

## **Defense Acquisition University Symposium Focuses on Cost Issues**

FORT BELVOIR, VA—Affordability was at the forefront of conversation Tuesday, April 12, at the 2011 Defense Acquisition University (DAU) Acquisition Community Symposium. Leaders from the DOD acquisition workforce expounded on the call from Dr. Ashton B. Carter, Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics, to do more without more.

“We’ve got to find more ways to improve our buying power,” Shay Assad, Director for Defense Procurement and Acquisition Policy and Strategic Sourcing, said during his keynote address.

With budgetary issues a matter of priority—and coming on the heels of a near government shutdown over budget disagreements—the speakers offered advice to the nearly 950 industry and government representatives in attendance on how to streamline for efficiencies and get the best return on investment for the American taxpayer and warfighter.

“I am here today to engage with industry. Let’s talk about what your problems are and what we can do with you. The bottom line is to support the Soldiers in the Army,” said Dr. Malcolm Ross O’Neill, Assistant Secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Logistics, and Technology.

O’Neill participated in a panel discussion moderated by Assad that included James Thomsen, Principal Civilian Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Research, Development, and Acquisition, and David Van Buren, Air Force Service Acquisition Executive.

Christine Fox, Director of Cost Assessment and Program Evaluation in the Office of the Secretary of Defense, also spoke about senior leadership’s perspective on efficiency initiatives.

“We need to look at our culture from the perspective of incentives and disincentives,” Fox said. “We aren’t going to change culture by just telling people to change. We have to look fundamentally at how we set our systems up and what behaviors we are incentivizing and what behaviors we are not. We can’t do this without your help.”

In addition to the speakers’ presentations to the general audience, the symposium also included afternoon breakout sessions. The sessions covered a variety of acquisition topics, including improving competition, improving tradecraft in services acquisition, and reducing nonproductive processes and bureaucracy.

The symposium was sponsored by the DAU Alumni Association.