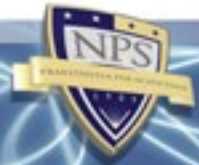


# Plenary Panel #17: DoD Acquisition Research

## *Historical Perspectives*

Keith Snider  
Graduate School of Defense Management  
Naval Postgraduate School  
Monterey, CA



# Acquisition Research – Some History

## U.S. Defense Acquisition Research Initiatives

Organization/Event	Year Established
Army Procurement Research Office	1969
Procurement Research Coordinating Committee	1971
Annual Federal Acquisition Research Symposium	1972
Air Force Business Research Management Center	1973
Federal Acquisition Institute	1977
Naval Center for Acquisition Research	1977

Long-standing recognition:

- That acquisition research lacks
  - quantity (few researchers devote attention to it), and
  - quality (the little work that is done is questionable in terms of methods, data, and rigor)
- Of the potential resource represented by university scholars

(Babione, 1975, Roback, 1975; Strayer & Lockwood, 1976; Martin et al., 1978)



# Acquisition Research – Some Initiatives

External Acquisition Research Program (NPS) - 1999-2001

- USD(AT&L) Gansler sponsored
- 15 university research contracts
- Terminated in 2001 for budgetary reasons

Unsuccessful “Special Issue” calls

- Acquisition Research Journal (DAU) - 1999
- Journal of Public Procurement (FAU/NIGP) – 2012

*International Journal of Defense Acquisition Management*

- Initiated in 2008 - joint effort by Cranfield University (UK) and NPS
- Ended operations in 2014 due to lack of submissions



# Acquisition – Why a Lack of Academic Interest?

No single “Acquisition” discipline with theoretical/conceptual foundation

Multiple and diverse reference disciplines – Engineering, Economics, Public Administration, Political Science, Business, etc.

No civilian university with Acquisition concentrations

Few university faculty with interest in Acquisition  
Academics beget academics

Lack of incentives for academics

Few publication opportunities  
Few grants sources  
Lack of data

Acquisition as a public sector function

Politics - “Who gets what, when, and how” (Lasswell, 1936)  
Public and private management are fundamentally alike in all unimportant respects. (Sayre, 1958)

Acquisition as a military function

Locus in the military services  
Predominance of military officers in key positions

Most research needs met by FFRDCs, nonprofit, and for-profit organizations



# Acquisition Research Program at NPS - 2003

Purpose - Increase quantity and quality of scholarly research in acquisition

Means – Present acquisition as a fertile and worthwhile research area

## Activities

- Dedicated staff – Chair, PM, PI
- Active sponsor engagement - \$\$ and topics
- External and internal grants
- Enabling access to data
- Connecting researchers with policy-makers and practitioners
  - Annual Acquisition Research Symposium
  - Repository of products (now Defense Acquisition Innovation Repository (DAIR))



# The need for a focused program of research in defense acquisition

Noting:

- (1) The large resource investments consumed by military procurement;
- (2) Recurring problems of cost overruns, schedule delays, and performance shortfalls, despite numerous reform initiatives;
- (3) The rapidly changing political, technological, and economic aspects of the world's defense environment; and
- (4) The relative lack of scholarly research devoted to these topics

Gansler and Lucyshyn called for a “disciplined basic and applied research program [as] the only proven way to develop new theories and then use them to solve specific, practical questions within [the defense acquisition] knowledge domain.”

Gansler, J. S., & Lucyshyn, W. (2005). *A Strategy for Defense Acquisition Research*. College Park, MD: University of Maryland, School of Public Policy, Center for Public Policy and Private Enterprise, 6.



# OSD-sponsored Research Program - 2006

Approved by USD(AT&L) Ken Krieg

- His comments during the decision briefing (attended by all the Service Acquisition Executives)
  - “I don’t want us to tell them (researchers) what to work on; I want them to tell us what we should be doing.”
  - “They (researchers) can only conduct the research and recommend improvements; implementation is up to us.”
- Funded by OUSD(AT&L); managed by NPS ARP
- Annual Broad Agency Announcement
- Proposals reviewed and scored by committee of reps from Services, OSD, DAU, NPS
- Awards ~ \$100K; 12-month period of performance
- FY2009 awards (\$1.75M total) to:

Iowa State  
Willamette  
Univ of Colorado  
Stevens Institute

Syracuse  
NPS  
Purdue  
UC-Irvine

Ohio State  
Univ of Maryland  
Georgia Tech



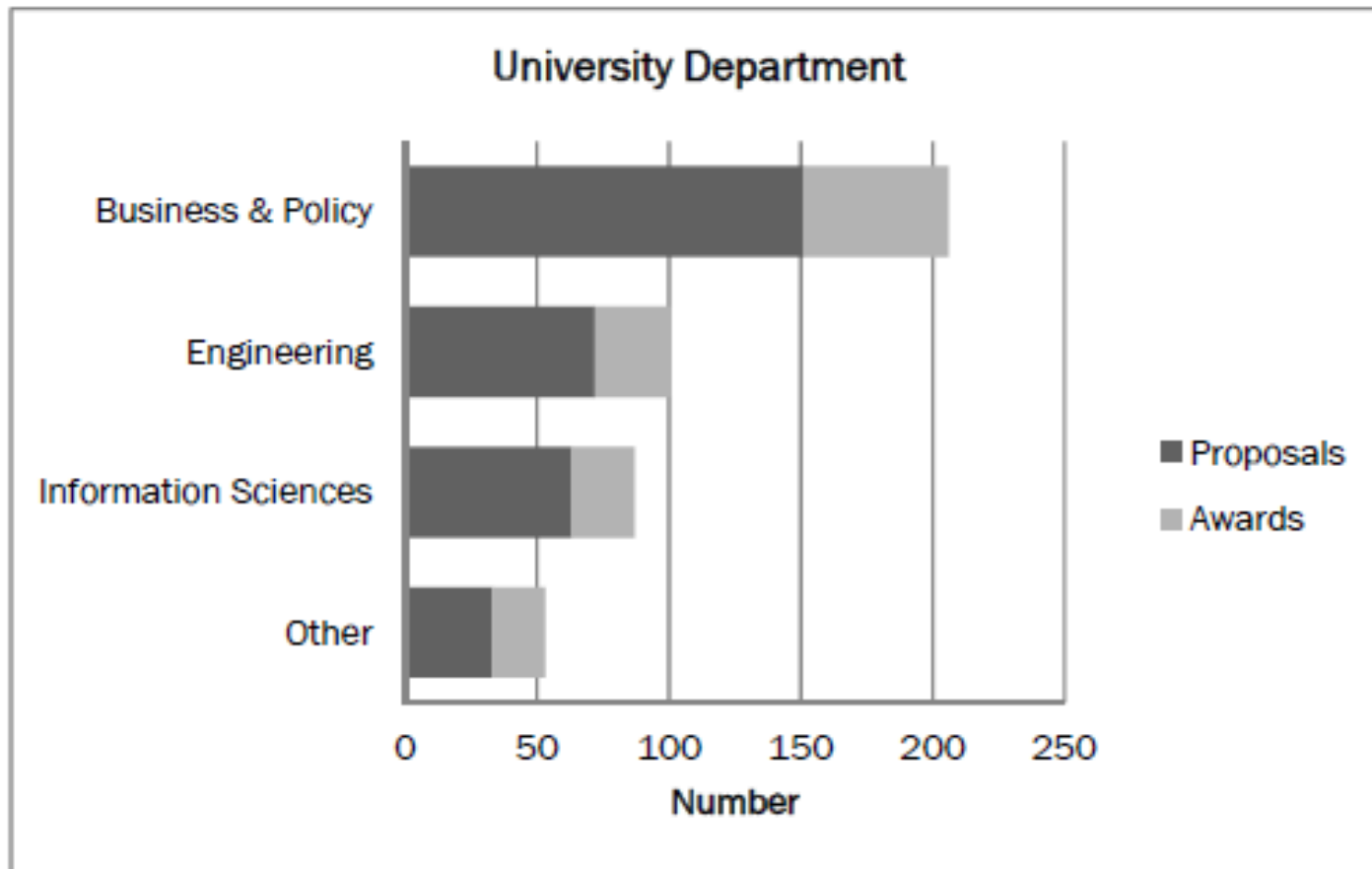
# OUSD Grants Program – 2007 to present

Naval Postgraduate School	59
University of Maryland	34
Center for Strategic and International Studies	22
Stevens Institute of Technology	12
Purdue University	11
University of California - Irvine	10
Massachusetts Institute of Technology	8
Air Force Institute of Technology	6
Carnegie Mellon University	5
University of Oklahoma	5
University of Colorado	5
University of North Carolina at Charlotte	5
The Ohio State University	4
Texas A&M University	4
University of Arizona	4
University of California - San Diego	3
Virginia Tech	3
Six Universities with 2	12
Ten Universities with 1	10
33 Research Institutions	222 awards





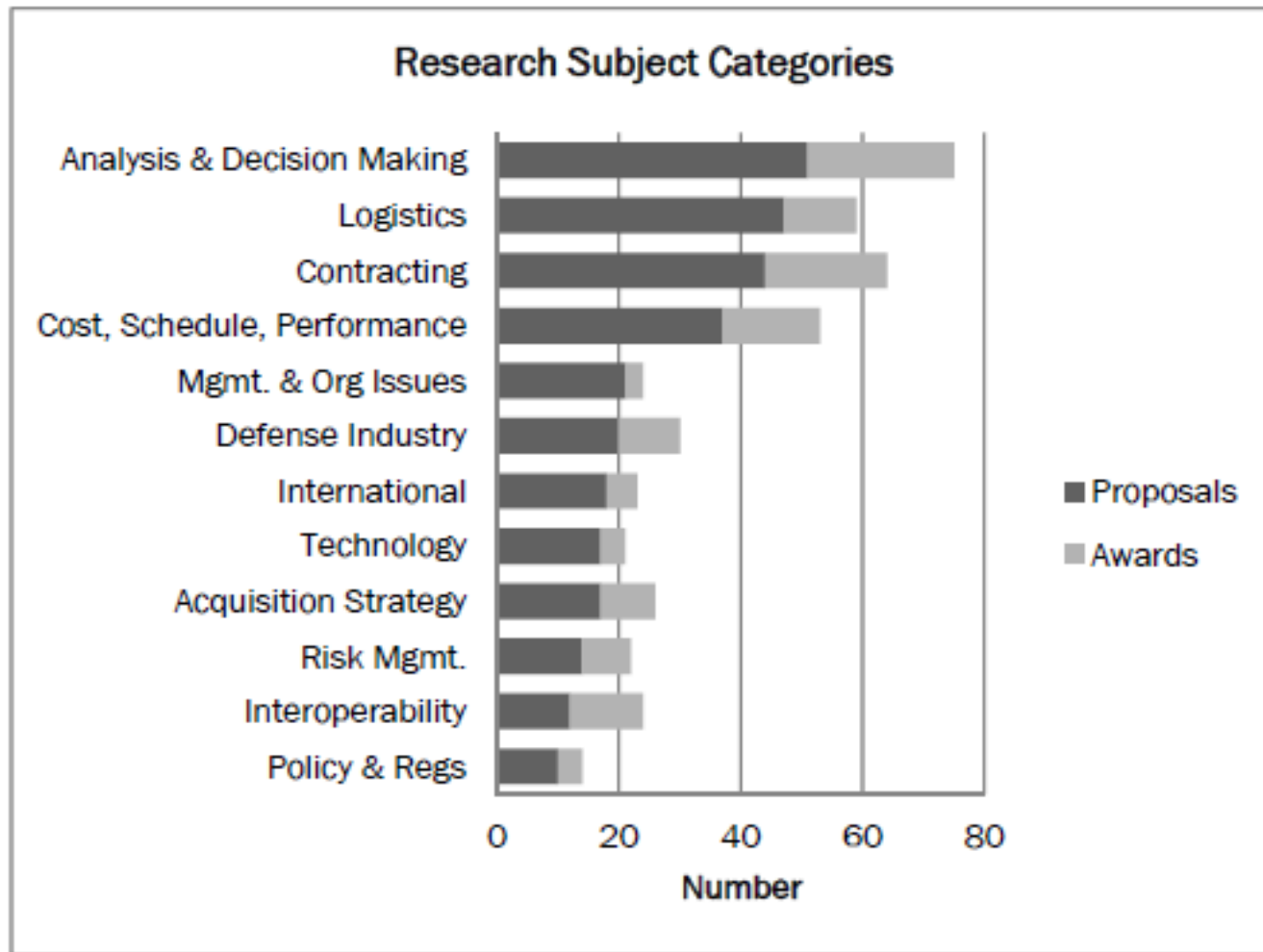
## University Department of Lead Researchers (Including both Universities and Defense Universities 2007-2013)



Shaffer & Snider, 2014

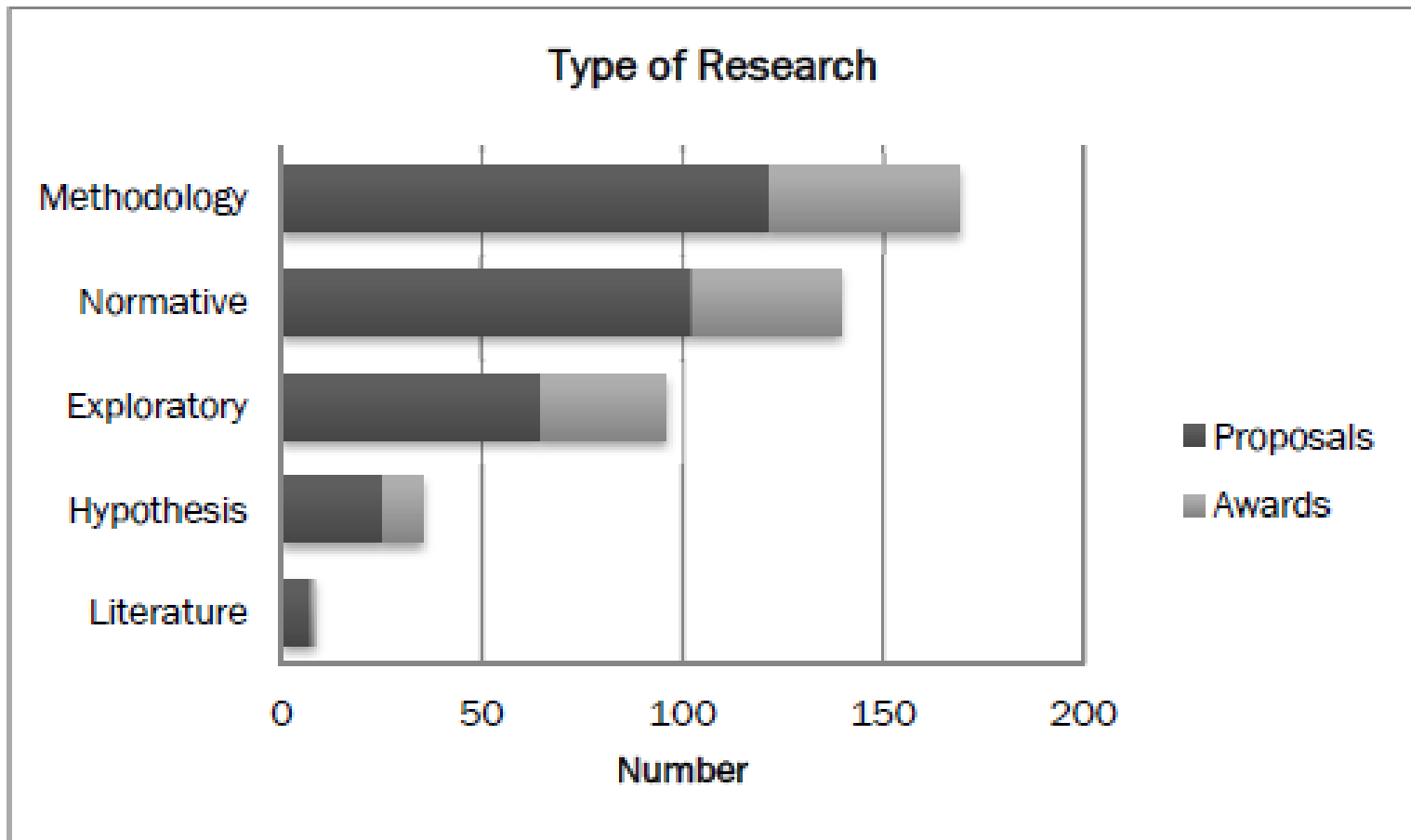


## Proposals and Awards by Research Subject Categories Proposed 2007-2013.



Shaffer & Snider, 2014

## Proposals and Awards by Type of Research Proposed 2007–2013.



Shaffer & Snider, 2014



## Concluding thought

In 1908, William Allen of the then-newly founded Bureau of Municipal Research issued a call in *Journal of Accountancy* for “1,000 accountants for municipal research.” Reflecting the Progressive Era’s focus on domestic reform after the closing of the American frontier, Allen wrote:

*“Only a pessimist will believe that the day is past for the pioneer. It is true that America has been discovered and that the law of diminishing returns long since began to operate in the gold fields of California, the wheat fields of the Northwest and the oil wells of Pennsylvania. It is also true that there is less opportunity today than ever before for adventure of the story book type. But to young men [sic] capable of thrilling with excitement when confronted with new problems to solve and new ideas to work out, I wish seriously to recommend a substitute for the North Pole – the unexploited field of municipal accounting and municipal business.”*

## Acquisition Research – A new frontier!

