



# From the Deputy Executive Editor

The opening words of one of Thomas Paine's essays captured the spirit that guided the founders of a fledgling nation as they resolved challenges they faced in 1776.

These are the times that try men's souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of their country; but he that stands by it now, deserves the love of man and woman. (Paine, 1776, p. 1)

Ironically, these words hold true for contemporary acquisition professionals. To garner the best possible return on public treasure invested, acquisition professionals must continually strive to deliver cost-effective systems and services that meet users' needs. The challenges inherent in achieving that outcome become more difficult whenever defense budgets contract, as they do on a cyclical basis. The word 'crisis' seems appropriate when shrinking budgets are squeezed further with the uncertainties of continuing resolution and sequestration.

The Defense Acquisition University Alumni Association Hirsch Research Paper Competition for 2013 reflected the idea that workforce members must learn new skills, tools, and ideas to face the challenges they encounter. The theme for this year's competition was: "Improving the Defense Acquisition Workforce in the Age of Austerity."

The first article in this issue is the winning paper in that competition. Winning authors Col Robert L. Tremaine, USAF (Ret.), and Donna J. Seligman, in "Learning Organizations: Their Importance to Systems Acquisition in DoD," conducted research to highlight how proven learning methods can be brought to bear in government organizations. The remaining articles in this issue illustrate that identifying tried and innovative best practices provides members of the workforce with the tools and ideas they need to tackle challenges they face.

Two of the articles were presented as papers at a research symposium hosted at DAU's Fort Belvoir campus last fall (September 18-19, 2012) under the conference theme "Limits of Competition." Ginny Wydler teamed with two of her colleagues (Su Chang and Erin M. Schultz) to explore various options for maintaining the benefits of "Continuous

Competition as an Approach to Maximize Performance,” including multisourcing with distributed awards. Also James Bradshaw and Su Chang (appearing twice as a coauthor in this issue), in “Past Performance as an Indicator of Future Performance: Selecting an Industry Partner to Maximize the Probability of Program Success,” emphasized the importance of evaluating contractors’ past efforts and key personnel during source selection.

COL Robert D. Morig, USA (Ret.), addressed a topic that is particularly relevant in view of current events. His survey of financial management practitioners provided insight into the factors that enable or detract from achieving funding stability. His conclusions, in “Acquisition Program Funding Stability—A Myth,” might surprise you. Patrick R. Cantwell, together with coauthors Shahram Sarkani and Thomas A. Mazzuchi from The George Washington University faculty, offers a system dynamic model in “Dynamic Consequences of Cost, Schedule, and Performance Within DoD Project Management,” which examines the interaction among cost, schedule, and performance to predict project behavior and develop control strategies for given situations.

Collectively, these articles reflect the purpose of acquisition research—providing empirical knowledge that supports practitioners in managing and executing their programs effectively. Particularly in an austere age, we can all heed words that also appeared in Paine’s essay: “The present winter is worth an age, if rightly employed.” As acquisition practitioners, we must not “lose or neglect the opportunity” presented by austere times to experiment and generate knowledge that will help us make more effective use of the constrained resources available. In that spirit, I hope you will enjoy the offerings in this issue.



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## Reference

Paine, T. (1776). *The American crisis* (No. 1) [Pamphlet]. Retrieved from <http://libertyonline.hypermall.com/Paine/Crisis/Crisis-TOC.html>