



A SUSTAINABLE ENTERPRISE

The DACM is committed to providing targeted learning to keep the workforce's skills sharp.

Building and maintaining an efficient and sustainable acquisition workforce is reliant on our commitment to the fundamental tenants of lifelong continuous learning. A new continuous learning points cycle started in October and our acquisition professionals are looking toward the next two years of professional and personal growth. Our Army acquisition functional leaders have curated exciting learning paths and new enterprise opportunities in areas like digital engineering and artificial intelligence that help the workforce stay current and ready to tackle any challenges ahead.

Alongside each of the programs, classes and other offerings included in your individual development plan is the call for personal commitment to identify and grow the skills necessary to be a successful acquisition professional. Prioritizing continuous learning in all areas of your career development leads to an increase in productivity and overall organizational success, according to Gallup's 2024 "State of the Global Workforce" report. As you consider the best path forward to achieve your professional goals, think about the skills that will best suit your needs in helping maintain and support an efficient workplace. Leadership, critical thinking and other soft skills are vital in our workforce's ability to evolve into best-in-class professionals.

Over the last few years, the Army Director of Acquisition Career Management (DACM) Office has addressed the needs of a successful and efficient acquisition workforce. It has been

my mission to encourage and enable each workforce member to take hold of every opportunity that will lead them on a path to success.

OPPORTUNITIES UNFOLDED

Back-to-Basics, the first major overhaul of the Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act in almost 30 years, was implemented in 2022 to address the need for a more agile and adaptive acquisition workforce. Through an increased emphasis on experiential learning, Back-to-Basics tailors training opportunities to the ever-evolving individual, team and organizational needs.

In 2023, we built a foundation for digital transformation with the rollout of learning pathways through Udemy, data-driven educational opportunities, enhanced credentials through the Defense Acquisition University and new partnerships with a digital focus that placed Army civilians in industry environments to get exposure to digital engineering. (See "Serving the Digital Soup," in the Fall 2023 issue of AL&T.)

The MOREin'24 campaign is an exciting highlight from the last year. (See "Serving the Digital Entrée," in the Summer 2024 issue of AL&T.) The campaign allowed us to add three new courses to the digital transformation offerings in Udemy, including the launch of the first-ever Army-specific Digital Foundations credential. Fostering the digital-first culture is vital to



NO TECHNICAL DIFFICULTIES

Twenty-five warrant officers completed the Talent Acquisition Course on July 11, 2024, at Fort Knox, Kentucky, to become talent acquisition technicians—the Army’s newest military occupational specialty, 420T. Soft skills, like leadership and critical thinking, go hand in hand with the technical requirements of the acquisition workforce and are vital to becoming an effective acquisition professional. (Photo by Lara Poirrier, U.S. Army Recruiting Command)

our investment in acquisition workforce upskilling, allowing us to keep an advantage over our adversaries.

As we move forward in the new year, the Adaptive Acquisition Framework continues to provide new pathways for accelerating delivery of capability to the force and requires that every acquisition professional has access to innovative learning opportunities that keep our workforce current and ready to support the warfighter. It is our duty to dream big and create the space to be adaptable and reliable, while maintaining the integrity of our programs and ensuring longevity for the future of the workforce. Alongside our training opportunities, from the basics to advanced, it is also essential that we put a spotlight on the soft skills that can help push forward our professional and personal growth.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT CALLS FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION

I am proud of the advances we’ve made in providing exciting and engaging learning opportunities for our workforce members. You and your supervisors can work within our framework to create a learning path that best suits the requirements of your given priorities and the hard skills necessary to advance in your career.

While you work with your supervisor to identify areas of advancement, your career development also demands moments of purposeful reflection to recognize potential areas for personal growth. Soft skills, such as leadership and critical thinking, go hand in hand with the technical requirements of the acquisition workforce and are vital to becoming an effective acquisition professional.

As a member of the acquisition workforce, it is your responsibility to develop the skills necessary to benefit the Soldier. Gone are the days that mandated years of preparation before taking any action. It is our individual responsibility to evolve, adapt and anticipate the future needs of service members. I encourage you to consider how you can build these soft skills through a combination of our formal training offerings and opportunities for growth throughout your day-to-day work.

For example, the DACM Office offers specialized programs, such as Inspiring and Developing Excellence in Acquisition Leaders and Leadership Excellence and Acquisition Development, that give our emerging civilian leaders the opportunity to take part in programs that are geared towards enhancing the leadership acumen of the Army’s civilian acquisition

workforce. For acquisition professionals that have not yet held supervisor roles, these programs are a great way to hone your skills in a formal setting and prepare you for future leadership opportunities.

Critical thinking skills grow your ability to problem-solve, embrace changing authorities and adapt to very volatile and complex environments that may make new demands and require new and novel approaches. As acquisition professionals, the ability to assess risk and make informed decisions is essential to sustaining an efficient workforce. Over time, every challenge we face gives us more tools and key learning to succeed in the future.

Programs and classes serve the workforce well in offering formal leadership development opportunities, but much of our growth in leadership and critical thinking comes from hands-on work and experience over time. Taking individual responsibility and identifying the soft skills that need to be nurtured is a skill in and of itself, and pursuing our own personal growth requires determination and resilience. Perseverance and a bit of an entrepreneurial spirit are enough to guide each of us to pursue greater heights. The more we cultivate these skills, the more we can ensure that our Soldiers have a unique advantage.

CONCLUSION

Achieving a sustainable enterprise requires a commitment to targeted learning and self-development that helps accelerate our capabilities to support the modern-day Soldier. Ensuring that they have the technology and tools needed to respond to threats and world events is essential. As a valued acquisition member, our office will continue to provide you with the necessary opportunities to prosper and cultivate the skills needed in the workforce.

Take that moment to reflect on the skills you'd most like to nurture and consider the many avenues that can help you achieve your goals. Use the programs and tools our office offers to plot your personal path to success. Together, we can continue to build the current and committed acquisition workforce that the warfighter deserves. 🙌🙌



DIGITAL-FIRST FUTURE

Young Bang, principal deputy assistant secretary for the Army for acquisition, logistics and technology, discusses the roles and risks of artificial intelligence at the annual South by Southwest Conference held on March 12, 2024, in Austin, Texas. Fostering a digital-first culture is vital to our investment in acquisition workforce upskilling, allowing us to keep an advantage over our adversaries. (Photo by Austin Thomas, Army Futures Command)



IT'S ALL IN THE DELIVERY

Jeffrey Vargas, president and CEO of Generationology LLC, presents during the Defense Acquisition Leadership Certificate Course on effective communications on February 21, 2024, at White Sands Missile Range, New Mexico. Programs and classes serve the workforce well in offering formal leadership development opportunities. (Photo by Vanessa Flores, White Sands Missile Range Public Affairs)