

## **GSA Acquisition Policy Federal Advisory Committee (GAP FAC) Acquisition Workforce Subcommittee Meeting**

**January 3, 2023**

The General Service Administration (GSA) Acquisition Policy Federal Advisory Committee (GAP FAC) Acquisition Workforce Subcommittee convened for the third public meeting at 3:00 PM on January 3, 2023, virtually via Zoom, with Darryl Daniels, Chair, and Nicole Darnall, Co-Chair, presiding.

In accordance with FACA, as amended, 5 U.S.C. App 2, the meeting was open to the public from 3:00 PM to 5:00 PM EST

### **Subcommittee Members Present:**

Darryl Daniels, Chairperson	<i>Jacobsen Daniels Assoc.</i>
Nicole Darnall, Co-Chairperson	<i>Arizona State University</i>
Gail Bassette	<i>Bowie State University</i>
Mark Hayden	<i>New Mexico General Services Department</i>
Anne Rung	<i>Varis, LLC</i>
Kristin Seaver	<i>General Dynamics Information Technology</i>
Clyde Thompson	<i>GovStrive, LLC</i>
David Malone	<i>Director, Procurement &amp; Supply Management</i>
Steven Schooner	<i>George Washington University</i>

**Absent:** n/a

**Guest Speakers & Presenters:** n/a

### **GSA Staff Present:**

Boris Arratia	<i>Designated Federal Officer</i>
Stephanie Hardison	<i>Deputy Designated Federal Officer</i>
David Cochennic	<i>GAP FAC Support Team</i>
Adam Sheldrick	<i>GAP FAC Support Team</i>
Skylar Holloway	<i>GAP FAC Support Team</i>
Cindy Thompson	<i>Closed Captioner</i>
Daniel Swartz	<i>ASL Interpreters</i>
Jill Lamoreaux	<i>ASL Interpreters</i>

## **CALL TO ORDER**

Boris Arratia, Deputy Federal Officer (DFO), opened the public meeting by welcoming the group before reminding the public that there would be time for comments and statements at the end of the meeting. He then performed a roll call to confirm attendance and a quorum. After the quorum was met, he turned the meeting over the Chairperson Darryl Daniels.

## **INTRODUCTIONS & REMARKS**

Chairperson Darryl Daniels welcomed everyone and reviewed the agenda before discussing the previous meeting. He explained that this meeting will be a working session to narrow down the priorities to three key priorities. After the priorities discussion, the subcommittee would move into bringing in more speakers or having another working session. He reminded the subcommittee of the following administrative meeting next Tuesday, January 10, 2023, at 3 PM EST.

## **KEY PRIORITIES DISCUSSION**

Chairman Darryl Daniels then handed the priorities discussion to Co-Chair Nicole Darnall to facilitate. The subcommittee members each shared their top two priorities as follows:

Kristin Seaver:

- Identifying knowledge and gaps in the workforce and developing solutions to address them.
- Identify tools and processes to make the acquisition workforce jobs easier relative to considering climate and sustainability in procurement decisions.

Nicole Darnall:

- Identify the critical levers needed to make environmental and sustainable acquisition the default in Federal acquisition.
- Identify the essential pathways needed for the Federal acquisition workforce to develop a shared understanding of environmental and sustainability concerns.

Chairperson Daniels:

- Establish a foundation and understanding of the definitions and criteria of sustainability for federal acquisition professionals to approve plans and purchases.

Chairperson Daniels stated he would like to see how the procurement people evaluate beyond just checking a box.

Clyde Thompson:

- How does the acquisition workforce inform and engage program partners and industry on sustainability requirements?
- How are sustainability requirements implemented by the acquisition workforce?

Clyde Thompson mentioned when he first heard the speakers present. He was unaware of how much work had been done on climate and sustainability procurement resources. It's important to focus on the acquisition workforce and give them instructions on implementing sustainability requirements within the procurement process.

He also stated that some other committees are looking at sustainability requirements. After they develop their requirements, we can focus on how the acquisition workforce can implement them.

Gail Bassette:

- Identify relevant and meaningful ways to inform, educate and engage small and minority contractors on environmental and sustainability procurement requirements.

Gail suggested thinking about outreach and identifying relevant and meaningful ways to inform, educate, and engage small and minority contractors on sustainability and environmental procurement requirements. In education and outreach, how can we partner or provide resources or capacity-building activities to help these minority contractors to engage with these larger contractors so they can compete? We need to promote and encourage the participation and education of these small minority vendors in sustainability procurement.

Anne Rung:

- What are the top 5 challenges, identified by the acquisition workforce in prioritizing environmental outcomes and promoting sustainability throughout the acquisition lifecycle, and what are the recommended strategies to overcome those challenges?

Anne shared that for this priority, we need to start with the end user and work backward to solve the problems. We have effective tools where we could assess the top challenge areas from the workforce and build our recommendations around that.

- How do we empower the acquisition workforce to prioritize environmental outcomes/promote sustainability with the least effort?

For her second point, Anne mentioned that in a perfect world, we shouldn't be asking the workforce to be environmental experts, but we should allow them to do what they're trained to do. The game changer for Amazon was one-click shopping which drove more users to the site. How can we make this so easy that we can empower the workforce and make it easy?

Steve Schooner:

- How can the subcommittee prompt, encourage, and accelerate the primary government training and knowledge management institutions to make sustainable procurement a core competency and increase the volume and diversity of courses and training materials?

Steve stated that every contracting officer for the government goes through a certification process. They must learn, and they will be tested on the core competencies. Unless and until sustainability procurement is treated as a core competency for training and certification purposes, the message to the workforce is less important than everything else we are being taught.

- Assuming the federal government's primary sustainable procurement rule requires contractor assessment, disclosure, and targeting concerns of greenhouse gas emissions and climate-related financial risk, how can we increase the federal acquisition workforce's familiarity and understanding of the related concepts and information and empower them to deploy that information to make more sustainable procurement related decisions in the future?

Steve shared his concern that if we don't start now, the rulemaking will take a while to pass, and it will take years before the acquisition workforce knows how to take advantage of all the information being generated.

Jeff Koses mentioned that the Department of Defense (DoD) moved to a new acquisition training curriculum called Back to Basics a few years ago. GSA will be the first civilian agency to move to that curriculum over the next few weeks. The curriculum is based on a lifelong learning model. There are four core courses in the major areas of

acquisition. It features a series of credentials that would allow us to create a new credential in climate and sustainability and define what goes into it and how they get certified in climate and sustainability.

Steve Schooner also mentioned that the single most significant aspect that drove the DoD Back to Basics was the first two decades of the Defense Acquisition Workforce Act. The DoD spent a lot of money to train everyone on how to do everything, which was later deemed inefficient. On how to train everyone on how to do everything. There will now be a focus on the basis but greater investment in specialty skills. Sustainability needs to be part of the core basics, but it also needs to have a track for people buying different things and could receive specialty knowledge.

Anne Rung stated that even with core competency built into acquisition training, there are still acquisition professionals, and we want to make this as easy as possible.

Nicole Darnall transitioned into identifying the group's top priorities and how they can hone and shape them. Two of these priorities will be the group's focus between now and April and how the group can inform or make recommendations around them. Before voting on the two top priorities, Nicole opened the floor to the subcommittee on how they should define priorities.

Some of the comments on how priorities should be defined were:

- The priority should advance and be consistent with our mission statement.
- The priorities should be simple to implement.
- Low-hanging fruit with a big impact.
- It should not be a tactic but rather a strategic focus area.
- Simple and easy to understand and execute.
- Builds an important foundation for other important priorities.
- Listen to end users and see what they need.
- Ensuring GSA can act on the priority.
- It has to make a difference and results must be seen.

Nicole then proceeded to the group's 12 priorities to determine their top two. Jeff Koses acknowledged the priorities listed so far are clear and actionable while being unique. They are not happening anywhere else and it would be a great opportunity to make GSA the accelerant in this space.

Nicole grouped the priorities into different themes with one being focused on core credentialing.

Jeff explained that the term core competency will be replaced by credential and will need to be created in sustainable purchasing since there currently isn't one. The new core competency will be core classes and an overview of acquisition in its pre-award, award and administration. GSA will be moving in that direction. A new recommendation is to create a new credential in sustainable purchasing with the long-term actions being to define what it takes to be credentialed. What is the training? What are the experiential components? What's the reading? How does someone get approved and recognized as a thought leader in this space and how do they keep that?

An example of credentialing is needing an expert in a field. GSA is currently looking at credentialing for leasing. GSA leases 8,000 federal buildings and needs an expert in leasing. They are looking for one in construction for people who would do construction contracting. The Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP) is currently looking at one in innovation and how you apply the ideas of innovation to acquisition. There has yet to be thought on whether credentialing can be applied to sustainability. Jeff would be able to provide a speaker on credentialing.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> theme was identifying critical levers/tools that will help amplify sustainability in the federal acquisition process. The group moved the priorities they felt fell under that category.

There were four priorities that the group felt could be moved to the Industry Partnership subcommittee.

The subcommittee voted to see what the top priorities are and what the top second-tier priorities are. After voting, the top priorities the group felt were most important were items #1, #10, and #4. The subcommittee further agreed to combine #1 and #10 since both priorities were similar. The group identified their top priorities:

- 1.) How do we empower the acquisition workforce to prioritize environmental outcomes/promote sustainability with the least effort?
- 2.) Identify the essential pathways needed for the federal acquisition workforce to develop a shared understanding of environmental and sustainable concerns.

After identifying the top priorities, the discussion moved to what information the subcommittee needed to know to make recommendations in these spaces. This will also help the group to know about what speakers they should be inviting to the group. The group was allowed to voice what two points of information would be most important.

The group came up with the following for priority #1:

- What does AWFS need to know to be empowered?
- What big levers can be used to automate the process?
- What best practices are in other local, state, or other governments
- How is the acquisition workforce incentivized to promote and prioritize the outcomes?
- What are the absolute requirements?
- What is already in the works?
- Where are examples of leadership from the top down which allow empowerment of the workforce through support, tools, and education
- What works best? – test this approach with a pilot group or at the state level
- It would be helpful to hear directly from the acquisition workforce about their challenges.
- What are AWFS's largest impediments?

The group came up with the following for priority #2:

- How do we best tap into the current learning system for AWFS?
- What would be the key minimum viable pathway to competency?
- What are the competency and credentials certifications requirements
- We should better understand the training/resources already available to the workforce through DAU/FAI
- Are there best practices we can learn from through states, other countries, or local governments?
- How do sustainable experts share their knowledge with others? Through meetings, webpage, classes, and working groups?
- What's most important – what capability has top priority to advance the mission?

The group began to identify potential speakers based on their top priorities and what they would like to learn from them. For priority one, a potential speaker would be leadership of Defense Acquisition University/Federal Acquisition Institute (DAU/FAI), 18F, and US Digital Services and hearing from current workforce focus groups and crowdsourcing tools. Hearing from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) would be good for priority one and two.

If there are other ideas, Nicole encouraged the committee members to drop them into google drive and continue this conversation at the next meeting. The discussion was

then turned back to Chairperson Daniels who then turned the meeting over to Boris Arratia to conclude.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Chair Daniels then opened the floor to the public, there were no comments.

**CLOSING REMARKS**

Cassius Butts shared that he enjoyed the discussion and thought there was a lot of progress and opportunity to add. He was looking forward to all the subcommittees coming together and sharing their ideas, as it would be helpful to each other.

Jeff Koses then thanked everyone for a well run meeting and enjoyed seeing the clear potential of both short-term and long-term recommendations for the committee.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Boris Arratia, DFO adjourned the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 PM EST.

I hereby certify that, to the best of my knowledge, the foregoing minutes are accurate and complete.

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*Darryl Daniels* 6/20/2023  
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Darryl Daniels  
Chairperson  
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