



ACQUISITION INNOVATION
RESEARCH CENTER

Quarterly Research Forums - Acquisition Innovation Research Center and the Defense Acquisition University

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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SPONSOR:

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As part of the Systems Engineering Research Center's (SERC) ongoing relationship with the Defense Acquisition University (DAU) and the newly codified statutory requirement for acquisition workforce educational partnerships (10 U.S. Code 1746a(a)(1)), DAU is seeking an explicit Quarterly Research Forum (QRF) for engaging relevant experts from academia with the leadership and faculty of DAU. This engagement is bidirectional to (i) make DAU faculty and the Defense Acquisition Workforce aware of relevant research in the multi-university Acquisition Innovation Research Center (AIRC) partnership, and (ii) engage academia experts on DAU's strategic curricula initiatives and challenges, informing the assessment and modification of DAU curricula to enhance the capabilities of DAU to support educational, training, and research activities in support of acquisition missions of the Department of Defense (DoD).

In the QRFs, AIRC researchers presented relevant research and received feedback from faculty and practitioners in the field, while also providing DAU with expert views on its curricula initiatives and challenges. To provide consistent engagement, AIRC established a small team of leading academia experts from broad disciplines such as law, policy, business, management, education, engineering, and data science that relate to the breadth of acquisition functions. AIRC worked closely with the sponsor on the agenda for each QRF. As appropriate, the QRFs included presentations, discussions, and question and answer (Q&A) sessions on research, strategic educational challenges, initiatives, current curricula, and training opportunities. All QRFs were held virtually with continuous learning points (CLPs) provided.

These quarterly engagements were so well received by the defense acquisition community that DAU is contracting with AIRC to collaborate on an additional set of briefings in the 2023-2024 academic year focused on Mega-Projects. This area of future research effort focuses on data visualization, artificial intelligence (AI), and machine learning (ML), as well as other topics to aid in the management of large DoD programs. The Virginia Tech National Research Center, as a member of AIRC, conducted a series of brainstorming sessions with its research faculty to develop ideas for content and focus in the upcoming academic year. Several ideas surfaced and four specific focus topic recommendations were made to enable a continued strong set of forum discussions with DAU in the coming year.

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