

GSA ACQUISITION POLICY FEDERAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE (GAP FAC) SUMMARY OF PUBLIC MEETING

October 27, 2022

The GSA Acquisition Policy Federal Advisory Committee convened at 1:00 P.M. on October 27, 2022, virtually via videoconference, with Chairpersons Troy Cribb and Cassius Butts, presiding.

In accordance with FACA, as amended, 5 U.S.C. App 2, the meeting was open to the public from 1:00 P.M. to 4:00 P.M. EST

Committee Members Present:

Troy Cribb, Chairperson	<i>Partnership for Public Service</i>
Cassius Butts, Co-Chairperson	<i>Global Leader Group</i>
Antonio Doss	<i>Small Business Administration</i>
Mark Hayden	<i>New Mexico General Services Department</i>
Kristin Seaver	<i>General Dynamics Information Technology</i>
Dr. David Waggoner	<i>Institute of Scrap Recycling Industries</i>
Clyde Thompson	<i>GovStrive, LLC</i>
Steven Schooner	<i>George Washington University</i>
David Malone	<i>City of St. Petersburg Florida</i>
Farad Ali	<i>Asociar, LLC</i>
Dr. Amlan Mukherjee	<i>Michigan Technological University</i>
Nicole Darnall	<i>Arizona State University</i>
Nigel Stephens	<i>U.S. Black Chambers of Commerce (USBC)</i>
Anne Rung	<i>Varis, LLC</i>
Darryl Daniels	<i>Jacobsen Daniels Assoc.</i>
Luke Bassis	<i>Port Authority of New York and New Jersey</i>
Jennie Romer	<i>Environmental Protection Agency</i>
Anish Tilak	<i>Rocky Mountain Institute</i>
Mamie Mallory	<i>Mallory and Associates LLC</i>
Richard Beutel	<i>George Mason Center for Government Contracting</i>

Absent: Stacy Smedley, Keith Tillage, Dr. Kimberly Wise

Guest Speakers and Presenters:

Nicholas West, *Acting Director, Office of Acquisition Policy, Integrity, and Workforce*
Michael Bloom, *Program Advisor, Office of Federal High Performance Green Buildings*

Jeff Birch, *Director, Federal, Federal Acquisition Institute (FAI)*

GSA Staff Present:

Boris Arratia, *Designated Federal Officer*

Stephanie Hardison, *Deputy Designated Federal Officer*

David Cochenic, *GAP FAC Support Team*

Wiaam Yasin, *GAP FAC Support Team*

Adam Sheldrick, *GAP FAC Support Team*

Jennifer B and Joan L, *ASL Interpreters*

Lee Bursten, *Captioner*

CALL TO ORDER

Boris Arratia, Designated Federal Officer, opened the public meeting by welcoming the group and encouraging the public to submit all comments to gapfac@gsa.gov. He then performed a roll call to confirm attendance and a quorum.

WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS

Chairperson Troy Cribb welcomed the Committee members and the public to the second official public meeting of the GAP FAC, thanking all for dedicating their time to being a part of the effort. She thanked the GSA staff for their hard work preparing and conducting the meeting. She provided a recap of the inaugural meeting held in September, stating that the Committee was honored to hear from GSA Administrator Robin Carnahan who reminded us that October marked the 50th anniversary of the Federal Advisory Committee Act. The Committee was reminded of its purpose, to ensure that the executive branch benefits from a wide range of public opinions and inputs as it develops policy and to help ensure that the public has some transparency and access into how the policy is made. She also stated that the GSA Administrator further emphasized the importance of this framework for the timing of this committee, again noting that this is the first discretionary federal advisory committee that has met at GSA in 15 years.

Chairperson Cribb noted that the timing of the committee's work is particularly important given recent passage of laws for GSA and the whole government to make important investments in addressing climate issues to put us on track toward sustainability in our government operations.

Chairperson Cribb then provided the purpose of the Committee, which is to advise GSA on how it can use its tools and authorities to help GSA and the federal government meet these significant challenges. She again thanked the speakers and presenters from the previous meeting, including the Associate Administrator for the Office of Government-wide Policy at GSA, Krystal Brumfield, who shared the group's excitement for its assembly and provided an overview of some of GSA's climate and sustainability initiatives, as well as Jeffrey Koses, the GSA Senior Procurement Executive. He led the

Committee through an overview of the areas that the subcommittees will cover, which provided a better understanding of the challenges that GSA is facing to help steer the Committee's work to be as effective as possible in making recommendations to GSA to meet those challenges.

Chairperson Cribb then turned her attention to the day's itinerary: the introduction of the nominees for subcommittee chairs and the three expert speakers from GSA who would be speaking on topics that the subcommittees would be considering: Policy and Practice, Industry Partnership, and Acquisition Workforce. The speakers will lead the Committee members through what GSA is already doing in these areas to help the Committee make recommendations to help GSA, the whole of government and our country address urgent challenges related to climate and sustainability. Chairperson Cribb then yielded the discussion to Co-Chairperson Cassius Butts.

SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIR AND CO-CHAIR REMARKS

Chairperson Cassius Butts thanked everyone for joining the meeting and thanked the GSA Administrator and all the other guest speakers from the previous meeting for being a part of a historical moment. He also thanked Chairperson Cribb for her leadership in leading this initiative.

Chairperson Butts introduced the nominee subcommittee chairs and co-chairs. The Subcommittee on Policy and Practice, which includes 14 members, will be chaired by Steve Schooner with Luke Bassis as co-chair. The Industry and Partnerships subcommittee, which includes 14 members, will be chaired by nominee Kristin Seaver with Farad Ali as co-chair. The Acquisition Workforce subcommittee, which includes 9 members, will be chaired by nominee Darryl Daniels with Nicole Darnall as co-chair.

Chairperson Cribb provided each subcommittee chair nominee with a moment to reintroduce themselves.

Professor Steven Schooner introduced himself as a George Washington University Law School professor. Before that, he served as a career Senior Executive in the Office of Federal Procurement Policy at OMB and has a background in private practice, the Justice Department, and the Army. He stressed his excitement for being involved in this initiative. He also mentioned his work with the National Contract Management Association (NCMA) and efforts to move its membership up the learning curve on sustainable procurement.

He emphasized that the Committee's challenge is immense. The Federal acquisition workforce is busy, so asking them to engage in sustainable procurement entails a massive learning curve and a serious change management challenge. The Committee will need strong and clear messages from leadership that it's important to adapt to and mitigate climate change. One of our biggest problems is overcoming the long-standing and entrenched "tyranny of low prices." We need to think differently about the value or, as the economists would say, externalize the effects of our purchasing decisions if we

want to make more climate change-conscious decisions. He thought it was a great task and was ecstatic to be involved. Professor Schooner yielded the discussion to Luke Basis.

Luke Bassis introduced himself as the Deputy Director of Procurement at the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, a mega transportation agency responsible for regions of New York and New Jersey. This includes busy airports, shipping terminals, bridges, tunnels, the PATH system, and multiple sites, including the World Trade Center. The staff at his agency are experienced innovators and thought leaders in sustainability and resilience. He hopes to bring what they have learned over time to this effort.

Mr. Bassis spent the last 14 years in procurement at the Port Authority in multiple capacities, from developing policies to drafting clauses, creating guidelines, ensuring compliance with Federal regulations, and developing and managing innovative procurements.

This subcommittee offers the opportunity of a lifetime - to make policy recommendations that support robust climate and sustainability action for the world's largest buyer, the U.S. Government. He sees the subcommittee's biggest challenge as figuring out where to start. He posed the question: Do we go big and broad and chisel away a little bit at the universe of government spending, or do we take a scalpel and go by industry, take deep dives, and make recommendations that will fill smaller buckets of sand but have a larger cumulative impact?

Chairperson Cribb introduced the chair and co-chair nominees for Industry Partnerships, Kristin Seaver and Farad Ali.

Kristin Seaver acknowledged committee members and thanked them for the opportunity to serve as chair of the industry partnerships subcommittee. She spent 30 years at the United States Postal Service and loved serving the American people by leveraging technology, fostering innovation, and leading awesome teams of dedicated employees. After retiring, she has been fortunate to accept a position where she continues to support the government's mission across Federal civilian agencies with technology, solutions, and services.

She explained the importance of a strong partnership between industry and government and how it plays out across our country daily. She is eager to advance on the important work ahead of seeking public input, fostering ideas, and making recommendations that support the charter of this Committee and help protect the future of our planet. She thanked attendees before yielding the discussion to Farad Ali.

Farad Ali introduced himself as Co-Chair nominee of the Industry Partnerships Subcommittee and explained he was a banker in his earlier career and had the chance to do lending for corporations in cities and towns to promote economic development in the community. Then he worked at a nonprofit, supporting the development of minority-

owned, women-owned, and veteran-owned businesses, working with the U.S. Department of Commerce, the U.S. Department of Transportation, and public allies as a part of community service awards.

Mr. Ali also worked for the National Supply Development Council, the largest organization focusing on partnering minority-owned businesses with corporations. He understands the importance of working with government and communities and additionally worked as the chairman of the board of the Raleigh Durham international airport authority. Hence, he understands the importance of how aviation works. We live in a community where diversity is a necessity - diversity of thought and diversity of utilization. This is the world's greatest diversity opportunity to ensure that future generations can have shared prosperity. He expressed his gratitude and excitement for serving in the Industry Partnerships Subcommittee to show how we can have better alignment between government, business, nonprofits, and community. The discussion was then yielded to Mr. Darryl Daniels.

Darryl Daniels introduced himself as the nominee for Chair of the Acquisition Workforce Subcommittee. He is the CEO and President of Jacobson Daniels. He was pleased and honored to be nominated to chair this subcommittee. He acknowledged his work in the private sector in consulting, operating, and supporting municipal airports around the country, intersecting with airport procurement, city procurement, and Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) procurement.

Mr. Daniels continued to share his work experience, dealing with procurement officers, processes, and procedures needed to work with cities, states, and municipalities. He volunteered to support trade industries in the aviation space and worked with those organizations as they developed policies and procedures around sustainable development for airports around the country. He understands the importance of preparing and upskilling the workforce. He hoped that tools could be discovered and advanced to provide recommendations to empower the workforce to make buying decisions for the federal government that provide taxpayer value.

He looks forward to hearing from a series of experts in the subject matter and having them provide the Committee with information and guidance so that committee recommendations will help develop the workforce at all levels. He then yielded the discussion to Nicole Darnall.

Nicole Darnall introduced herself, a professor of public policy at Arizona University State School of Sustainability. She mentioned her engagement with more than 4,000 governments at all levels globally to facilitate sustainable purchasing.

Ms. Darnall was also a former Associate Dean of ASU's School of Sustainability. She expressed her excitement about this opportunity with the GAP FAC. She looks forward to learning from the public's diverse voices and bringing the knowledge learned within ASU's sustainable purchasing research initiative to the work required to reorient the workforce towards embedding sustainability in federal acquisition. She thanked all

attendees before yielding the discussion back to Chairperson Cribb.

POLICY AND PRACTICE DISCUSSION

Chairperson Cribb thanked everyone for their introductions. She brought to the attendees' attention the excitement she and Chairperson Butts share regarding the amazing leaders the Committee has to head its Subcommittees. She stated that she was struck by how all the Subcommittees and the Committee as a whole are benefit from the diversity of backgrounds and experiences everyone brings to the table.

Chairperson Cribb stressed her excitement for having three outstanding speakers from GSA to discuss key efforts and challenges that GSA is taking on which are relevant to the Committee. She then introduced the first speaker Nicolas West, the Acting Director of the Office of Acquisition Policy, Integrity, and Workforce at GSA, with over 17 years of experience at GSA. Mr. West oversees acquisition policy, workforce policy, acquisition performance management, and enterprise-wide supply chain risk management.

Mr. West thanked the Committee for their service and efforts in helping GSA think through important issues facing GSA. He provided an overview of acquisition policies, some things GSA has done in sustainable acquisition, and the key acquisition programs that GSA runs.

Mr. West started by setting the stage with the different types of acquisition policies, describing the three different buckets:

1. Government-Wide Policy
2. Agency-Wide Policy
3. Service-Level Policy

Government-wide policy includes the laws, the OMB memos, and the Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR) rules where GSA has a role but not necessarily the final vote. GSA often plays the role of a subject matter expert, advising the decision makers, but doesn't have final decision-making authority. His team operates on the middle bucket (Agency-Wide Policy), where they have much more control. And this is also where they implement the government-wide policy. He feels that this is where the GAP FAC can make the biggest impact.

The third bucket (Service-Level Policy) is where GSA's Federal Acquisition Service or the Public Buildings Service issues policies specific to their programs. Mr. West noted that this was another space that would welcome recommendations from the Committee.

Mr. West covered current policies that GSA issued which impact sustainability:

- GSAM Case
 - Recognized the need for expertise in sustainable acquisition on contracting teams.

- Added the Chief Sustainability Officer to the acquisition review board.
- Acquisition Letter
 - A call for innovation; asking contractors to share best practices.
- Single-Use Plastic Reduction
 - Ways to reduce single-use plastics.

He gave an overview of major GSA acquisition and staff certification programs and objectives. For example, GSA is committed to zero emissions in Federal buildings by 2045. He shared additional resources: the OMB category management strategy, schedules on the Government-wide Acquisition Contracts (GWACs), and the Sustainable Facilities (SF) Tool, to name a few. He thanked the Committee before going to questions and answers.

POLICY AND PRACTICE QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Chairperson Cribb opened with the first question; Where do you see the biggest pain points of getting the whole acquisition community used to thinking about sustainability? Particularly for policy, are there areas that come to mind where you hear from folks across the government in the acquisition community that there are policy barriers? Or is it more a matter of trying to educate people?

Chairperson Cribb had an additional question for all three speakers; she stated that we know GSA is heavily invested in addressing climate and sustainability challenges and is doing some great work. She would like to know where there are other bright spots across the government so that the Committee can help spread best practices and help each agency leverage good work elsewhere in the government.

Mr. West's response: When he discussed the three buckets of how you incorporate sustainability, the easy button for the contracting officer is that third bucket when you infuse a compliance requirement for the vendor. It is simpler for the contracting activity to implement. If there's a clause in the contract, folks can be held accountable. It presents challenges for industry in complying, and you have to ensure competition, but that's easier to implement. If you're looking more towards the first bucket, the performance requirements, you have to go to industry, and it's based on what you're buying. The SF Tool, procurement compilation, has been one of the better practices they have seen in helping teams work through what could apply on sustainable procurements.

Nigel Stephens asked Mr. West for his view on whether other requirements are included in prime contracting goals. Companies get points and credits as a part of their bid proposals when it comes to subcontracting plans or diversity spending, working with designated entity firms, and so forth. Can/should this approach apply to sustainability?

Mr. West's response: They've certainly seen that in certain acquisitions. There are few standards or guidelines on potentially doing that, but one of the things they have seen as part of those policies is encouraging innovation, for example by giving give additional

credits to those who offered more sustainable outcomes.

Nicole Darnall then asked if it would be possible for the Committee to see examples to include specific language so that they'd have a better understanding of how this has been done. Mr. West replied absolutely and would be happy to share those best practices.

Mr. Stephens then asked about legislative language. Regarding things like diversity spending or subcontracting plans, there was specific targeted legislative language about certain goals and objectives in procurement being in the inherent interest of the government. He suggested that instead of reinventing the wheel, we could use similar language in legislation to drive contracting opportunities towards more innovative, sustainable solutions.

Mamie Mallory asked how the past performance of firms is validated. She explained that you would get references or ratings regarding their contracting abilities and quality. The same question for teams and their qualifications: how will sustainability type requirements be validated? Is it based on some rating, some industry standard?

Mr. West stated there are standards only in certain areas. There may or may not be standards available based on what you're buying. That is certainly a challenge that they struggle with, where there's no pre-established standards. Should you be picking winners or losers based on sustainable approaches, and does the contracting team have the expertise to evaluate whether one proposal is better than another?

Chairperson Cribb asked Mr. West if he saw trends in the private sector of those standards being developed outside of government for different types of products and services?

Mr. West explained that there are efforts to drive standards, but not across the board. He mentioned that there are some gaps. That might be a good area for the Committee to explore where there are still gaps.

Luke Bassis asked Mr. West if he were a member of the Committee, what challenges he would tackle first, and what area he saw as most ripe for tackling, most receptive to a large kind of effort?

Mr. West suggested the scalpel approach is going to be more effective by allowing the Committee to focus on a couple of programs and make progress on something concrete. He thought that was a big question and needed the advice of the Committee to assist GSA with getting started on some of these issues.

Dr. Amlan Mukherjee followed up on the question posed by Ms. Mallory around construction materials. He discussed current International Organization for Standardization (ISO) efforts that may be of help in setting standards to acquire sustainable products. He mentioned GSA came up with a specification for

environmentally preferred asphalt and low-carbon concrete last fall and that might be a starting point.

Jennie Rommer shared that part of the program that she oversees at the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Environmentally Preferable Purchasing Program, has 37 ecolabels and standards recommended for Federal purchasing. She sees a big opportunity to update and create a more streamlined, multi-attribute approach.

David Malone asked if the Committee could be provided with a list of the various categories currently being managed by the various teams throughout the government.

Mr. West stated that the information was widely available and that he could provide the Committee with the information.

Anne Rung then asked if there was any data around the workforce or reaction response to current sustainability policies. Has the workforce been queried on whether they have questions, whether there's confusion, or how they think the policy is going?

Mr. West explained that nothing came to mind in terms of past workforce surveys. There are many impactful policies in place today and this would be one way to understand how they are being implemented today and if there are areas for improvement.

Anish Tilak wanted to know if Mr. West could provide guidance on which product/service categories are less in need of an update or are off the table and the Committee shouldn't necessarily focus on.

Mr. West explained his intent today was to cover most of the work that GSA does. Looking at the different programs, there are different ways that each of them tackles sustainable acquisition. Some tackle it by the standards in the FAR, some through the performance requirements in specific acquisitions, and very few by evaluation methodologies. He provided the full landscape to help the Committee consider where they want to focus their efforts.

INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIPS SUBCOMMITTEE

Co-Chairperson Butts introduced Michael Bloom, Program Advisor, The Office of High-Performance Green Buildings. Mr. Bloom manages the team behind the Sustainable Facilities ([SF](#)) [Tool](#).

He provided background on GSA's SF Tool, stating that about 12 years ago, GSA realized it needed to promulgate best practices in green buildings. So, they translated what used to be an Excel spreadsheet with the rules agencies independently came up with, into a single place - the Green Product Compilation. Its goal was to gather all the guidance that applies to products and services people buy in one place. It included the collaboration of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Department of Energy (DOE), United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), and GSA.

When it comes to industry partnerships, Mr. Bloom stressed that we need an easier way to follow all the rules. Ultimately when people talk about procurement, they have a job that needs to get done, and they need products and services to do that. The challenge is to pay attention to every variable simultaneously. This applies to not only sustainably compliant products that are recyclable, safe, non-toxic, energy, water efficient, or even increasingly PFAS, chemical free, and Buy American, but also buying from small and disadvantaged businesses, and doing so in an environmentally just way.

He shared a story to illustrate the power of a committee like GAP FAC, explaining that about two years ago, the Green Building Advisory Committee (GBAC), another GSA run federal advisory committee that has been around for more than ten years, had a subcommittee that asked a key question - how we can get our arms around low embodied carbon materials? They discussed it and spent three to four months looking and surveying the field and asking experts questions like: what is the impact or potential impact, who knows about low embodied carbon, what we can do, is there a difference between big projects and small projects and how should this be handled, etc.. The GBAC came up with an advice letter that addressed the whole building life cycle assessment performed for big projects, to understand how to design and build with low embodied carbon materials. For the smaller projects they said, we need a materials approach; we need to pay attention to the materials that matter most.

Mr. Bloom mentioned that sample solicitation and contract language can be found in the Green Procurement Compilation on the SF Tool among other things. While the tool has covered many areas, this subcommittee could perhaps help us figure out what's missing and what other resources would be useful.

We care greatly about transparency and ensuring that the tools we offer at GSA reflect the best products and services you should purchase. He would like to see us change the defaults in how our procurement systems work so we see compliant products first. He emphasized the need for industry participation in this effort. GSA has also invested in improving the quality of the data behind its programs. They have a program called the Verified Product Portal (VPP) that was built to ensure we had no incorrect products on systems on GSA Advantage or under contract. It would be helpful to determine a pathway for industry to provide the Federal Government with the most up-to-date information about their products. VPP provides a low burden way to do that.

Mr. Bloom suggested the Committee watch for discussions on how to share more information like recycled content, PFAS, things not covered yet by ecolabels, etc. The goal is to provide decision makers with information to consider the variables he discussed about sustainability, small business, equity and environmental justice, etc. He provided links for the Committee to review.

Links Provided:

- [Linked-In SF Tool](#)

- [Verified Products Portal \(VPP\)](#)
- [EPA's EPP Program Recommendations](#)

INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIPS QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Co-Chairperson Butts asked Mr. Bloom, is there a particular source or area where committee members can look and say, “This is where I can see these are new trends, this is new trending technology?”

Mr. Bloom suggested committee members review the SF Tool and provide input on ways to improve it. It represents the best practices in government.

Professor Schooner commented on the Federal Supply Schedule. One way to change outcomes would be to require that buyers who use the Federal Supply Schedule, order from the environmental aisle or do a determination and findings, as to why they didn't. This is not saying you can't order something else, but one could change staggering numbers of purchasing decisions overnight with no training required. That's low hanging fruit and the high impact work that he thought the Committee should focus on.

Professor Schooner asked Mr. Bloom about how to make these tools more accessible and to prioritize the most important things so that people don't go to them and throw their hands up?

Mr. Bloom answered that the SF Tool currently gets between 7,500 and 12,000 visits per week. About 40% of those are for procurement related content. They have a useful tool that has user guides on the front page. They built the tool so that feds, states, international communities, and contractors can use them. GSA will be posting five-minute training videos about SF Tool on the site starting in February. There is even a LinkedIn page, which is unusual for Federal tools.

Farad Ali asked if a dashboard could be created to help track SF Tool user analytics.

Nicole Darnall asked for more information about the Verified Products Portal (VPP) verification process. How is verification defined here?

Mr. Bloom explained that GSA invested in VPP to eliminate counterfeit products from being on the Federal Supply Schedules and to offer opportunities for industry to provide GSA with information that it would otherwise lack. It is information that in part, when it comes to sustainable products, the SF Tool has access to.

Ms. Darnall had a follow-up question: Are 40% of users utilizing the SF tool for procurement? Is that data being tracked with respect to spending so that the Committee could get a sense of what proportion of the buys are being redirected?

Mr. Bloom responded that GSA cannot distinguish industry and federal users and part of the reason is because of the privacy laws for the Internet. That was something that

they used to see on the back end. So, it's no longer possible. Since they don't have a required login, they are unable to track through SF Tool directly.

Richard Beutel asked if the SF Tool was flexible enough to encompass, for example, data centers. With respect to service procurements such as those reflected by SAS and software-based products and services, how would the SF Tool change or grow to encompass those acquisitions?

Mr. Bloom explained that they do not dive into IT services. He recommended that Mr. Buetel view the procurement section of SF Tool and look on the right-hand side of the page, which is all about services. There are seven categories of services. It would not be hard to add additional data if there were rules and best practices for the IT sector. The reason SF Tool has a phenomenal health and building section is that the Green Building Advisory Committee did a deep dive into those areas. If individuals or Committees as entities have additions, they can easily add the information they have. For example, they'll add a section on EV this year: what do you need to think about when designing it as an engineer, what do you need to do about managing the policies around charging stations in buildings, etc.

Mr. Buetel asked: Does the SF Tool go beyond the nature of the charging station and address whether the electricity being provided through that device is using sustainable generation methods?

Mr. Bloom conveyed that they show the tradeoffs and the things you need to be aware of, providing an example of how the SF tool can be used to design green roofs.

Nigel Stephens asked a follow-up question: Does that also apply to construction services? We're looking at the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA). A lot of money goes into clean buildings, environmentally sustainable buildings, and renewable projects. But how do we account for deconstructing, removing, and recycling all the building materials?

Mr. Bloom shared that the low embodied carbon material discussion is pushing attention onto the deconstruction and reuse of building materials. That is something that, again, is on their plate for building into the tool in the next few months.

GREEN BUILDING ADVISORY COMMITTEE (GBAC) FEDERAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE DISCUSSION

Boris Arratia asked Mr. Bloom if he would briefly share about the Green Building Advisory Committee (GBAC) for awareness. Mr. Bloom discussed the history and operations of the GBAC. He shared that recently they are grappling with how to engage with traditionally disadvantaged communities. That led to a discussion on equity and environmental justice, which was challenging at times because it was new to the architects and engineers that make up most of the committee. This discussion led to two new positions on the GBAC for individuals who can address environmental justice

and equity considerations. The GBAC meets publicly twice a year.

ACQUISITION WORKFORCE SUBCOMMITTEE DISCUSSION

Chairperson Cribb thanked Mr. Arratia and introduced the next presenter, Jeff Birch, the Director, Federal Acquisition Institute (FAI). She mentioned he worked closely with the Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP) over at OMB, which has a statutory role in overseeing the office. FAI, established in 1976, supports the civilian agency acquisition workforce professionals, a community of approximately 180K. She wanted to talk about how the acquisition workforce is defined and how important it is not to narrowly define that because there are so many people involved in any program or project who have a role in making sure that acquisitions are successful. Chairperson Cribb then yielded the discussion to Jeff Birch.

Jeff Birch provided a brief overview of FAI for perspective. He explained that the FAI team today is the largest it has ever been. FAI supports OFPP with implementing its acquisition workforce policies and government-wide career development initiatives.

Mr. Birch presented FAI's 12 statutory responsibilities and stated that they cover three areas. Acquisition training and career development is the largest, then human capital planning and lastly acquisition research. There is a significant focus on modernizing certification training, lifelong learning training and career development. FAI has been very busy in developing training and support tools to support Executive Orders and congressional mandates.

Mr. Birch also discussed government-wide Federal Acquisition Certifications that are mandated by OFPP and stated Requirements are the same for all agencies. However, agencies are authorized to add additional training requirements above and beyond the OFPP requirements. There have had three-levels of certification across these functional areas for many years: in contracting, contracting officer representatives, and program/project management. He explained that agencies have the latitude given by OFPP to supplement this training. But if the agency doesn't supplement the training with agency specific training or some other type of continuous learning, once the training is completed and have the requisite experience individuals are certified.

Mr. Birch explained that FAI will be moving from the three-level certification to a single-level certification. The three-level certification currently is approximately 650 hours of required training. Workforce members are required to achieve 80 continuous points every two years to maintain their certification. FAI is moving to, and DoD has already moved to a [single-level certification framework](#). That required training is approximately 200 hours. He emphasized the significant difference between the training requirements and the number of hours.

He emphasized that the certification training is just one element of the new single-level certification model. Workforce members are also required to achieve credentials which is a group of curated resources focused on a specific topic and vary in the number of hours required to complete. Credentials will be determined by workforce member and

the supervisor; credentials will also depend on the contracting actions the individuals perform. This model they are moving to is a lifelong learning model. FAI has been actively engaged with DAU and Defense Pricing and Contracting and have a close relationship. They also have been involved with DAU as they've been moving through the three-level certifications at the single-level. He reiterated the mandatory assessment is a component of the new single-level FAC-C-P. Workforce members who already hold a FAC-C certification (Level I, II or III) will automatically receive the new FAC-C-Professional certification.

Mr. Birch explained that they have been working with DoD/DAU specifically in developing credentials. There's more commonality with DoD than differences. They have been working closely to ensure they can leverage the learning resources, the career development opportunities, and things of that nature to develop workforce members. This will help expand the types of training or career development opportunities, activities that enable workforce members to achieve and increase their skill set and gain experiential opportunities to grow.

He discussed the development of FAI's Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) sheet because they kept getting inquiries, like what course can I take? They compiled a [list of continuous learning opportunities](#) that individuals could do besides just taking another course, because what they have found is that workforce members were oftentimes taking the same course multiple times.

He stated that OFPP will be releasing [FAC-C Modernization](#) guidance around the first of the calendar year.

Mr. Birch's presentation included the key FAI priorities for Fiscal Year 2023:

1. FAC-C Modernization
2. Training Development & Maintenance
3. FAI Cornerstone OnDemand (CSOD)
4. Performance Metrics
5. Stakeholder Engagement

They have worked very closely with representatives from the agencies to ensure the contracting workforce community is aware of the certification changes. They've ensured that outreach and change management is happening along the way.

The second area that they will continue to focus on is training development and maintenance. There have been many executive orders issued, some of them being put into legislation. So, they have been very busy creating courses to support executive orders and congressional mandates.

The third item they are focusing on is to continue to mature Cornerstone OnDemand (CSOD), the civilian agency learning management system. A year and a half ago, they migrated from a government wide learning management system that had been customized, the Federal Acquisition Institute Training Application System (FAITAS).

Their goal was to move to a commercial platform solution which would require business process reengineering for the civilian agencies. This effort resulted in many process efficiencies across the workflow. They partnered with DAU, which had already implemented CSOD. The migration was successful

There were a few bumps along the way, but they have seen agencies become more comfortable with the new system. They established an advisory board made up of seven representatives from across the larger agencies who look at the biggest challenges and take action on those which will have the largest impact across all of government.

He then addressed stakeholder engagement. He explained that they have great working relationships with the agencies. The agencies have been very supportive in providing resources to FAI to help them with government-wide initiatives and this helps reduce duplicative efforts. FAI has a board of directors that includes eight members. The majority of them come from agency training schools.

So, they have been leveraging DAU resources and they have been a great partner. They are really trying to build a better government and workforce by leveraging resources that support the acquisition workforce.

Chairperson Cribb thanked Mr. Birch for his presentation before turning the floor over for questions.

Links provided:

- <https://www.fai.gov/certification/fac-c>
- <https://www.dau.edu/training/career-development/logistics/blog/All-New-DAWIA-Certification-and-Development-Guides>

ACQUISITION WORKFORCE QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Antonio Doss asked how Mr. Birch sees the sustainability and environmental components handled within the coursework. Should it have a separate certification program.

Mr. Birch explained that they developed and deployed a sustainability course at the end of September 2022. It is a climate adaptation course for program managers. They reach out to stakeholders as some of the executive orders require work through various organizations to ensure that we're providing a larger view of the requirement. So right now, they have one course. Based on feedback, it is possible they will they develop additional courses.

Mr. Birch addressed the second question relative to the disparity between the 650 hours to the 200 hours. That was a big change management effort for DoD as well. Under the 650 hours, they were force-feeding workforce members with all this information which was not relevant due to their specific missions. The idea is to provide the workforce with the basic knowledge for their initial readiness. Then based on mission requirements and developmental goals they would begin achieving credentials to expand their skillset

following a lifelong learning framework.

He also explained that most of the folks that went through the new certification on his team had jitters during the four-week course because they had to pass a test. When they started talking about this on the agency side, there were concerns about having an assessment, because some people are not good test takers. They plan to have a prep session. Individuals can take the test online. There will be prep courses to prepare the workforce for taking the assessment. DAU is collecting assessment, but the new requirement is only a year old. However, the data thus far shows that only five out of 200 failed the first time around.

There has been a lot of concern about requiring an assessment but is one of the requirements to have reciprocity with DoD. Having reciprocity increases workforce mobility across the entire federal government. Today's younger workforce isn't going to stay with the same agency or position for years like many have done today.

Nicole Darnall asked Mr. Birch what he sees as some of the prominent pain points related to embedding sustainability in Federal acquisition.

Mr. Birch stated that for some people sustainability is a new topic. They are talking about how to increase access to the information to help workforce members who purchase goods that support all types of sustainability initiatives. And when they revised the course, they included other topics based on competency models that they use and there has been no resistance to that. He doesn't see any significant pain points. He believes sustainability is a topic of interest for many workforce members. They are working on their first credential with OFPP. FAI worked closely with DAU on their transition to the single level certification and drew from lessons learned which enabled FAI to get to where it is today. We had many discussions around credentials and the goal continues to be collaboration to be more efficient and optimize resources for the greater good of government.

Nicole Darnall also asked about the climate adaptation course that they have for program managers. Are you collecting feedback on the extent to which that course meets their needs for thinking about how to drive sustainability in acquisition? She stated that she brings this up because it connects with the prior presentation on the SF Tool and the complexities that individuals are encountering in using the tool. So, it seems like a strong bridge here between the tools that are available and the training that we deliver to reach a place where people feel empowered to think in a really productive way to embed sustainability in acquisition is needed.

Mr. Birch stated they want to give the workforce members all the resources and tools they need to be successful. GSA has a group focused on sustainability and is discussed from many perspectives He mentions that one thing he always stressed was that for these tools to be used, they need to be integrated into their work process.

He turned back to address Ms. Darnall's third question regarding tracking metrics, explaining that the course was just deployed on September 30th. He was only aware of

one person from his team who had taken the course at the time.

Darryl Daniels asked a following-up question about the credentials. When you were talking about credentials for the workforce, what would be some examples of the credentials that they would have now? And it sounded like the acquisition workforce members would be working with their supervisor to figure out what credentials they needed. Mr. Daniels mentioned that he is an architect and is familiar with the credentials that architects have in that field.

Mr. Birch stated that the [DAU credentials](#) are available on their website and FAI's goal is to work with training organizations to work together and leverage resources to build a stronger and more efficient government.

Mr. Daniels also asked if the FAA is included in the civilian agencies that FAI works with. Mr. Birch explained that FAI's mission is focused on the [Chief Financial Officer Act agencies, which Dept. of Transportation is included.](#)

However, FAI has been supporting members of the Small Agency Council, they had just migrated into CSOD, working with OFPP, which is a big supporter of all agencies. In the past four months, we brought almost 100 members of the Small Agency Council over to CSOD. So, we have been spending a lot of time with them, providing them training on CSOD and ensuring that they feel comfortable supporting their agency workforce members.

Steven Schooner mentioned that DAU and FAI are talking together, and efforts are being made to bring the National Contract Management Association (NCMA) and the private sector certifying bodies into the fold. He hoped they would continue to think about that as well.

Mr. Schooner then asked when the first course was coming on mitigation. He also stated that he was waiting to hear from FAI or DAU if they consider sustainable procurement a core competency or part of the body of knowledge or something everyone needs to understand. He explained that this is important if we want behavioral change. But it also means we take a different approach. On the DAU web page, he sees things like the contracting cone, the acquisition adaptive acquisition framework and the contracting subway map. He stated that what we need is a good resource where an acquisition professional comes to DAU or FAI or anybody else and says, "Where do I start? Where do I go? How do I work through this? And What's my pathway?"

Mr. Birch explained that about two years ago, they developed the [Contracting Professionals Career Roadmap](#) that provides opportunities to consider, not that they

were mandatory. Their goal was to provide those resources because they knew it could be overwhelming, especially to someone new coming into the field. You could also have people from industry, other civilian agencies, or DoD that are already certified. But the way procurement and acquisition have been evolving, there will always be a need for people to build new skills.

Chairperson Cribb thanked Mr. Birch and all the presenters of the day again before turning the discussion to Mr. Arratia and Co-Chairperson Butts as the 4:00 P.M. hour approached.

CLOSING REMARKS

Co-Chairperson Butts stated that it had been a fantastic day with a lot of information that he thinks has been very valuable and thanked everyone for their input and suggestions.

Mr. Arratia stated that it'd been a wonderful day of learning. The committee spent a good amount of time during the morning talking about procedures and administration of subcommittees. And then, in the afternoon, they went into the deep dive they hoped would happen. He appreciated everyone's engagement.

He mentioned a couple of things before closing for the day. First, GSA will make a recording of this meeting available, as they did in the previous meeting. Some of the members had to drop off a little bit early today, and the recording will make sure everybody gets the opportunity to hear all these great discussions. In terms of the subcommittee process, he let members know they are working through the administrative process of appointing subcommittee chairs, co-chairs and members. Also, they will follow up with the actions mentioned both this morning and this afternoon. Transcripts of the meeting will also be available.

He also explained that they will look at meeting schedules as soon as subcommittee members are appointed. They're going to be about every other week for the subcommittees. The public will be hearing about it at least 15 days before via the Federal Register and will be able to register to observe. In terms of the next full committee, we're looking at two days, either December 15th or January 12th.

He asked committee members to think about their participation in subcommittees after what they heard today, again, to see what's being thought about in terms of topics they would be taking on. He then yielded the discussion back to Chairperson Cribb.

Chairperson Cribb thanked everyone again and expressed how she enjoyed the whole afternoon. She stated that we're sorting through a lot of complex issues, and she thinks

this is the right group to be with.


Co-Chairperson Butts echoed her sentiments before thanking everyone for volunteering their time and looked forward to the next opportunity to have additional conversations.

ADJOURNMENT


Mr. Arratia: adjourned the meeting and reminded the public attendees that their input was welcomed through gapfac@gsa.gov and to visit the GAP FAC GSA website for presentation postings and other committee information.

The meeting adjourned at 4:00 P.M. EST

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

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 21/2023
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Troy Cribb
Chairperson
GSA Acquisition Policy Federal Advisory Committee

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 /2023
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Cassius Butts
Co-Chairperson
GSA Acquisition Policy Federal Advisory Committee