Commentary: Settled Science?

By: Neil Markee
Editor in Chief-Purchasing Link

Sitting in a doctor's refrigerated waiting room, I picked up a tattered and, by then, only partial copy of the January 2014 issue of Scientific American, which, apparently, another patient had left behind. A college classmate and fraternity brother of mine had been the editor of this well-regarded publication at one time and, although I wasn't a subscriber, I had become an occasional reader, buying a copy whenever a cover story caught my eye. This time, the article was under the heading History of Science, authored by Dennis Danielson and Christopher M. Graney and titled, "The Case Against Copernicus."

You probably know the story of how the astronomer Copernicus (1473-1543) and, later, the telescope-building Galileo (1564-1642) were not able to sell their scientific findings to the religious leaders of the day—who saw their theories as heresy. Heresy was, of course, a much more dangerous word to be attached to your name at the time than the oblique complement it usually is now. True to its title, the article was about the seemingly sound basis for rejection by both of the day's scientific community, as well as the clergy. "Copernicus's theory that the earth traveled around the sun unpended more than a millennium's worth of well-respected scientific and religious wisdom. Their theories were not supported by many of the best scientific minds of the time.

The article mentions a few scientific assumptions of the Einstein era that have proven not to be completely accurate and asks, "Now imagine ourselves four centuries from now, in a future in which Einstein's ideas have been supplanted; scientists have long ago experimentally confirmed that neutrinos really can travel faster than light. How would we, then, looking back on physicists of today, construe their reluctance to accept the evidence? Would we conclude that 21st-century physicists were just set in their ways? Unreceptive to new ideas? Maybe motivated by nonscientific considerations—a bunch of closed-minded Einsteins toeing a line dictated by tradition and authority."

What has all this got to do with purchasing in support of higher education in the first quarter of the 21st century? Climate change—and what to do about—it is the link. A few years ago, understandably impatient folks concerned with what they saw as a lack of action to address...
climate-change issues called for an end to discussion and study and the implementation of concrete steps to work toward a solution, while there was still time. They saw the sand running out and called for action based on what was referred to as "settled science." Since then, we have learned more about both the science of the problem and what is politically possible. Models have been altered or refined, and I hope we have adjusted our plans on how to address the challenge to reflect the ever-changing reality in both crucial areas.

A few decades earlier, during troubles in the Mideast, pundits were trying to accurately predict when the earth would run out of crude oil. There were all sorts of graphs in the media explaining the dire future implied and, at least here in the northeast, the gas shortage drove home just how serious the issues involved were or could be. I remember getting up early and driving one of our cars to get in line to buy ten gallons of fuel while my wife dressed and got ready to go to her job teaching school. When she was ready she would drive to where I was waiting in line and we would swap cars and I would drive to the office. When the next odd- or even-numbered day came up, we'd do it again, along with many others. I bought the scientific conventional wisdom at the time and really thought the earth was running out of the crude oil needed to make motor fuel. Even earlier, I recall reading convincing articles in popular magazines about the coming ice age.

Come fall regional meeting time, NAEB board member Earl Newland, the chief procurement officer at Baylor University in Waco, Texas, and I were separately making plans to attend two of the same meetings. One was in the upstate New York area and the other was on the gulf coast of Louisiana. I was planning to avoid driving at all costs. Earl, on the other hand, said he was planning to drive from Waco to New York and then back to Louisiana before heading home, and he invited me along. I didn't want to impugn my friend's sanity but I did ask, "What about the gas shortage?" As I recall, he said his pickup held more than 100 gallons and, besides, he hadn't seen much of a gas shortage in his part of the country. We went on the trip and I saw no fuel problems until I flew back to New York. The limo driver who took me home from LGA waited overnight for our gas station to open to get enough fuel to head back to his base sixty miles or so West. He was at the head of the line the next morning.

Currently, we have a growing surplus of available crude, and nobody is predicting we are about to run out any time soon. The pundits of the coming fuel shortage era were wrong because their data on available supply and their understanding of the geology/technology involved was incomplete. I didn't imagine the gas shortage in the New York metro area. It was real but, from where I stood, I could not see enough of the overall situation to know it wasn't nationwide. Today, some of those concerned with climate change see the abundance of relatively cheap oil and natural gas as part of the problem. It didn't take four hundred years to bring about a change in thinking.

Growing up, I lived not far from what had been a large TB sanitarium. Readily available, effective treatment, unforeseen when they built the solid brick buildings in Long Island's pine barrens, brought about unexpected change and obsoleted long-term projections. Suffolk County Community College now occupies the site. One of the large hospitals in the town where I live now once specialized in treating and providing long-term care for polio patients. I recall rooms full of young people in iron lungs and the dedicated nurses who provided care. But then came the vaccines and now the hospital has been repurposed.

Another article in the same issue of Scientific American magazine pointed out that previous transitions from one source of fuel to another on a large scale had taken decades each time. The article by Vaclav Smil carried the subhead, "The great hope for a quick and sweeping transition to renewable energy is wishful thinking." According to the article, it had taken roughly fifty years, beginning in 1840, for coal, beginning at 5 percent, to supplant wood and provide 50 percent of the world's energy. The nineteenth century was effectively powered by wood and cereal straw, according to the article, and the twentieth century was powered by coal. Starting in 1915, with the availability of crude in industrial quantities, it took oil roughly forty years for the fuel to account for 40 percent of the energy produced and oil surpassed coal in 1964. And it has taken natural gas, beginning in 1930, sixty years to reach 25 percent of the total energy produced. All the while, overall energy demand and production increased and coal still powers the generation of one third.

The author notes that currently traditional renewables are providing about 9.39 percent of the total energy, with hydro power accounting for about two thirds of the total. "New" renewables such as wind, solar and liquid biofuels provide about 3.25 percent. The article notes that growth in the renewable sector will have to come from those sources as, in most industrialized nations, traditional sources such as hydro have all but reached their potential. The author argues that—barring the development of safe, inexpensive, nuclear power, or an inexpensive way to store vast amounts of solar- or wind-generated power—any shift in major sources of energy is likely to take decades.

We seem to be running out of short-term solutions. Experience indicates relying on "settled science" may not be advisable long-term. But we must make decisions based on the best information available at the time when we think action is called for, even at the possible cost of looking a bit foolish at some point in the future. If you find yourself not absolutely sure what action to take at some point, your uncertainty may be well-founded. With that in mind, prudence suggests we seek long-term approaches and ways to contribute to the solution, while keeping a weather eye on the horizon for evidence of a breakthrough or an investment opportunity that could change the equation.
Both articles are worth your time. I suspect your library can provide copies. We may revisit other aspects of what was discussed in both articles next month. As they say, Stay tuned!

What's happening on your campus?

From the President: School is Back in Session—Is Your Toolbox Stocked?

Lisa Deal, C. P. M.
University of Florida
NAEP President 2015-2016

Are you ready for the fall season? Students are returning to campus and we are all gearing up for an exciting (and cooler) time of year. In preparation for what's coming, is your toolbox stocked? Here's a suggested list of resources and where to find them:

| One place to see and compare accessible contracts | NAeProcure* |
| Connect with national colleagues in your field to ask questions | NAEP Forum* |
| Meetings of educational procurement colleagues in your region | NAEP Regional meetings |
| Library of RFPs from other educational institutions | NAEP RFP Library* |
| Job Description library | NAEP Job Description Library* |
| Interview guides for hiring buying staff | NAEP Interview Guides* |

*requires NAEP membership

Most of the above tools require NAEP membership, so if you / your organization hasn't yet renewed your NAEP membership, now's the time. In addition to the above benefits, NAEP provides:

- Training: Institutes, Academies and webinars, either for a reduced cost or free
- Searchable Regional and National Forums for higher education professionals
- Surveys: Green Procurement and Salary Surveys, for higher education procurement
- Innovators Forum white papers on leading edge procurement practices and how to accomplish them
- Reduced registration fees for the NAEP Annual Meeting – San Antonio, May 22-25, 2016

There's no time like the present to renew your membership. Ensure you attend your Regional meetings. Best wishes!

We Are Not Alone! Collaboration Unlocks Potential

NAEP is collaborating with organizations on several projects to help procurement gain a seat at the table. A core belief of NAEP is that, working together, we can affect positive change and progress throughout higher education management. Procurement sits at a pivotal space in your institution and should be involved with senior levels of administration.

NAEP is collaborating with NACUBO on one such project that you should be aware of as you work with your chief business officer. NACUBO is currently updating the 7th edition of its core reference work for higher education management: College and University Business Administration (CUBA). Two NAEP Members contributed to this publication: Nancy Brooks from Iowa State University and Richard Taylor from the University of California Berkeley and San Francisco. We owe them our
thanks for undertaking this impressive project. If you have not yet read the procurement chapter in CUBA, visit the NACUBO website to download your complimentary copy.

Another recent collaboration was our fourth annual Innovators Forum. NAEP brought together a wide variety of thought-leaders from across higher education and private industry to share their best practices and success stories. Visit the NAEP website to download and read this engaging paper. It is complimentary for NAEP Members.

**Nominations Open for Board of Directors: November 1, 2015 Deadline**

The call for nominations for our 2016 Board of Directors is now open. NAEP is accepting nominations for the 2nd Vice President Board seat along with Board of Director representatives from District II and District V. [CLICK HERE](#) to read the criteria for nominating a candidate.

The Board of Directors is seeking candidates who are strategic thinkers and visionaries. Self-nominations are encouraged. Here is an opportunity to advance the purchasing profession and your own career. We want and need to hear from you. If you are interested in serving—or if there are any NAEP Member colleagues you would like to recommend—please contact [Cory Harms](#), NAEP Immediate Past President for 2nd Vice President nominations and your current regional or district leadership for district nominations.

Nominations are due by November 1, 2015.

**What Have YOU Heard on the Street?**

Our new Heard on the Street columnist Greg Macway is already hard at work! In these video sessions, Greg reviews some of the questions found on the NAEP National Forum. The forum posts and video links (run anywhere from 5-15 minutes) can be found here. (Note: Must be a member to view posts)

- [Heard on the Street July 28th](#)
- [Heard on the Street August 7th](#)
- [Heard on the Street August 13th](#)
- [Heard on the Street August 28th](#)

Carve out thirty minutes of your day to [watch the newest insights video](#) on the Analytic Hierarchy Process, an analytic tool for sourcing. The Analytic Hierarchy Process is an analytic tool to define needs and build consensus when you have a varied stakeholder group. AHP can be an anchor for developing your strategic sourcing process, as it has at the University of California, Berkeley and San Francisco campuses. Andrew Clark joins Greg to explain the tool and how we’ve used it.

Greg has taken over the Heard on the Street column in the [Educational Procurement Journal](#), beginning with the winter 2015 issue, as [Cory Harms](#), Iowa State University, who originated the column and authored it since 2005, retires from the Editorial Board.

**Many Opportunities Await You Backstage at NAEP**

Are you interested in being part of the production crew that keeps NAEP up and running year after year? Are you ready to get involved behind the scenes at NAEP but don’t know where to start? Here are just a few places where can try out anything from a small role to volunteering to produce or direct a meeting, an event, or a project.

Actively participate in your regional meetings by helping to organize, by presenting, by being a vendor liaison.

If you like to write, submit an article for publication in the [Educational Procurement Journal](#) or here in the [Purchasing Link](#).

Act on this opportunity immediately by networking at your own regional meeting this fall. Do more networking at the Annual Meeting this spring in San Antonio. That’s the place where you’ll have the opportunity to talk to our current board members, to listen to their visions and to offer your own.
Talk to the National Office staffers who are working at the regional and Annual Meetings to get information on how we operate. You’ll soon gravitate to the best place to utilize your talents. Want to volunteer now, click here to see what’s available.

Call for Programs 2016 Annual Meeting: Closes September 18th

As you read this, the Program Committee for NAEP’s 95th NAEP Annual Meeting in San Antonio, Texas, May 22-25, 2016, is working hard to schedule educational sessions and needs your help! Here is a unique opportunity for any of you NAEP Members to boost your leadership profile by passing on the specific expertise you’ve gathered in your own purchasing career. Share your knowledge and experience by making a presentation at the Meeting and you will become a valuable player—an educator, a mentor, a resource—in the educational procurement field. Session Tracks: for full descriptions and for extensive information on suggested topics and criteria, click here.

Hurry, time is limited. Presentation ideas are due by September 18th!

Contest for First-Time Submitters of Annual Meeting Presentations: Complimentary Registrations

NAEP is running a contest to encourage program offerings from first-time submitters. If you are a new presenter and your session is selected by the Program Committee to be placed on the conference agenda, your name will be entered into a drawing. Two winners will be selected from this group to receive complimentary registrations for the Meeting in San Antonio.

NAEP Forums: A Better Way to Connect

Have you used the new NAEP Forums yet? This new technology makes it easy for you to connect with your colleagues across the country and keep abreast of what’s going on. Designed to improve upon the listserv experience, the forums are a 3-D version of that older technology. Now, when a question is asked on the forum you can follow in real-time the answers that are posted!

What is the best part about the new forums? No more out-of-office replies when you post! This enhanced communication feature is available for NAEP members. Be sure to sign into the website to access both the national forum and your regional forum as well.

Upcoming Professional Development Courses

Contract Management Institute, December 6-8, 2015, Las Vegas
Instructor: Ken Adams, ContractExpress; Notre Dame Law School
Clear contract drafting is a skill that must be learned. The ability to draft procurement-related documents clearly is essential to lowering risks and increasing compliance. This class will introduce you to the skills needed to draft clear documents, policies, and procedures.

Who Should Attend

- Attorneys
- Contract officers
- Purchasing officers
- Business officers
- Anyone who needs to know more about contract drafting
Women’s Leadership Institute, December 6–9, 2015

Program dates: December 6–9, 2015.
Location: Ritz-Carlton, Amelia Island, Florida

Designed for women of all ages who aspire to new leadership positions on campus, the Women’s Leadership Institute features a curriculum with an overall focus on building the next generation of leaders in higher education administration. The Institute is co-produced by members of the Council for Higher Education Management Associations.

Core Competencies:

Learning Outcomes
A stronger community of practice among women in the college and university environment
Personal and professional growth through reflection and both general and concurrent sessions
Team-building and leadership development
Empowerment for women to pursue higher level positions in their respective fields

Tentative Program Topics
Gender communication
Negotiating salary
Techniques for good supervision
Work/life balance
Conducting quality searches
Mentoring
Financial competency
Career mapping

For more information and registration contact the Association of College Unions International (ACUI) at www.acui.org/wli.

2016 Procurement Academy: Tiers 1, II, & III, January 31-February 2, Phoenix

Discount for Back-to-Back Courses in Phoenix
NOTE: A discount is offered for attending both the Procurement Academy and either the RFP Process Institute or the Federal Procurement Institute, which both immediately follow the Procurement Academy in Phoenix.

Career development does not happen by chance. It takes thoughtful planning and active management to understand and learn the right skill sets, job knowledge, and abilities to succeed at your current position and advance into your next role. The NAEP Procurement Academy offers three Tiers, each tailored to the specific needs of the individual’s current career position and experience.

Tier I: FOUNDATION

Course schedule
If you are newer to higher education procurement, this tier is for you. Join others in your cohort group as you discover best practices across a broad range of procurement topics including the legal aspects of procurement.

Tier II: PROFESSIONAL

Course schedule
Ideal for the more seasoned veteran, learn from subject matter experts who will share best practices on leadership development, ethics and diversity, contract development, management and administration, as well as special legal issues in procurement.

Tier III: PROFESSIONAL PLUS

Course schedule
Are you ready to manage people? Do you understand Emotional Intelligence and conflict resolution? This tier will teach the specific skill sets needed to become an effective leader on your procurement team and at your institution.

For course detail and to register, click HERE.
### RFP Process Institute, February 2-4, 2016, Phoenix

Discount for Back-to-Back Courses in Phoenix

NOTE: A discount is offered for attending both the Procurement Academy and either the RFP Process Institute or the Federal Procurement Institute, which both immediately follow the Procurement Academy in Phoenix.

The RFP Process Institute is designed to help procurement professionals determine when it is most effective to utilize an RFP process; how to develop an RFP; conduct evaluations; monitor vendor performance; handle disputes; and close out projects.

**Learning Objectives**

Participants will learn to:

- Determine when an RFP should be used
- Define roles
- Structure the RFP document
- Identify elements of an effective Statement of Work
- Describe the benefits of performance-based contracting
- Conduct a pre-proposal conference
- Develop evaluation criteria and matrix analysis
- Apply scoring methodologies
- Conduct vendor debriefings
- Recognize the importance of properly handling bid protests
- Monitor vendor performance
- Demonstrate Contract Administration from post-award through contract close-out

[Download agenda](#)  
[Register](#)

### Federal Procurement Institute, February 2-4, 2016

Discount for Back-to-Back Courses in Phoenix

NOTE: A discount is offered for attending both the Procurement Academy and either the RFP Process Institute or the Federal Procurement Institute, which both immediately follow the Procurement Academy in Phoenix.

The Federal Procurement Institute provides specific information concerning Federal Government policies related to procurements for grants, contracts and cooperative agreements. It is designed to be a resource for those who purchase goods and services in support of federally sponsored programs or research. The Institute will focus on the recently enacted *Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards*, which introduces new requirements in the procurement process for grants and cooperative agreements. The new policies were originally scheduled for implementation on December 26, 2014. Universities now have an additional year to comply.

**Learning Objectives**

Participants will learn to:

- Know the difference between Federal grants, contracts and cooperative agreements
- Understand and apply the Federal requirements for competition which include Micro-Purchase, Small Purchase, Sealed Bidding and Competitive Proposals
- Develop bid documents which promote competition and include required Federal terms and conditions
- Understand the basic structure of the Federal Acquisition Regulations
- Identify and mitigate conflicts of interests as defined by the Federal Government
- Recognize items that are unallowable for purchase with Federal funds
- Understand the Federal concept of reasonableness when conducting transactions
- Gain an understanding of the *Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards* which are the applicable policies that provide guidance to Colleges and Universities receiving federal funds.
- Understand how Federal Government views “compliance”, through review of procurement related audit findings
- Apply the correct federal procurement process to any order

[Download agenda](#)
Quote of the Month

“When someone tells me “No,” it doesn’t mean I can’t do it. It simply means I can’t do it with them.”

— Karen E. Quinones Miller