# Federal Acquisition *Insight*

*Featuring the Latest Acquisition Workforce News and Events     Visit us online at www.fai.gov*

## From the Desk of the Director
by Karen Pica

Congratulations to Ms. Gloria Sochon, outgoing Director of the Federal Acquisition Institute.  Gloria has accepted a position with the GSA FAR staff.  Ms. Sochon dedicated the past four years of her career to enhancing the learning opportunities available to the federal acquisition workforce.  Under Ms. Sochon's leadership, FAI has:

- Implemented a strategic partnership with the Defense Acquisition University to leverage learning and career development resources across the entire federal spectrum.
- Managed delivery of nearly 38,000 hours of classroom training and over 290,000 online hours in FY05, with over 28,000 classroom hours planned for FY06.
- Facilitated the design and implementation of a federal acquisition certification in contracting.
- Initiated efforts to develop a federal acquisition certification for program and project managers.
- Provided sound stewardship of the Acquisition Workforce Training Fund.

## FAI Sponsors Training Opportunities in 2006!

The General Services Administration (GSA) recently announced the award of delivery orders for core contracting courses in support of FAI.  These awards were the result of FAI's first procurement of courses through the Acquisition Workforce Training Fund.  The Fund was established by the Services Acquisition Reform Act to provide the acquisition workforce with new skills and perspective to contribute effectively in the changing environment of the 21st century.  The training requirements were developed from responses to a survey of training needs completed by civilian agencies last summer.

Managed by the Federal Acquisition Institute, this acquisition covers 88 courses that will accommodate 2,544 training slots between now and September 30, 2006.  The classes are required for civilian agency contracting professionals and meet Office of Federal Procurement Policy guidelines for training that is consistent with Department of Defense practice.

Emily Murphy, GSA's Chief Acquisition Officer, stated that "Providing the right training represents a major step forward in the government's ability to strategically manage our contracting workforce.  GSA and FAI will continue to provide programs that help to align acquisition workforce initiatives across federal agencies and build the business skills we need."

**To find out what's new with FAI, visit us at www.fai.gov. In the *What's New* section you will find:**

- *Classroom Training Enroll Now!*

- *FACE Update*

### Highlights

## OMB Establishes Federal Acquisition Certification in Contracting Program

by Christine Packard, FAI

In April 2005, the Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP) issued Policy Letter 05-01, focusing on improving the development of the acquisition workforce by more closely aligning civilian agency and Department of Defense (DOD) requirements. It called for the establishment of a federal contracting certification program, and it made recommendations for a federal certification program for program and project managers. These certification programs will reflect a standard for education, training, and experience leading to the fulfillment of core competencies.

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) issued a memo effective January 20, 2006, outlining the Federal Acquisition Certification in Contracting Program (FAC-C). The program sets forth the requirements for education, training, and experience for those seeking a federal certification in the contracting function, and it describes the process for requesting and granting a FAC-C for the general schedule (GS)-1102 contracting series and other series. While the program is not mandatory, members of the workforce issued new contracting officer warrants on or after January 1, 2007, must be certified at an appropriate level to support their warrant obligations.

The FAC-C program applies to all executive agencies, with the exception of those subject to the Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act (DAWIA). The Federal Acquisition Institute (FAI), in consultation with the FAI Board of Directors, the Interagency Acquisition Career Management Committee (IACMC), and other organizations as appropriate, will provide general program oversight. The certification process will be administered by each civilian agency, and administered by the appointed Acquisition Career Manager (ACM) in that agency. FAI will conduct periodic reviews to ensure that the program remains rigorous and certification standards are applied consistently across all agencies.

Achievement of the FAC-C is based on three requirements: education, training, and experience, with the requirements being cumulative for each level of certification. To maintain a FAC-C, acquisition professionals are required to earn 80 continuous learning points (CLPs) of skills currency training every two years, beginning October 1, 2007.

The most current version of the program, competencies, required courses, and other FAC-C related information can be found at www.fai.gov. Questions regarding the program should be directed to FAI at questions@fai.gov or (703) 805-2300.

## Now Accepting Registrations: FAQs for FAI Classroom Registration

Below you will find a list of questions and answers regarding the 2006 courses, registration process, and ACM responsibilities.

**Q: Is this the complete list of classes for 2006?**
A: This is a list of those classes for which contracts have been awarded. It is our plan to add more classes to the 2006 calendar when possible.

**Q: Who can process registrations for my agency?**
A: The Acquisition Career Managers (ACMs) for each agency will be the point of contact for registration. Employees and Supervisors contacting the Registration Team can be given course information, but they will be referred to their ACM to process the registration.

**Q: Why are the ACMs tasked with registration?**
A: By having the agency ACM process the registration, several things are accomplished. First, this process ensures that the participants who are registered are both eligible for the class selected and that it is applicable to their needs. It also allows the agency to prioritize the participants' attendance by need and availability, and it provides a concentrated focus on meeting the agency's allocated number of seats in 2006. In addition, the ACMs can work in-house with participants to ensure they are adequately prepared to attend the course.

**Q: How do the ACMs register participants?**
A: ACMs can register participants by emailing information to fairegistration@sra.com.

**Q:   What information is necessary to register a participant?**
 A:   The following information is necessary:

- Participant Name
- Position
- Agency
- Email Address
- Office Phone Number
- Supervisor Name & Email
- Course Name
- Location
- Start Date
- Is ADA Compliance Necessary?  If so what type?
- Comments and/or questions

**Q:   What is the follow-up we can expect?**
A:   Once the information is received FAI will confirm the enrollment, or contact the ACM regarding the need to reschedule or wait list the participant, within 3 business days.  The confirmation email will be sent to the participant, and the ACM will be copied.

**Q:   How were the seat allotments calculated?**
A:   The seat allotments, or quotas, were established by:

- Reviewing agency demographics, such as the number of procurement professionals.
- Reviewing the 2005 Training Survey results to establish the number of requests per agency.
- Balancing weighted factors, such as agency size and need.

**Q:   Is the quota a fixed number?**
A:   No.  The seat allotment was established to ensure a fair and equitable distribution of available seats to all agencies for the first series of courses scheduled.  But it is not a number that cannot be revised.  For some agencies there may be a few more seats allotted than are needed.  For others, additional seats may be necessary. Changes to agency need may impact the allotments.  The addition of other course offerings will increase the allotments per agency.

**Q:   What do I do if a participant needs to cancel or reschedule?**
A:   Whenever possible, FAI should be notified as soon as possible, or at least 10 business days prior to the course start date, that a participant needs to cancel or reschedule.  FAI will work with your agency to get the participant into the next offering that fits his/her needs.

**Q:   Is there a wait list for classes?**
A:   Participants can be put on a wait list for a particular class.  The wait list will be run on a first request/ first provision basis.  If a participant is on the wait list and a seat becomes available, the participant and ACM will be notified immediately that the participant may attend the course.  If the participant no longer wishes to be in that class, the next participant on the list will be notified.  It is strongly recommended that participants not depend on a wait list enrollment being fulfilled.  The optimal procedure would be to register the participant for the second choice of courses and join the wait list for the first-choice course.

**Q:   Where are the classes located, and what time do they start?**
A:   Locations for classes on the current training calendar are still being identified.  After the awards were made the week of March 6th, the vendors started confirming the class locations.  They will compile a list and provide it to us in the next few days.  FAI will update the Master Calendar as additional information becomes available.  Classes will start at 8:00 AM local time.

## Federal Agencies Endorse the JWOD Program
By Stephanie Lesko, Public Affairs Specialist

The Javits-Wagner-O'Day (JWOD) Program is one of the ways in which the federal government uses its acquisition policies to support important socioeconomic goals. In honor of the October observance of National Disability Employment Awareness Month, federal agencies reaffirmed their support of the JWOD Program through a series of memoranda designed for their acquisition and procurement professional and purchase card holder communities. These memoranda support the JWOD Program's efforts to reduce the very high unemployment rate of nearly 70 percent faced by individuals who are blind or have other severe disabilities by providing employment opportunities on federal contracts nationwide.

Federal agencies that recently issued Memoranda of Support include: the Departments of the Army, Defense, Health and Human Services, Interior, and State; Army Materiel Command; Defense Logistics Agency; and Defense Supply Center Richmond. Current standing Memoranda of Support are also available from many agencies including: the Departments of the Air Force, the Navy, Agriculture, Commerce, Energy, Treasury, and Veterans Affairs; Defense Supply Center Philadelphia; Environmental Protection Agency; U.S. Marine Corps; and U.S. Postal Service.

These Memoranda of Support call on Federal employees to learn more about the JWOD Program, the various products and services it provides, and the responsibilities of federal employees to purchase JWOD products and services in accordance with Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) 8.7. Through collaborative efforts with federal customers, the JWOD Program is able to satisfy the government's need for quality products and services at fair prices, while creating employment opportunities for people who are blind or have other severe disabilities. Federal agencies ask their acquisition professionals to review their current and future purchasing needs to determine where they can create new employment opportunities through the JWOD Program.

JWOD Memoranda of Support can be found on the JWOD Program information website at http://www.jwod.gov/jwod/library/memos_of_support.html. For further information, please contact Stephanie Lesko of the Committee for Purchase From People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled, the federal agency that administers the JWOD Program, at slesko@jwod.gov.

## Next FACE in 2007
by Heather Cameron, FAI

The Federal Acquisition Institute (FAI), based upon recommendations of the Federal Acquisition Conference and Exposition (FACE) Steering Committee, composed of the FACE sponsors, determined not to hold FACE in 2006. The next FACE will be in 2007. It will continue to be sponsored by the Chief Acquisition Officers Council, Federal Acquisition Institute, U.S. General Services Administration, and Department of Defense.

For 2006, FAI will sponsor training sessions at the GSA Expo in San Antonio on May 15, 16, 17, and 18, 2006. FAI will also host three seminars around the nation in order to bring training into the field. Details will be posted to our website (www.fai.gov) as they are confirmed.

Thank you for your interest in FACE. If you have participated as an attendee or exhibitor in the past, thank you for your support. Please continue to share ideas and thoughts with us as the conference transitions to the new format in 2007.

For questions or comments regarding FACE, call (703) 247-5727 or toll free at (866) 604-5376, or send an email message to face@sra.com.

"FAI is excited to begin launching these training opportunities," stated Gloria Sochon, Director, FAI. "We especially appreciate the Defense Acquisition University's support as FAI establishes its learning programs. Our partnership with DAU makes it possible for FAI to deliver improved training and tools to the civilian agency acquisition workforce."

The delivery orders, placed under GSA schedule contracts, were awarded to Business Management Research Associates, ESI International, Inc., and Management Concepts, Inc. Courses include:

- CON 100: Shaping Smart Business Arrangements
- CON 202: Intermediate Contracting
- CON 204: Intermediate Contract Pricing
- CON 210: Government Contract Law

The components of CON 101, CON 104, and CON 202 are described by DAU as "predecessor courses" that have been superseded by recent offerings and are sometimes given different names by course providers. However, the components of these courses are being offered to serve the needs of contracting professionals who have completed some of the predecessor courses but not others. Below is a list of the component courses available:

- Acquisition Planning I
- Acquisition Planning II
- Contract Formation I
- Contract Formation II
- Contract Administration I
- Contract Administration II
- Cost Analysis
- Negotiation Techniques
- Price Analysis

For a description of each CON course and information on dates and locations of all scheduled courses, please visit http://www.fai.gov/resource/classtrain.htm. FAI is managing the registration process for these courses. For more information on registration, see the article on P. 2. FAI plans to procure additional courses and to conduct periodic surveys to help ensure that it provides needed training to civilian agencies.

## Strategic Sourcing and Spend Analysis CLMs Launched by DAU

DAU launched two new continuous learning modules as one of the first steps in institutionalizing the strategic sourcing process. These modules are available in both the DAU Continuous Learning Center (https://learn.dau.mil) and Contracting Community of Practice within the Training Center (https://acc.dau.mil/msc). Civlian agencies can access the descriptions by clicking the CLC link located at the bottom of the DAU CLC page. Users have the option to "browse" the course as a resource or to "register" and earn continuous learning points.

**CLC 108: Strategic Sourcing Overview**

The U.S. Department of Defense, like the rest of the federal government, is discovering how Strategic Sourcing can be a key enabler for achieving improved quality and cost related to the purchase of goods and services. This course provides an overview of Strategic Sourcing concepts and techniques for helping organizations make the shift from tactical to strategic purchasing. Upon completion of this module, you will receive 2.5 Continuous Learning Points.

**CLC 110: Spend Analysis Strategies**

Spend Analysis is one of several tools the U.S. Department of Defense and other federal agencies are using to gain critical insights into the procurement history and spend patterns for purchased goods and services. Ultimately, a Spend Analysis contributes to the "commodity fact base" that forms the foundation for identifying valuable strategic sourcing improvement opportunities. Upon completion of this module, you will receive 4.5 Continuous Learning Points.

## TIN Matching in CCR
by Lisa Cliff, IAE Office of Communications

On October 30, 2005, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) began validating Taxpayer Identification Numbers (TINs) and names of registrants in the Central Contractor Registration (CCR) at www.ccr.gov, ensuring improved data quality.  An exact match is required before registration in CCR can be completed.

A TIN is a nine-digit number which is either an Employer Identification Number assigned by the IRS or a social security number assigned by the Social Security Administration.  The number is important for identification purposes and used by those relying on CCR for payment procedures.

The TIN matching process is a joint effort between the GSA's Integrated Acquisition Environment E-Gov initiative (www.acquisition.gov), DoD, and IRS to improve data quality in government acquisition systems.  The validation and reliance on the reuse of the TIN for CCR registration purposes aligns with the goal of IAE to simplify and streamline the acquisition process.

A notice went out to every company registered in the CCR informing them of the IRS validation process.  In order to complete registration in CCR, a registrant must provide a TIN and Taxpayer Name that matches exactly with the data used in federal tax matters.

 For more information, email integrated.acquisition@gsa.gov.

## Spotlight on the AKSS, ACC, and DAU Online Resources Tour
by Jeffrey Birch, DAU

DAU offers a wealth of resources to the acquisition community within the framework of the DAU Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics (AT&L) Performance Learning Model (PLM) at http://www.dau.mil/plm/plm.asp.  The focus of this column is on the Knowledge Sharing component of the PLM, which centers on providing resources and maintaining a 24/7 presence for the acquisition workforce through online communities of practice and knowledge systems.  Two collaborative resources that promote the 24/7 presence are the AT&L Knowledge Sharing System (AKSS) and the Acquisition Community Connection (ACC).
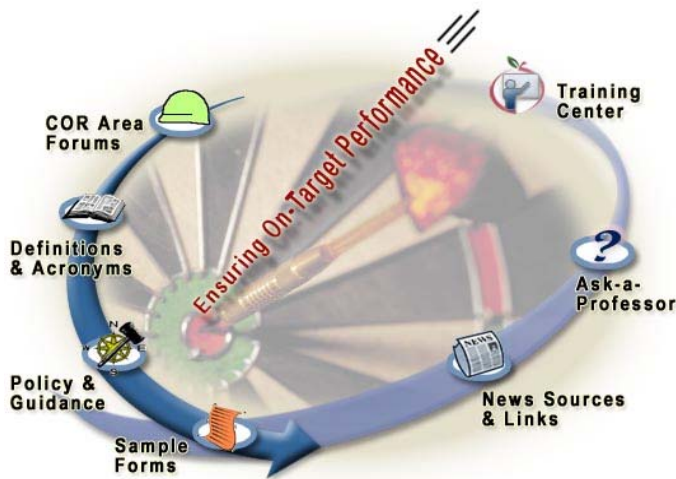
The AKSS:    http://akss.dau.mil

The AKSS, formerly referred to as the *Defense Acquisition Deskbook*, contains links to mandatory and discretionary reference material; glossary and acronyms listings; "Ask a Professor"; news and publications; education and training; acquisition events; and other related websites.  The AKSS leverages existing "golden sources", which is a term used to refer to the original document owner (i.e., Washington Headquarters Services (WHS) and the Hill Air Force Base Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) Site).  The AKSS serves as a repository for key policy and guidance information that is not readily available in a single site or location.

The ACC – https://acc.dau.mil

The ACC is the collaborative arm of the DAU knowledge system that facilitates knowledge sharing and complements the AKSS.  The optimum goal is to connect practitioners with know-how across federal organizations and industry.  While DAU supports the infrastructure and operation of the knowledge sharing systems, several developments are the results of partnerships and provide a broader scope and increase audience relevancy.  The ACC provides access to several career field communities of practice (CoPs) to include the Mission Support Contracting Community of Practice CoP (MSC CoP), https://acc.dau.mil/msc.  The two most recent MSC CoP developments include:

*The Contracting Officers Representative (COR) Community of Practice (CoP)*: https://acc.dau.mil/cor

This COR Community of Practice (CoP) supports you and other COR members by providing a central clearinghouse of knowledge and learning assets, as well as by fostering the sharing of best practices and lessons learned within the COR Forum Area. In addition, the CoP serves as a collaborative resource tool to aid learners with the recently deployed online COR course.

*The A-76 Competitive Sourcing Community of Practice*:

The A-76 CoP serves as the repository for A-76 learning assets. It includes best practices, e-tools, policy and guidance, and a discussion forum. The Training Center offers DAU A-76 related training opportunities as well as other information about sources providing similar training.

DAU has developed many online resources available for the DoD AT&L workforce, industry partners, and other federal, state, and local government organizations. These online resources provide you with the ability to apply for a course; take a continuous learning module for continuous learning credit; research policy and other documents; link to related learning and knowledge content; ask a professor a question; contribute knowledge objects (such as lessons learned, best practices, templates, or samples); or collaborate with your peers on work issues.

*The DAU Online Resources Tour*: http://www.dau.mil/about-dau/virtual_tour/index.html

These online resources were developed in support of AT&L's PLM: A Net Centric Approach to Engaged Learning. The PLM represents a complete learning environment, 24/7, whenever and wherever you need it to improve your performance.

Ms. Sochon was recently recognized by the Federal Chief Acquisition Officer's Council for her outstanding efforts, and we here at FAI, in addition to colleagues throughout the government, wish her well in her new position.

Please welcome the new acting director, Ms. Karen Pica.  Ms. Pica comes to FAI with more than 15 years of experience in workforce and human capital initiatives, most recently as the Director, Acquisition Workforce Program for the Department of Homeland Security.  Ms. Pica joined the DAU team in November 2005.

## CON Level II Curriculum Change
by Linda Ott, FAI

The DAU core courses for Level II Certification in Contracting are being revised.  The current core Level II contracting curriculum: CON 202:  Intermediate Contracting, CON 204:  Intermediate Contract Pricing, and CON 210: Government Contract Law will be replaced by the following:

- CON 214:  Business Decisions for Contracting

- CON 215:  Intermediate Contracting for Mission Support

- CON 216:  Legal Considerations in Contracting

- CON 217:  Cost Analysis and Negotiation Techniques

- CON 218:  Advanced Contracting for Mission Support

CON 214, 216, and 217 are distance learning courses that build upon Level I training by focusing on more complex acquisitions (to include planning, award, and administration), legal considerations, cost analysis, and negotiation techniques.  Level I core courses are prerequisites for Level II core courses.  CON 214 is a prerequisite to CON 215, which is a capstone type course where the students apply learned knowledge to practical exercises involving acquisition planning, source selection, and award of a multi-agency multiple award service contract.  CON 215, 216, and 217 are all prerequisites to CON 218, which is also a capstone type course where the students again participate in practical exercises involving acquisition planning; cost analysis; negotiation, award and administration of a sole-source research and development contract; and acquisition planning, source selection, award, and administration of a competitive production contract.

An initial pilot offering of the new Level II core courses (CON 214-218) began on March 13, 2006.  Students enrolled in the pilot courses must complete all 5 courses this fiscal year, per the pilot schedule.  (CON 214 will be held in Hunstville, AL, March 23-April 6, 2006, and CON 218 will be held in Pt. Hueneme, CA, May 15-26, 2006.)

The restructure of the Level II core contracting courses completes the major restructure of the career field training undertaken to better align the training with the skills, knowledge, and competencies identified as being key to the contracting career field.  As these new courses utilize distance learning to a larger extent than in the past, it is important that supervisors provide their employees ample time to complete the required training courses and facilitate open dialogue about the course material.  Civilian agencies will have a transition plan to the new curriculum that allows time for equivalent providers to prepare materials and get equivalency recognition to provide the classroom course offerings.

## FAI to Sponsor Sessions at the GSA Expo
by Christine Packard, FAI

The GSA Expo will be held in San Antonio, Texas, from May 15-18, 2006.  FAI will be sponsoring a total of six sessions in the Professional Procurement Training and Technology Solutions tracks.  Attendance is on a first come, first served basis, and attendees will receive Continuing Learning Points for completed courses.  The courses provide information on key acquisition practices and issues useful to the federal contracting professional and program manager.  Information about the FAI sponsored sessions is as follows:

**Acquisition Learning Tools and Assets**

The DAU is integrating learning assets and maintaining a continuous presence to the acquisition community via online resources like the Acquisition Community Connection (ACC), AT&L Knowledge Sharing System (AKSS), the Acker Library, the Virtual Campus, and the Continuous Learning Center. These learning assets are available 24/7 and provide the acquisition workforce with resources and job aids to enhance job performance and achieve mission goals. Our goal is to fully engage our workforce in both the classroom and on the job.

**Competitive Sourcing Panel: Where We've Been and Where We're Going**

The last five years have seen numerous changes to the way the federal government competes against private industry for the right to perform commercial activities. This workshop offers a panel of competitive sourcing experts from various federal agencies who will discuss major studies conducted by their agency, the outcomes of those studies, and the impact on the agency workforce. In addition, OMB will provide insight on what lies ahead in the realm of competitive sourcing as the federal government continues to move forward in its efforts to create more effective and efficient processes that meet the demands and expectations of the American Taxpayer.

**Federal Certification in Contracting: Recognizing Acquisition Professionals**

The Federal Certification in Contracting program recognizes professional achievement across federal agencies. Similar to the Department of Defense DAWIA program, this new certification program provides a common framework for agencies to manage their acquisition workforce, identifies certification requirements for members of the acquisition workforce, and provides for mobility of the workforce among agencies.

**Performance-Based Acquisition**

This session is a must for personnel who work with program officials to plan, award, and administer performance-based contracts. It will be an overview of PBA including the definition of PBA and planning for success when implementing PBA into your acquisition. Success factors include: identifying performance measures and standards for the Performance Work Statement, performing market research to understand your requirement and market, using incentive contracts to get the highest performance from the contractor, and using a Quality Assurance Surveillance Plan to manage the contractor's performance.

**SARA Section 1423 Panel**

This Federal Commission, which has been meeting publicly for over a year now, has adopted numerous recommendations to report to Congress and OFPP on improving the federal acquisition system. These recommendations cover a number of areas of importance to your work, including interagency contracting, government commercial buying practices, and performance-based contracting. Get an update on the Panel's recommendations at this informative session.

**Integrated Acquisition Environment**

This session will provide you with an opportunity to learn about how IAE is simplifying and unifying the extremely complex acquisition process through central services such as CCR, FBO, eSRS, EPLS, FedTeDS, FedReg, ORCA, FPDS-NG and WDOL. If these are just alphabet soup to you, you need to attend this session!