administrator, Joseph G. Jordan, signed the revised FAC-PPM certification policy. This new policy replaces the policy last issued April 25, 2007. The first two sentences of the policy memo speak volumes to the increased emphasis and credibility of project and program managers in the greater acquisition process for the Federal government.

“Gaining efficiencies, reducing redundancy, and supporting innovation in all areas of government are key components of the Administration’s management initiatives. Having skilled, competent, and professional program and project managers (P/PMs) is essential to the success of critical agency missions.”

The new policy was built through the collaborative efforts of the multiagency Functional Advisory Board, Chief Acquisition Officers Council (CAOC), Chief Information Officers Council (CIO), FAI, and other stakeholders. Some of the salient points of the new policy include:

- » Current PPMs certified under the previous policy are grandfathered at their current level of certification as long as their continuous learning requirements are up to date.
- » Two new competency models define the performance outcomes for FAC-PPM core, and core-plus specialty certifications.
- » This policy launches the first core-plus specialty certification for PPMs managing the acquisition of Information Technology (IT) capital assets, the FAC-PPM/IT core-plus specialty certification.
- » The number of training hours is now expressed as a range of 80 to 120 hours (instead of a set number of hours) required per certification level, accounting for the differences in innovative instructional methods used to impart real learning outcomes of students in a learning environment.

- » On-the-job experience requirements at the senior level of certification have been updated.
- » PPMs leading projects or programs determined to be major investments by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) are required to be Senior-level certified. Also, those PPMs leading projects that are subordinate to or components of major program investments must be Mid-level certified.

The revised FAC-PPM policy was effective March 31, 2014. At that time, agencies began managing their PPMs in accordance with the new requirements and certification standards of the policy, as well as updating their agency-specific certification requirements to align with the new policy. The [policy memorandum](#), [core FAC-P/PM competency model](#), and [IT PM core-plus competency model](#) are posted on FAI.gov, as well as [summaries of the revised certification standards](#). Below is an excerpt of the updates presented in the policy memo.

FAC-P/PM of April 25, 2007	Refreshed FAC-P/PM
Applicability: At a minimum, P/PMs assigned to programs considered major acquisition must be senior-level certified.	All acquisition P/PMs must be certified at the appropriate level, as determined by their agency. Considerations for determining the appropriate level have been added.
Allowability of Waivers: The CAO could waive all or part of the FAC-P/PM requirements.	Extensions to the required certification date by the CAO are allowed, but waivers are not.
Competencies: Competencies were provided for each certification level.	Competencies have been updated for each of the three certification levels, and performance outcomes for competencies at each level have been defined, which better describes the required knowledge, skills and abilities needed for successful performance.
Training Requirements: Inflexible minimum hours of training and learning outcomes areas were tied to various functional areas.	Training requirements are more flexible with requirements ranging from approximately 80 - 120 hours collectively for each of the three

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

FAI Training by the Numbers

The Federal Acquisition Institute's Training Application System (FAITAS) has enabled a more granular analysis of training statistics than ever before. An analysis of statistics for FY2011-2013 has revealed some very interesting trends in the demand for acquisition training.

Classes - Seats - Registrations - Attendees - Graduations

FAI was on track for offering a consistent number of classes from FY2011 (115) through FY2013 (107). However, FAI saw a spike in the number of classes/seats it provided in FY2012. FAI relies heavily on its partnership with Defense Acquisition University (DAU) to access online training. With DAU's system going down in July 2011, access to CON 100, CON 110, CON 111, CON 112, CON 214, and CON 216 was lost. Furthermore, the change to DOD's contracting curriculum meant that CON 110, CON 111, CON 112, and CON 214 were no longer available when DAU's system resumed operations in November 2011. To mitigate the loss of online classes, FAI secured classroom offerings for those courses.

What is interesting to note is the upward trend of registrations, attendees, and graduations which speaks positively of the demand for FAI's training.

The Rates

	FY2011	FY2012	FY2013
Classes	115	142	107
Seats	3,314	4,152	3,210
Registrations	2,522	3,726	3,164
Attendees	2,513	3,568	2,851
Graduations	2,449	3,465	2,791

The numbers in the previous chart are difficult to interpret on their own because of the spike in FY2012. However, the *rates* of registration, attendance, and graduations demonstrate a distinctly positive trend. Between FY2011 and FY2013, there

was a 23 percentage point jump in registrations and a 13 percentage point jump in attendance; massive growth by any measure.

The consistency of the graduation rates is simply indicative of the quality students bring to their learning.

	FY2011	FY2012	FY2013
Registration Rate	76%	90%	99%
Attendance Rate	76%	86%	89%
Graduation Rate	97%	97%	98%

One Key Metric

The explosion in the number of waitlisted students from 453 in FY2011 to 1,051 in FY2013 is an undeniable indication of the increased demand for training. However, the concurrent rise in the number of "no-shows," from 182 to 477, undermines FAI's capability to satisfy that demand. With the number of waitlisted students more than doubling in the course of three years, there is no reason to have so many students fail to keep their commitments to the classes for which they registered.

On a positive note, we have experienced a precipitous drop in the number of empty seats and the resulting amount of funds "lost" to those empty seats. Seats in FAI classes are empty because 1) students do not register for them, and 2) students fail to appear for a class and there is no time for FAI to find replacements. It is heartening to see that fewer and fewer seats in FAI classes go begging, but there is still a cost to an empty seat. The money spent on procuring that seat is simply lost. This is one key metric about which all should be aware:

- FY2011 had 801 empty seats at a cost of \$413,590
- FY2012 had 584 empty seats at a cost of \$270,220
- FY2013 had 359 empty seats at a cost of \$187,124

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

FAI Training by the Numbers

It's good to see that the amount of money lost has been cut in half over three years; however, it is disturbing to see any money lost in this environment of agency training budget constraints.

	FY2011	FY2012	FY2013
Waitlisted Students	453	672	1051
No-Show Students	182	301	477
Walk-in Students	173	143	164
Empty Seats	801	584	359

Low-fill Classes

Low-fill classes are defined as those with attendance rates of less than 90% (e.g., 26 or fewer students out of a possible 30). Forty-three of the 107 classes FAI offered in FY2013 were considered low-fill. Nearly all of the classes had 100% registrations with significant numbers of students on the waitlists. There were simply a tragic number of "no-show" students. We've assessed the data, but no clear pattern emerged indicating why specific class experienced a higher number of "no-shows."

Cancelled Classes

FAI locates the classes it offers according to:

- Agency acquisition career manager (ACM) requests
- Concentration of Federal acquisition workforce members
- Historical registration rates

Because FAI's resources are limited and we wish to satisfy the greatest training needs we can, a great deal of effort is expended with ACMs to determine the classes FAI provides and their location. We are very pleased to report that no classes in the Washington, DC, area were cancelled. This includes classes in Arlington, VA, and Rockville, MD. However, in spite of FAI's best efforts at scheduling and to generate

interest and student registrations, some of our FY2013 classes - most for FAC-COR (FCR 201) and FAC-P/PM (FPM 111-115 and FPM 311-315) - still had to be cancelled due to low enrollment. Our biggest challenges were found outside of the DC Beltway. All 6 Chicago classes were cancelled, 3 of 9 Dallas classes were cancelled, and 10 of 16 Denver classes were cancelled.

A key provision in the contracts with our training vendors states that FAI may cancel any class that has 22 or fewer students thirty days before that class begins saving that money for other endeavors. Therefore, no funds were "lost" by cancelling these classes. However, we hope to better focus our classes where there is the greatest demand to maximize attendance and minimize cancelled classes.

Epilogue

To mitigate problems found with empty seats and no-shows, FAI has instituted [two items of policy](#):

- A more stringent "No Show" policy. A "No Show" is when an enrolled student fails to cancel a reservation at least 10 days prior to the class start date or fails to report to class on the first day at the class start time. A No-Show action will result in the student being unable to register for ANY classroom course offering for a period of 6 months.
- Encourage Waitlisted students to attend the first day of class. If students are placed on the waitlist for a class, it means there are no vacant seats for the moment. Waitlisted students are notified if seats become available before the class start date, and their status will change to "Reservation" in FAITAS. Otherwise, if the training facility is in students' local area, they are encouraged to attend the first day of class to check for available seating. If a scheduled student cancels at the last minute or fails to attend, the instructor may allow waitlisted students to fill any vacant seats. Priority for the vacant seats will be determined by waitlist position.

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Highlights from the Acquisition Learning Seminar Series

FAI recently broadcast two very engaging Acquisition Learning Seminars (ALSes) on FAI.gov. Vendor Engagement and Negotiation: Meeting the Challenge of Better Outcomes was broadcast in February, and Customer Engagement: Put Your Service to the Test, was broadcast in April. Over 5,000 Acquisition professionals viewed the live broadcasts. Read more about each one below. If you missed either of these great webcasts, please visit [FAI's Video Library](#). Be on the lookout for future ALS events in the coming months!

Vendor Engagement and Negotiation: Meeting the Challenge of Better Outcomes

The Vendor Engagement and Negotiation seminar starred AI Munoz from USDA's Customer and Program Management Office. Vendor engagement and negotiation skills are tools that should be in every acquisition practitioner's toolbox and sharpened regularly. Fortunately, collections of best practices do exist and can help encourage you to start and to help you avoid mistakes that others have made along the way. If you have been looking to improve your agency's vendor engagement and to sharpen your negotiation skills, this seminar was designed for you. You will hear how contracting staff, program managers and end users can use their knowledge and their position in the process to contribute to solving the challenge of better outcomes.



Image for Vendor Engagement and Negotiation ALS with AI Munoz, USDA Customer and Program Management Office

Customer Engagement: Put your Service to the Test

The Customer Engagement seminar was facilitated by Stacy Cook, a training and development expert on the FAI Team. The seminar also starred subject matter experts, Lawrence Williams, Chief of the Policy Branch in the Contract Management Division USDA's Food and Nutrition Service, and Karl Alvarez, Director of the Office of Recipient Integrity Coordination at HHS.



Customers don't buy products and services; they buy solutions. The Federal acquisition workforce consists of contracting officers, CORs, and P/PM's, but the essence of each role is "Problem Solver." As members of the acquisition community, we are positioned to help our co-workers navigate the parameters and opportunities of acquiring and managing the best solutions to meet their needs. The speakers offered practical techniques to enhance the most critical aspects of customer services and included a multitude of real-life examples aimed at showing how to apply theory in practice.

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

End of Course Survey and Analysis

FAI offers Contracting (FAC-C), Contracting Officers Representative (FAC-COR), and Project/Program Management (FAC-P/PM) training to Civilian Federal employees through commercial vendors. Upon completion of the training, end of course surveys were conducted to ensure that content was presented in a manner which addressed the learning objectives and that instructors promoted active participation. From 2010 through June of 2013 paper-based surveys were used to collect quantitative and qualitative data aimed at providing insight into the student's reaction to training and to what degree they acquired the intended knowledge and skills. However, conducting quick turn-around analysis was difficult due to the paper-based methodology. Beginning in June of 2013, FAI moved to an automated web-based survey in the Federal Acquisition Institute Training Application System (FAITAS). The FAITAS survey tool allows surveys to be sent automatically to students who attend training, eliminates manual data entry, automates the analysis of responses, and allows FAI to reduce turn-around time on addressing issues raised by the students.

"Overall Course Satisfaction" is rated on a seven-point scale. Analysis of the June-December 2013 survey responses across all three curriculums, revealed an average "Overall Course Satisfaction" score of 5.92.

- » FAC-C Curriculum scored 5.88
- » FAC-COR Curriculum scored 6.39
- » FAC-P/PM Curriculum scored 5.84

In June of 2014, we will have twelve months of data to serve as a baseline metric of training satisfaction. This is just one example of how, across government, our collective goal is to identify opportunities to improve the quality and efficiency of delivering developmental services to the Acquisition Workforce.

Leveraging Expertise and Resources

In FY2015, FAI and the Veterans Affairs Acquisition Academy (VAAA) will have contract vehicles in place for Government agencies for the delivery of core certification courses and electives and for the development of customized acquisition training classes for Continuous Learning Point (CLP) credit. Specifically, the VAAA will serve as the civilian agency executive agent for the development and maintenance of the FAC-P/PM curriculum. "This relationship is a win-win for everyone but ultimately for the acquisition professional who wants to do a good job, and for the American people we are serving," remarked Joanie Newhart, Associate Administrator of Acquisition Workforce Programs at the Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP).



**Melissa Starinsky,
VAAA Chancellor**

"Over the past year, we've worked closely with the OFPP and the FAI to leverage our respective expertise and resources and reduce duplication of efforts so that we can deliver better and more cost-effective acquisition-related training to our Government-wide workforce," said Melissa Starinsky, VAAA Chancellor.



TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Federal Transportation Officer Training Program Overview



Addressing the need for standardized Federal training in transportation and logistics, the General Services Administration's Office of Government-wide Policy's Transportation Policy Division launched the [Federal Transportation and Logistics Management eLearning website](#). This site offers online training at no cost to all Federal employees involved directly or indirectly in transportation, traffic management, and logistics activities. This training is encouraged for transportation officers, traffic managers, contracting and procurement officers, financial officers, mail managers, program analysts, and others who interact with agency transportation activities. This is one great way to fulfill your annual training requirements!

The Federal Transportation Officer Training Program is composed of a basic, intermediate and advanced course with 5-12 sessions (listed right). Each course has a final exam. Join over 300 students by registering at <http://transportationofficer.golearnportal.org/>.

For more information, please contact [Lois Mandell](#), Transportation Policy Director (202) 501-2735 or [Lee Gregory](#), Senior Program Manager, (202) 507-0871.



Basic (Level 1) Sessions		CLPs
Introduction to Federal Transportation Management		2.0
Roles Associated with Federal Transportation		1.5
Modes of Transportation		3.0
Domestic Transportation		1.0
International Shipments		1.5
Hazardous Materials Transportation		2.5
Payments and Audits of Transportation Services		1.5
Temporary Non-use, Suspension and Debarment		1.5
Claims		3.0
Laws, Rules and Regulations		3.0
Sustainable Transportation		1.0
Household Goods Transportation		1.0
Intermediate (Level 2) Sessions		CLPs
Determining Best Value in Transportation		1.5
Tenders of Service		2.5
One-Time-Only Rates		1.5
Transportation Contracts		3.0
International Freight Shipments and Customs		5.0
Small Package Transportation		2.0
Packing and Marking Shipments		2.0
Special Requirements and Accessorials		2.0
Customer Relationships		1.5
Advanced (Level 3) Sessions		CLPs
Ownership-Title Transfer Liability, and Insurance		4.0
Transportation Analysis		2.5
Financial Issues		3.5
Managing the Agency Transportation Program		3.5
Carrier Management and Rating		3.0

HUMAN CAPITAL MANAGEMENT

Data Driving Action and Results: What Gets Measured Gets Improved!

Acquisition Workforce Competency Survey (AWCS)

The Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP) and the Federal Acquisition Institute (FAI) would like to thank all those acquisition workforce members who participated in the 2014 Acquisition Workforce Competency Survey (AWCS)! Your input is being used to identify the strengths and priority training needs of the acquisition workforce, both at your agency and across the Federal acquisition community.

The AWCS received 14,378 responses from Contracting Officers, Contracting Officer's Representatives, Program and Project Managers, and supervisors across all 23 civilian Chief Financial Officer's (CFO) Act agencies as well as 32 small agencies. This marks almost a 50% increase to the 2012 AWCS response rate! Participants provided a self-assessment of their competencies associated with their Federal Acquisition Certification (FAC) areas.

For the past several years, Federal departments and agencies have made a concerted effort to align their strategic human capital planning activities for the acquisition workforce with the goals, priorities, and expectations established by the President of the United States, the Office of Management and Budget, the Office of Personnel Management, and the Government Accountability Office. The 2012 AWCS indicated several priority FAC-C competencies for improvement (shown in the

figure to the right). Acquisition community leaders targeted these competencies with development opportunities and each received higher proficiency ratings this year. We are thrilled that the AWCS is driving results!

While the majority of FAC technical competencies were strengthened since 2012, each of the FAC Business Competencies (e.g., Ability to Influence, Communication, Customer Service) experienced a slight decline. OFPP and FAI, in conjunction with the Acquisition Functional Advisory Boards, are reviewing the results of the 2014 AWCS to prioritize government-wide developmental needs. Additionally, agency Acquisition Career Managers (ACM) recently used their agency-specific AWCS results to inform their Acquisition Human Capital Plans and related workforce development initiatives.



Acquisition Workforce Agency Change Survey (AWACS)

The Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP) and Federal Acquisition Institute (FAI) are launching the first ever Acquisition Workforce Agency Change Survey (AWACS). This survey will help us assess how the Federal government and individual agencies can better attract and retain talented Acquisition Workforce members. The AWACS results will also enable Acquisition Career Managers (ACMs) and other agency leaders to make more informed Acquisition Workforce management decisions and investments.

The AWACS will be sent quarterly to individuals who changed agencies within their FAITAS profile. On February 10, 2014, the first survey invitations were sent directly from the FAITAS survey tool to FAITAS account holders who switched agencies during the first quarter of FY14. Every six months, survey results will be analyzed and a summary of findings will be sent to the agency ACMs.

Thank you to the agencies that participated in developing the AWACS! We will continually monitor the process and make improvements as appropriate. Future capabilities will include surveying those who leave government entirely.

TOOLS AND TECHNOLOGY

FAITAS: A Government-wide Success

FAI has been recognized by two prominent organizations for the implementation of the Federal-wide acquisition career management system, the Federal Acquisition Institute Training Application System (FAITAS). FAITAS is a one-stop-shop for acquisition workforce members to register for training, track their certifications, and manage their careers. It is also a Government-wide workforce management system, which enables agencies to better manage their acquisition workforce and make informed, data-driven decisions.

FAITAS Wins the Human Capital Management Government Award!



At the 7th Annual Human Capital Management Government (HCMG) Award Ceremony, held on December 4th, FAITAS was awarded the Best Implementation of an Enterprise Technology System. This award recognizes the best program implementation of a human resources technology system, aimed at streamlining a specific HR process in order to drive down costs and improve efficiency and productivity. The HCMG Awards recognize outstanding efforts in advancing and progressing human capital management in the public sector.



"Top 8" Finalist at the ACT-IAC Igniting Innovation Awards



The American Council for Technology (ACT) - Industry Advisory Council's (IAC) Institute for Innovation selected FAI as one of the top 30 semi-finalists for its development of FAITAS. As one of the semi-finalists, FAI participated in the ACT-IAC Igniting Innovation Awards Showcase held on February 6th which highlighted innovative IT products and services to improve the government. During the showcase, FAI was voted as one of the "Top 8" finalists for the Igniting Innovation Award.

FAITAS is truly a Federal-wide success story with the commitment, dedication, and support of all civilian agencies. In particular, we wish to thank the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) for its significant contributions and collaboration which enabled FAI to expedite the delivery of an enterprise-wide solution, saving taxpayer dollars by reducing duplication.

The FAI team sincerely appreciates your support in accomplishing our mission of strengthening the acquisition workforce and looks forward to continued successes. For more details, please visit - <http://www.fai.gov/drupal/content/fai-makes-top-8-act-iac-igniting-innovation-awards>

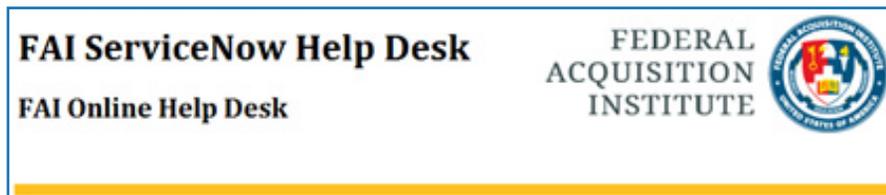
TOOLS AND TECHNOLOGY

New FAI.gov Features

FAI has been busy behind the scenes with some exciting new features and content for the FAI.gov website!

ServiceNow Help Desk Tool

FAI officially launched the ServiceNow software-as-a-service (SaaS) enterprise help desk tool on February 1, 2014. This new and improved help desk system is designed to connect you to the people and information you need more quickly and easily, with a streamlined user interface and a multitude of behind-the-scenes enhancements designed to speed up processing of requests, including automated workflows, the capability to receive immediate confirmation once a ticket is opened, and the ability to triage incidents quickly. The new Help Desk portal is located at the same location as the previous help desk (www.fai.gov/help-desk), and for faster access, users can click the “Help Desk” link on the FAI homepage.



New Small Agency Council Content

We introduced new content revolving around the Small Agency Council (SAC), a voluntary management association of about 90 sub-Cabinet, independent Federal agencies. Each agency’s principal management official represents that agency on the Council, and generally oversees agency management functions including those related to procurement management. As such, we now offer procurement-related information for acquisition professionals working for these agencies, including a dedicated section on our [Acquisition Career Manager](#) page and an [SAC Resources page](#) where users can find links to presentations, meeting minutes, and other resources related to small agency acquisition activities.

New Human Capital Section

FAI recently launched the [new Human Capital section](#) of FAI.gov, which is designed to be your one-stop shop for information related to the Federal acquisition workforce. The Human Capital section provides tools for workforce management and recruitment, many human capital planning documents and reports, and other resources relevant to acquisition professions responsible for human capital activities.



Additionally, the Acquisition Career Manager (ACM) page has been moved to the Human Capital Section of the site. Stay tuned for more content and functionality to be built into this section over the coming year.

ACM IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Getting to Know Crandall Watson, Acquisition Career Manager (ACM), U.S. Department of Agriculture



**Crandall Watson,
U.S. Department of
Agriculture**

1. How long have you worked at the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)?

I've had the opportunity to serve with USDA for the past 7 years.

2. Where were you before coming to the USDA?

Prior to joining the team at USDA, I served at the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services within the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), and prior to that with the Department of Defense (DoD).

3. Tell us about one of your biggest successes achieved by your team.

One of our biggest, and more recent, successes is the USDA-wide automation of the previously manual warrant management process. Our team now leverages the Warrant Module in the Federal Acquisition Institute Training Application System (FAITAS) to process all warrant requests, assess workforce needs, and to enhance oversight.

4. What is the biggest challenge in your position?

One of the biggest challenges is obtaining sufficient resources to provide cutting-edge training and development opportunities to meet the unique needs of each of our Acquisition Workforce members. To mitigate this challenge, when feasible, we've offered webinars, internships, rotational assignments, etc.

5. What motivates you to put your best foot forward on a daily basis?

I receive daily motivation when I reflect on the important missions that our Acquisition Workforce plays a critical role in accomplishing. From sustaining the health and productivity of national forests and grasslands, to helping improve the economy and quality of life in rural America, to ensuring our meat, egg, and poultry products are safe, to assisting farmers and ranchers, to administration of federal nutrition assistance programs like the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) and school meal programs. These are just a few of the many motivating missions that our Acquisition Workforce helps to make a reality!



6. What skills do you think are most critical to successfully perform your job?

I think one important skill is the ability to simultaneously manage multiple requests originating from varying customers. On any given day there may be research and/or responses needed for one of our 5,000+ members of the Acquisition Workforce, one of our 11 ACM Designees, our Senior Procurement Executive, our Procurement Policy Chief, OMB's Office of Federal Procurement Policy, and of course FAI!

Another important skill, in my opinion, is the ability to actively listen because there are many terrific ideas and valid concerns expressed daily.

ACM IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Getting to Know Crandall Watson, Acquisition Career Manager (ACM), U.S. Department of Agriculture

Adequately hearing and understanding these ideas and concerns will help me in more effectively addressing them.

7. What could the FAI Team do to move the federal acquisition workforce forward?

I hope that FAI continues to provide opportunities for programmatic enhancements through its various Change and Functional Advisory Boards. These boards are a great tool for engaging agencies in the process of improving outcomes!

8. What words of wisdom would you offer to your fellow acquisition career manager?

Enjoy the journey! Each day will have its share of ups and downs, twists and turns. Try to keep things in perspective by making a small difference each day and usually by the end of the year you'll be amazed at the significant impact your team has made.

9. What is a goal you have for your acquisition workforce?

One goal is for USDA's Acquisition Workforce to continue in the trend of improved certification rates each year. Although certifications alone certainly cannot capture the breadth of talent among our acquisition professionals, it does help confirm attainment of inherent competencies and standards in a consistent manner.

10. What is something about yourself that others might not know?

I had the pleasure of serving as a U.S. Army Officer and supported allied forces in the Balkan Region during NATO's Operation Joint Forge.



Want your agency's Acquisition Career Manager to be the star of an upcoming Edition of ACM in the Spotlight? E-mail your nomination to contact@fai.gov.

WORKFORCE RESOURCES

Student Support

If you have training and development questions, always begin with your agency Acquisition Career Manager (ACM)

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