



MICHAEL MERCIER

Students from all over the country come to the Defense Acquisition University to learn more about their field.

# Gov Biz U

## Huntsville's Defense Acquisition University teaches how to make smart business decisions for the government

By **KIMBERLY BALLARD**

In the 1980s, the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO), sometimes called "the congressional watchdog," reported the government spending \$435 for hammers, \$640 for toilet seats and \$7,600 for a coffee pot. The slightly exaggerated cost did not take into consideration the government's inclusive pricing structure, and it was perhaps not fair to compare it to a consumer-bought hammer or toilet seat purchased at Home Depot. Yet the leak

from the GAO, which has as its purpose reporting the progress or lack of progress in the acquisition of new weapons systems for the Department of the Defense (DoD), was an attempt to show the American people how broken the federal acquisition system was at the time.

The public outcry was nearly unanimous, and the result was the institution of the Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act (DAWIA). DAWIA, (pronounced Da-wee-uh), states that

anyone who works in the acquisition segment of government business must be certified to do so. Congressional Section 852 of the Appropriations Authorization bill provides funding for recruitment and retention initiatives that then provide more requirements and training. This mandate required that the DoD establish a means for training and educating government civilian contractors and military workers. The answer came in the form of Defense Acquisition University (DAU),

44 HUNTSVILLE R&D

NEWSMAKERS

Winter 2009



Home | News | Sports | Forums | Blogs | Multimedia | Entertainment | Jobs | Autos | Homes | Classifieds  
Complete Forecast | RSS Feeds | RSS Terms and Conditions | Site Index | About Us | Contact Us | Advertise |  
Help/Feedback



Winter 2009

NEWSMAKERS

HUNTSVILLE R&amp;D 45

started in Ft. Belvoir, Va. Huntsville is home to the main DAU office representing the Southern Region, with three satellite facilities at Robins Air Force Base in Macon, Ga.; at Eglin Air Force Base in Ft. Walton, Fla., and at McDill Air Force Base in Tampa, Fla.

DAU's mission is to provide practitioner training, career management, and support services that enable the Acquisition, Technology and Logistics (AT&L) workforce to make smart business decisions and deliver timely and affordable capabilities to the war fighter.

"The main function of DAU is to teach the government how to do the government's job," says Jim McCullough, dean of DAU, South Region, located in Progress Center across from Bridge Street in Huntsville. "A corporate education is the benchmark of the industry. DAU courses and certifications cover all the basic func-

tions of doing business with the government. DAU helps recruit, retain, and develop government employees into experts at making smart buys on weapon systems and in the financial management of government acquisitions."

"If you will be spending any of the government's money, you are coded under DAWIA and must be certified," explains Marshall Eubanks, associate dean of academics for the South Region. "There are 135,000 people currently in the DoD acquisition workforce and they are our primary customers."

Matt Ambrose, professor of acquisition management at DAU, says the curriculum is broad and far-reaching. "We run the gamut from logistics, business cost estimation and finance management, to systems engineering, testing and evaluation, acquisition management, program management, contracting, contract pricing, and production

quality management." Level 1 and 2 certifications consist of five weeks and eight-hour days. Some Level 2 classes are two weeks in length. Level 3 classes range from three to five weeks and the Level 4 Senior Services College Fellowship is a master's level leadership-based 10-month program for high-level managers.

According to Kathy Peake, a professor at DAU, "Once a company gets a contract, their job has only just begun. They must know how to interpret the contract, how to implement that contract and they must understand the governments' expectations for the contract. DAU not only brings people along in their career, but they ensure efficiency in government systems as well as the people involved."

"Eighty percent of my job is dedicated to sustaining a system," says Al Barnes, director of program development and a teaching professor at DAU,

## Federal Contract Management

*certificate programs*

### Essentials

Join us **one night a week** and learn the skills needed to effectively manage a project or a large complex program. The courses in this certificate program are designed to be responsive to the Project Management Book of Knowledge (PMBOK®).

The FCME certificate is awarded after the successful completion of the following three courses:

<b>Understanding Procurement and Contract Types</b>	Jan 26-Feb 23 • M • 5:30-9pm • \$595/*\$555 • C2509010N
<b>Legal Aspects and Clauses</b>	Mar 2-Apr 6 • M • 5:30-8:40pm • \$695/*\$655 • C2509011N
<b>Cost/Price Analysis and Contract Administration</b>	Apr 13-May 18 • M • 5:30-8:40pm • \$695/*\$655 • C2509012N

### Specialization *One-week format*

Enroll in this comprehensive 40-hour week class and explore complex issues beyond the basics of Federal Contract Management Essentials. Receive an update on government contracting issues.

Jan 26-30 • M-F • 8am-5pm • \$1,195/\*\$1095 • C2509015N

**Course topics include:**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current Procurement Issues</li> <li>• Proposal Preparation Cost</li> <li>• Accounting Standards and Principles</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contract Negotiations</li> <li>• Principles of Subcontract Management</li> <li>• Financial Management of Government Contracts</li> </ul>
--	---

Prerequisite: FCME curriculum or previous contract management experience. \*WMA Member Discount

*professional*  
**Development**

An Affordable Access/Equal Opportunity Initiative

**The University of Alabama in Huntsville**  
www.ConEd.uah.edu • 256.824.6015 • pdinfo@uah.edu  
*Call or visit our website today for complete details and easy registration!*





Home | News | Sports | Forums | Blogs | Multimedia | Entertainment | Jobs | Autos | Homes | Classifieds  
Complete Forecast | RSS Feeds | RSS Terms and Conditions | Site Index | About Us | Contact Us | Advertise |  
Help/Feedback



"That is what logistics is - making wise decisions and doing it right the first time so you don't have to do it again, wasting time and taxpayer money."

"At first, I dreaded coming to what I thought was just some dull classes for 5 weeks; but the synergy in the classes is outstanding," says Army Col. Chris Roan, a visiting DAU student with over 20 years hands-on medical program management experience. "But the courses run the lifecycle of the program, from basic requirement through retirement of the system. Instruction is very interactive, thought provoking, problem solving and idea-based. We spend the dollars, develop the program, test the program systems, evaluate decisions, use the system in the field, and retire it at the end of its life." Rick Gallman in DAU's outreach and performance support department wants people to know there is more to DAU than just continuing education. "I work with establishing partnerships throughout the community and with other colleges and universities to coordinate an equivalency program where a student at say, Athens State, studying program management, can take classes here at DAU and the hours count towards their existing curriculum." He also works one-on-one with students to review and evaluate their curriculum to make sure it meets the requirements for graduation and certification under the DAWIA mandate.

Performance support is an area of particular pride for DAU. "DAU consults with DoD and military experts in the field on special problems and operational issues that crop up on the fulfillment of a contract," Gallman says. "DAU handles Performance support on a case-by-case basis, because every obstacle is different."

McCullough, the school's dean, says the performance support aspect is often necessary once a system, technology or product leaves the laboratory and goes into the program of record. "Experts sometimes need help with technology transition. We provide support, programming and user representatives who

work with the team to communicate and solve these problems." DAU consults on short-term problem solving missions on a pro bono basis but in the case of more long-term issues, they often provide rapid deployment training as well as faculty who can do backfield training. Other DAU performance support includes research projects; the development of ongoing curriculum for new and existing alliances; human capital strategic planning; course management; keeping current on existing and new technologies and systems where DAU may be called in to consult; and of course maintaining knowledge-sharing communities and forums through online resources.

"Government business is hugely complex," McCullough says. "There are currently 25,000 government workers currently on Redstone Arsenal. We are most comfortable with 30 students per classroom, so obviously, we have a waiting list."

DAU employed 55 faculty and 20 staff members in 2008 but in 2009, will be adding 11 faculty members to cover the increasing need for qualified and certified candidates in the system. "To give you a perspective," Eubanks explains, "in 2008, we offered 280 classroom courses and certified 7,700 government personnel here at the South Regional Office. In 2009, we will add 60 more faculty and staff and offer 340 classroom courses to certify about 9,500. That is an increase of 1,800 - a growth of about 25 percent, and that does not include online classes."

Growth means the need for more space. DAU already utilizes the bottom floor of the SAIC building, housing the high-tech TelePresence Center for the Senior Services College Fellowship. Gary Byrum, associate dean of operations, is currently putting final touches on the plans for DAU's new 50,000 square-foot facility off Old Madison Pike. Building on the 10-acre vacant lot next to CAS, DAU recently received congressional approval for an additional 12,000 square foot expansion. "I will

be meeting with the planners November 13 to confirm and finalize. We break ground in February and start building in April 2009. We plan to open with full festivities November 22, 2009." The newest and most exciting aspect of DAU is its Senior Service College Fellowship (DAU-SSCF). David Newberry, director of the Senior Services College, says, "The SSCF Fellowship provides leadership and acquisitions management training for Army Acquisitions Corp members at the G-14 or higher level. One must have 16-20 years of experience to be considered for the fellowship, and this leadership and operations training program is designed to prepare highly qualified experts for roles as product and program managers and program executive officers." Eighty-eight percent of the fellows are civilians working for the government.

"The SSCF program is intense, but it makes you reflect a great deal on yourself and how you handle situations that might arise at such a high level of command," says Gordon Porter, a fellow of three months who entered the 10-month program after tenure with AMCOM, a missile defense agency. Only one-third of the way through his training, he says, "It makes you ask yourself, 'What should a leader be when it matters the most and what can I do to become a model of leadership to those I lead?'"

The SSCF is now in its third year. Senior-level leaders had been requesting such a program for some time. "The level of competence we seek is equivalent to those at Harvard or any other institution of excellence," Newberry says. "We have an application process for acceptance, and we find that eight to 10 fellows per program is just the right fit."

"The Senior Service College Fellowship costs \$26,000 in tuition but the return on investment is well worth the cost to the government, which pays to put qualified individuals through the course," Gordon says. ■



Home | News | Sports | Forums | Blogs | Multimedia | Entertainment | Jobs | Autos | Homes | Classifieds  
Complete Forecast | RSS Feeds | RSS Terms and Conditions | Site Index | About Us | Contact Us | Advertise |  
Help/Feedback

