



# THE CULTURAL CHANGE REQUIRED FOR RAPID DEFENSE ACQUISITIONS

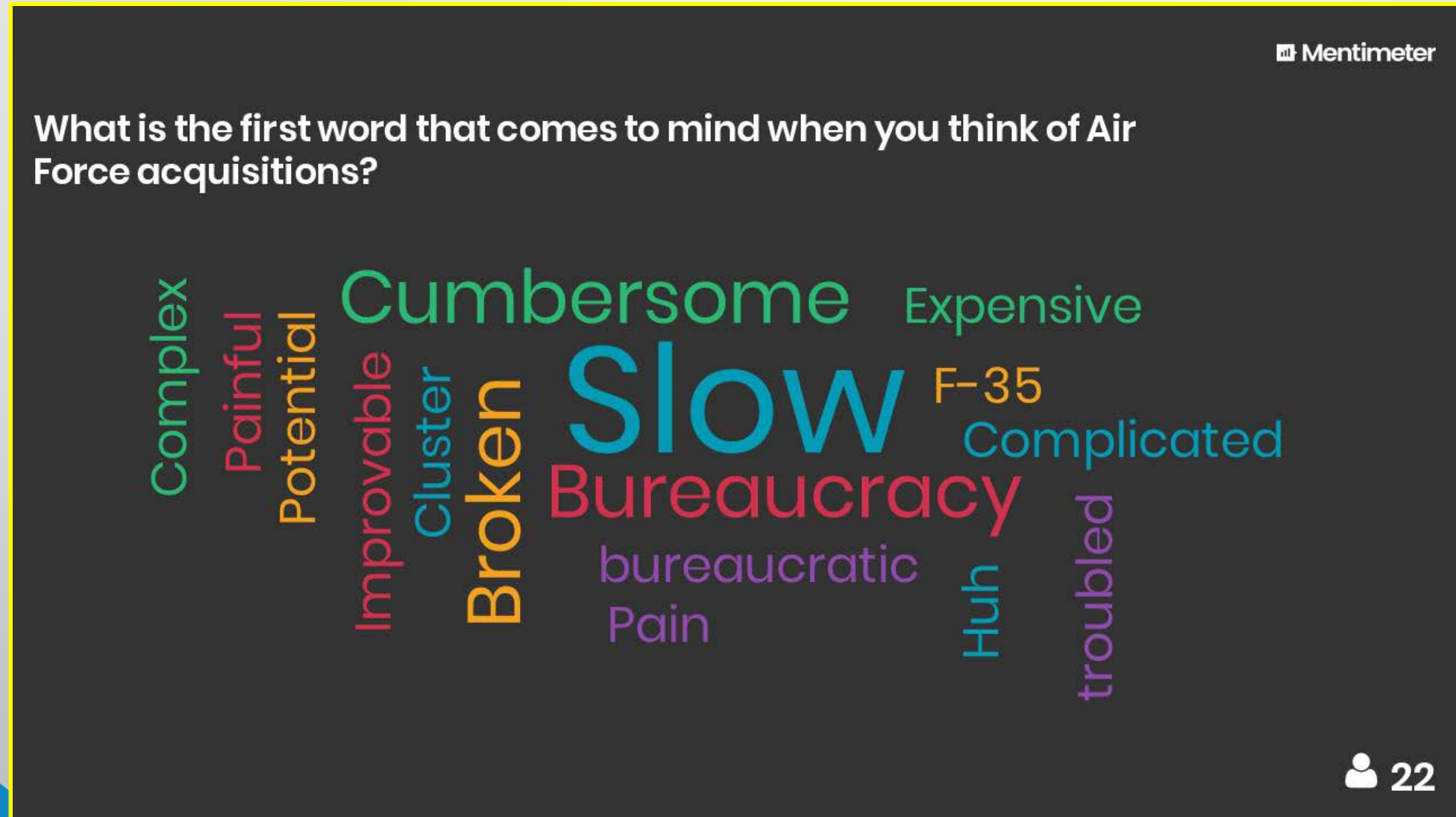
*"...The acquisition process is **too slow**, overcautious, inflexible, overregulated, unstable, driven by the quest for performance at the expense of high costs, and far too different from the commercial world"*


*- Jacques Gansler, 1991*

Chad Millette, Lt Col, USAF (ret.), PMP  
KBR Government Solutions - US  
AFIT School of Systems & Logistics



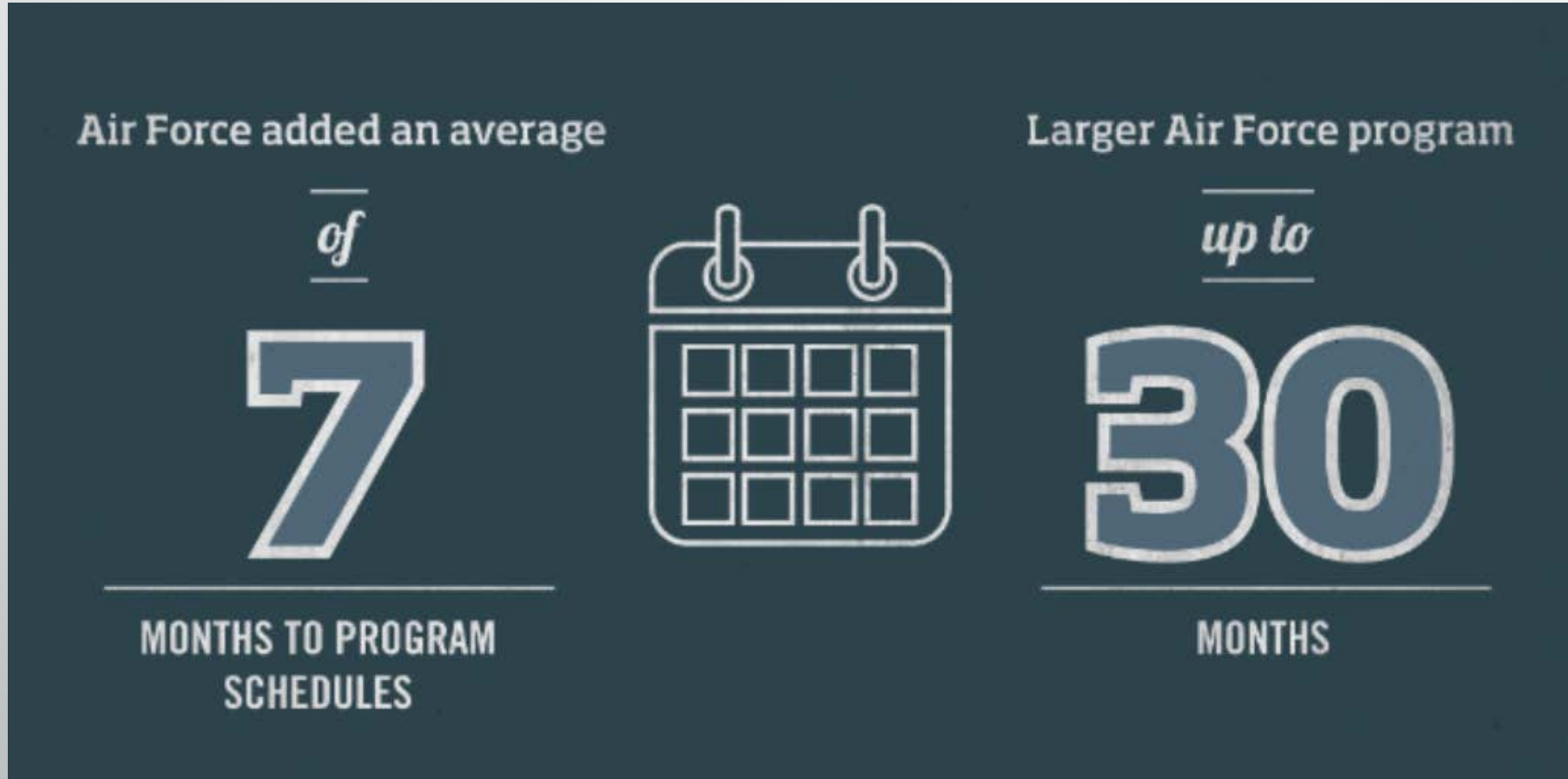
We asked 22 AWC / ACSC students & Faculty;  
top answers on the board...





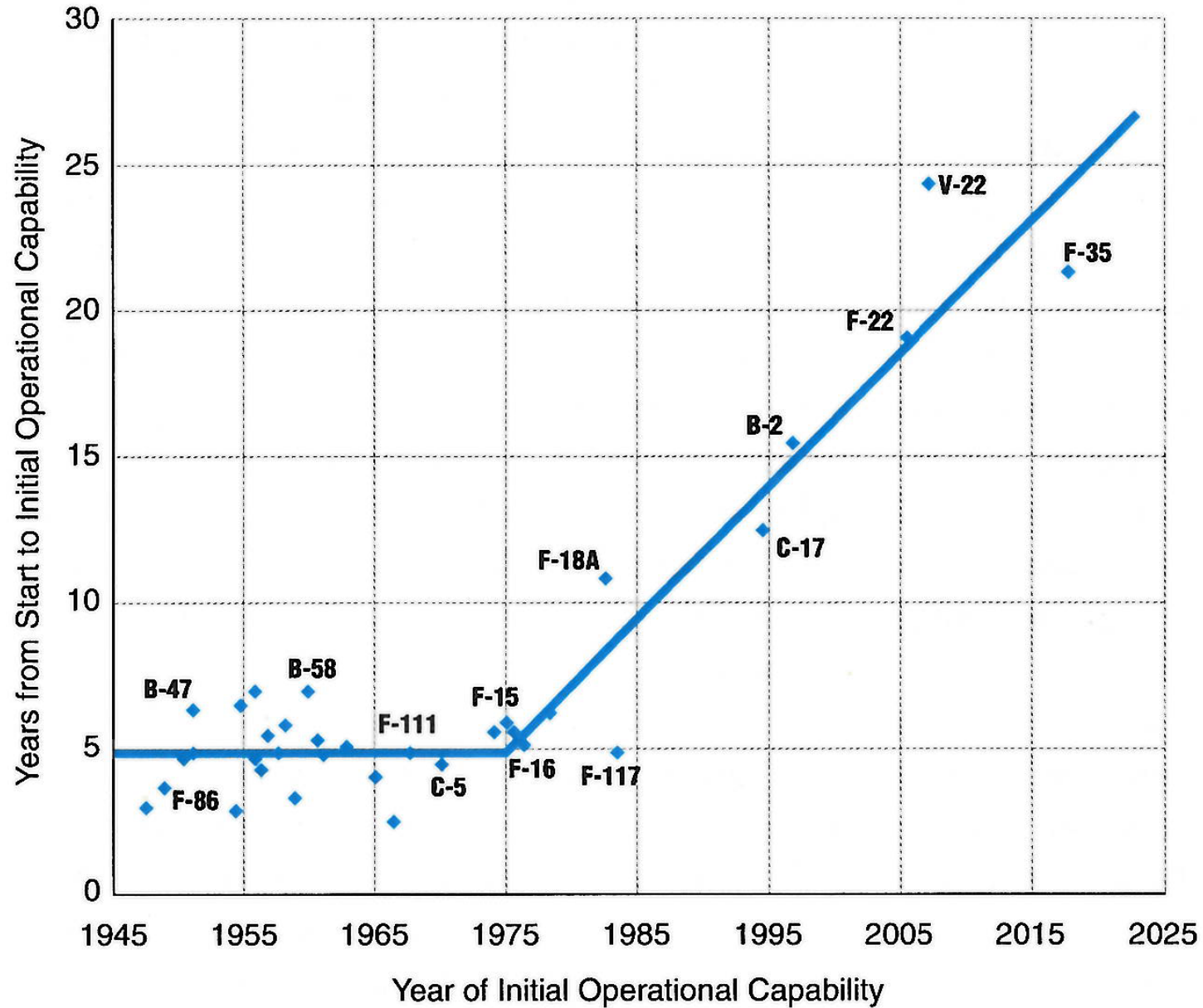
# Indicators of poor schedule performance for Air Force acquisition programs...

# Air Force Schedule Performance - 2012



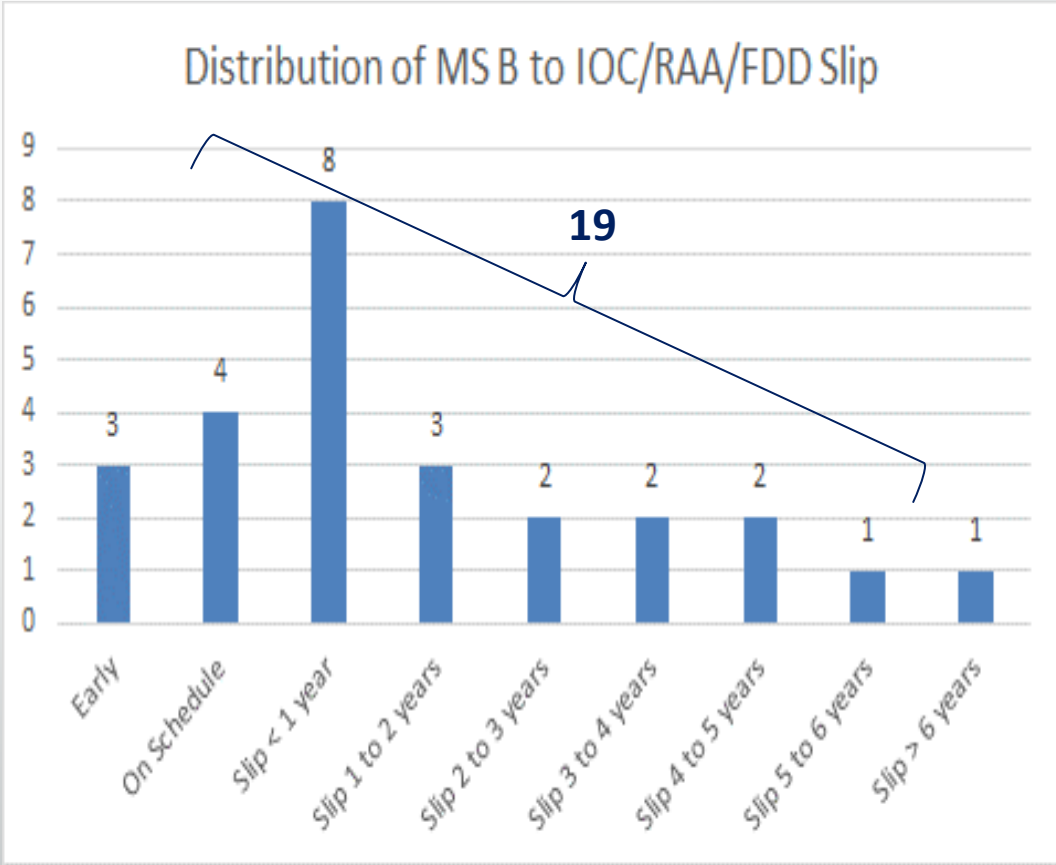
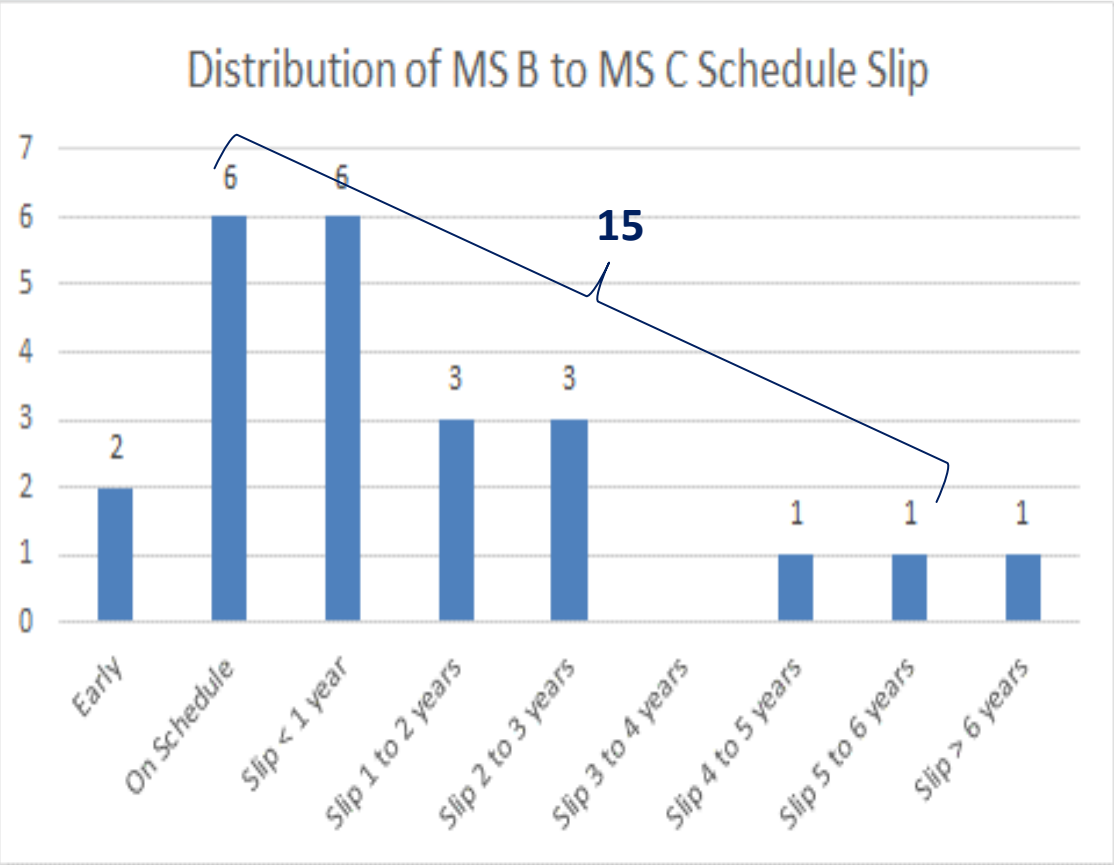
Slip in schedule between Milestone B and C

**Figure 1: Time from program start to Initial Operational Capability (IOC) for select aircraft procurement efforts**



# FY16 Air Force ACAT I Cycle Time Growth

Number of Programs

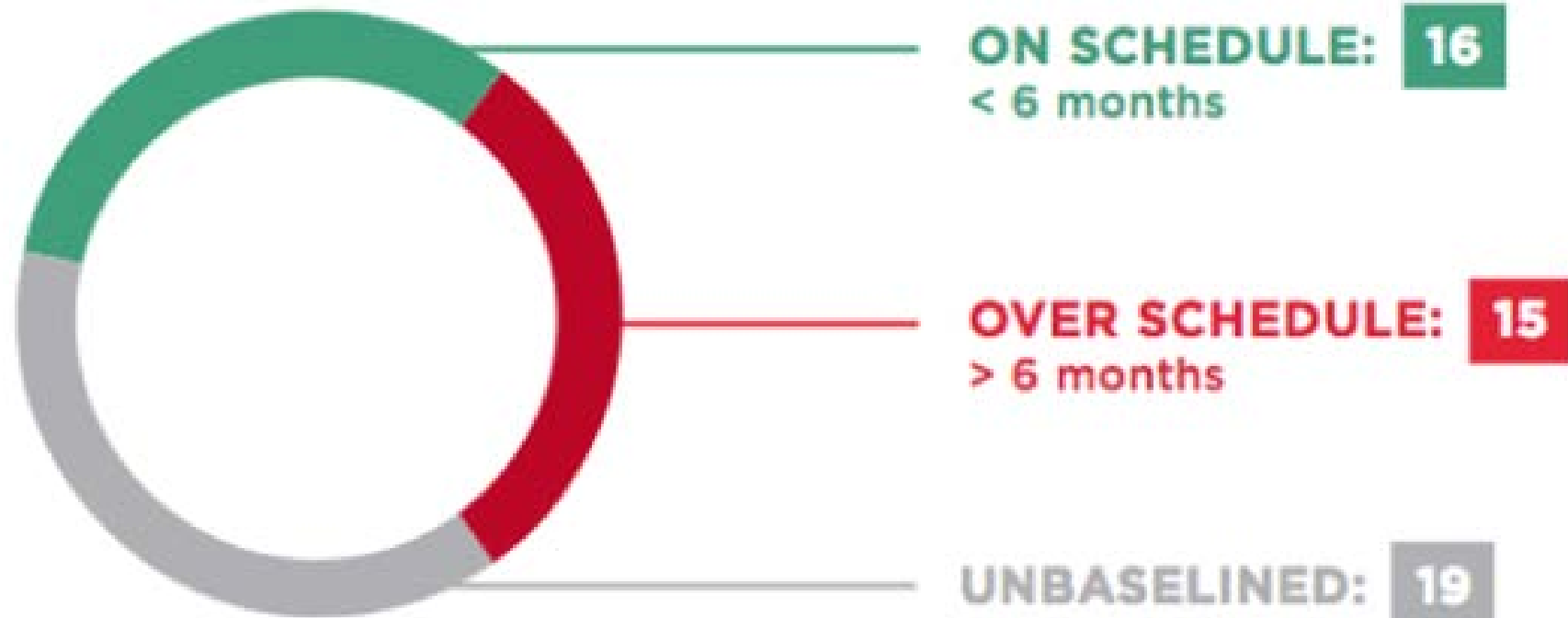


Source: SAF/AQX Performance of the Enterprise

IOC – Initial Operational Capability  
 RAA – Required Assets Available  
 FDD – Full Deployment Decision

# 2018 Report on 'how we're doing'

## ACAT I - SCHEDULE PERFORMANCE ORIGINAL BASELINE



# AWC / ACSC Student Research

- 18 case studies of organizations / programs / tools associated with rapid acquisition

Organizations Dedicated to Rapid Acquisition		Innovative Organizations	Program Offices Executing Rapid Acquisition Efforts
Air Force Rapid Capabilities Office (RCO)	Defense Digital Service (DDS)	Defense Innovation Unit Experimental (DIUx)	Stryker Infantry Combat Vehicle
Big Safari & the MC-12 Liberty program	Prototype Integration Facility (PIF)	AFWERx	F-16 AESA JUON
US Special Operations Command (SOCOM)	US Army Rapid Equipping Force (REF)		AC-130W Stinger II
Strategic Capabilities Office (SCO)	SpaceX		Squad Multi-Purpose Equipment Transport (SMET)
Joint Rapid Acquisition Cell (JRAC)			Light Attack Aircraft Experiment (OA-X)







# #1 Common Characteristic: Personnel Management

- 10 of the 17 organizations investigated had the ability to 'hand pick' their personnel
  - Program offices acquiring predominantly classified systems (i.e. RCO, Big Safari) make use of Green Door assignment process
  - DSS hires people at the GS-15 pay grade
  - SpaceX certainly hires who they think is the best fit

What are the implications for the rest of us?

Can this be abstracted from these rapid organizations into 'standard' program offices?



# Overall, 24 characteristics

- Some are unique to these rapid organizations and can not be incorporated into 'standard' program offices
- Many are already available and in use in 'standard' program offices
- Some are (somewhat) easily incorporated into 'standard' program offices (at least theoretically)
  - Barriers to incorporation are cultural

# Characteristics Unique to Rapid Acquisition Organizations

- Not having to wait on paperwork / Having a 'get out of competition' free card (SpaceX, Big Safari, AC-130W, & F-16 JUON)
- Unique (or other than JCIDS) requirements process (SOCOM, REF)
- Dedicated contracting group (PIF, RCO)
- Title X authority (SOCOM)
- Private company with a genius leader (SpaceX)
- Long-term relationships with contractors (Big Safari)

# Already available to program offices

- Contract vehicles: IDIQ, OTA, UCA, BAA
- Tightly coupled operators and acquirers
- Using COTS solutions
- Concurrency in development, testing, and fielding (F-35 anyone?)
- Co-location
- Incremental funding
- Program office tax exemption
- 'Alpha contracting'

# Cultural changes that ~~can~~ be made

SHOULD

*Not our current  
monolithic program  
offices*

*PM reports to the PEO and not  
responsible to other  
functionals*

**Small hand-picked teams in a flat organization taking intelligent risks led by an empowered PM to deliver the minimum viable product**

*Not the 100% solution;  
incrementally delivering  
capability*

# Acquisition Culture

*"Decisions on matters that have never been previously reviewed are being withheld for inordinate lengths of time.... If we are to be held to this overly conservative approach, I fear the timid will replace the bold and we will not be able to provide the advanced weapons the future of the nation demands."* - Gen Bernard Schriever in a memo to CSAF Gen LeMay 14 May 1962

*"The current risk-averse culture, along with the gap in technical engineering expertise within Air Force acquisition programs hinders program managers from making informed, timely, and independent decisions. This culture is negatively impacting programs and is a driver of rising costs and protracted schedules."* - Owing the Tech Baseline Report 2016

**50 years later, Gen Schriever's fears are still valid...**



# CULTURE – “THE ORGANIZATION’S IMMUNE SYSTEM”

