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Knights with Armor

The Inspectors General Auditor Training Institute Ten Years Later

When I was assigned to direct the Inspectors General Auditor Training Institute in December 1999, I had only a limited idea of the challenges and rewards involved in this position. Now, having completed my first year as Director, I have a greater appreciation for both the Institute and our community.

The Institute was not unfamiliar to me. In 1991, I was special assistant to then Treasury Inspector General Donald E. Kirkendall, who was instrumental in founding it. Later, as a Regional Inspector General for Audit, I sent students to the Institute's first training program—and many programs thereafter. In 1992, I participated with my peers from other Offices of Inspector General (OIG) in a focus group that designed the Auditor-in-charge training program. Occasionally I have been a student at the Institute.

The Inspectors General Auditor Training Institute held its first class on July 8, 1991. The Institute—often known by its acronym IGATI and now approaching its tenth anniversary—has taught more than 60 Introductory Auditor programs. More than 10,000 students from 68 Federal OIGs and 32 related organizations attended IGATI classes as of September 30, 2000.

The ten-year milestone is a good place to revisit some fundamental questions about the Institute. Why was it created? Does it provide quality training? Why is it located at Ft. Belvoir, Virginia? Why has the Institute succeeded in light of other available sources for audit training? Does it have a distinctive role to play in providing training for OIG auditors in the twenty-first century?

Why IGATI

Recognizing the need for training devoted exclusively to the needs of the Federal OIG audit community, the President's Council on Integrity and Efficiency (PCIE) voted in December 1990 to establish the Institute. The Institute is an organizational component of the U.S. Department of the Treasury's Office of Inspector General, which administers it for the PCIE. In fiscal year 1998, the Institute joined the Department of the Treasury's Franchise Fund as a Federal business activity. Subsequently the Institute has been funded solely by tuition revenue rather than appropriated funds.

Since the Institute's inception the PCIE's Audit Committee has provided oversight, serving as its Board of Directors. On three separate occasions, the Audit Committee has conducted thorough internal reviews of IGATI's curriculum. The most recent of these was completed this fall.

Although best known for its Introductory Auditing program, the Institute teaches twenty-three distinct programs. The curriculum includes well attended series on information systems and financial auditing as well as popular programs to enhance auditors' skills in making presentations, writing reports, auditing Government Performance and Results Act products, auditing to improve processes, and researching on the Internet.

Each July, the Institute surveys the needs of all its customers. The responses by the OIGs are used to build the training calendar for the upcoming fiscal year. The Institute's catalogue of training programs is available on our web site, at www.igati.org.

The Institute also designs programs to meet the needs of individual Offices of Inspector General. These "customer specific" programs can be taught at either IGATI's offices or the customer's preferred location. During fiscal year 2000, we taught on-site programs for several OIGs, including: the Social Security Administration in Baltimore, Maryland; the Department of Energy in Scottsdale, Arizona; the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration in Cincinnati, Ohio; the National Archives and Records Administration in Adelphi, Maryland; and both the Department of Education and the Small Business Administration in Washington, DC.

For Fiscal Year 2001, we made several changes to meet our customers' needs. First, the Introductory Auditor training has been enhanced and streamlined from a 3-week to a 2-week program. Second, the Institute is providing five new training programs:

1. **Essential Skills and Techniques for Evaluators** covers the basic concepts needed to perform effective evaluations and inspections within Federal organizations. The 5-day program gives a chronological overview of the

entire evaluation process, focused on a practical system for providing rapid feedback to decision-makers on program and policy issues. Students learn low cost, accessible strategies for providing outcome-oriented, practical information to Federal managers for their immediate use. This is the first training program designed to meet the exclusive needs of Federal Office of Inspector General evaluators and inspectors.

2. **The "Real World" Electronic Data Gathering and Analysis Workshop** provides students with a 5-day practical experience in gathering and analyzing elec-

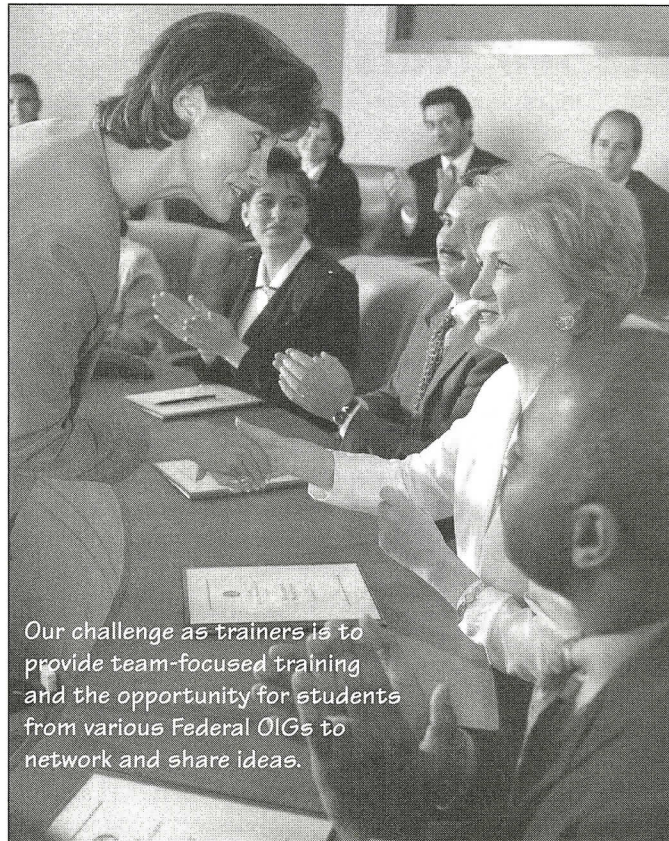
tronic data. Through videotaped simulations and team exercises, students experience the challenges of defining and retrieving electronic data from such disparate sources as personal computers, legacy systems, local area networks, and mainframe computers. After gathering the data, students will use IDEA software to manage and analyze the data, to identify significant trends, and to find potential fraud.

3. **Practical Application of Statistical Sampling in Audits and Evaluations** will familiarize auditors and evaluators with practical methods for integrating statistical sampling more effectively into their assignments. Through team exercises and case studies, this 3-day program seeks to engender enthusiasm and overcome natural reluctance

to use statistical sampling to quantify the effect and impact of our work.

4. **Audit Report Team Writing From Entrance Conference to Final Report** is a 5-day program specially designed for those organizations that desire a team approach to writing audit reports. By integrating report writing into the audit process from the start, and by learning a common language for editing and structure, teams will be able to write reports together rather than climbing up and down the ladders of review associated with conventional report processing.

5. **Enhanced Testimonial and Briefing Skills** is a 3-day program that enables executives to hone oral communication skills that are essential to success when briefing departmental and agency senior management, testifying



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before Congress, or speaking before the news media. The program concentrates on proven techniques for anticipating questions and being prepared to respond most effectively. Special emphasis is given to the timing, length, tone and degree of formality of executive level presentations in each of these scenarios.

Quality Training

Inspectors General, Deputy Inspectors General, Assistant Inspectors General for Audit, and their staffs have developed the Institute's curriculum and program content through their participation in focus groups and course design activities. Student feedback, also carefully considered in course design, rose from 88 percent approval in FY 1999 to 90 percent approval in 2000.

As a training provider, IGATI is unique in that:

- All full time instructors and administrative staff are Federal OIG employees.
- All training is designed to the specification and with the participation of Federal OIGs.
- Training is delivered at cost to ensure that Federal OIGs receive desired training at the lowest price.

As I have learned more about the Institute this year, I have been especially impressed with the quality of the instructors and their diligence in keeping program content fresh and up-to-date. Our small staff includes three instructors plus a fourth instructor detailed to the Institute by the Department of Defense OIG on a fully reimbursable basis. To meet the needs of our customers, we also contract out for instructors—most of whom are retired Federal auditor managers or private consultants.

Greatly enhancing the quality of our programs are those current Federal employees from audit, investigation and other disciplines whose agencies permit them to volunteer their time to teach a module or segment of a training program. They bring contemporary, pertinent examples from real life experience along with their expertise. To the extent that IGATI is viewed by many as the leading Federal audit training provider, we owe a great deal to these volunteers.

As someone who, until this year, has been an IGATI customer, I sometimes thought I would like to be a volunteer instructor. I wondered why no one contacted me. Of course, I made no inquiries or attempts to volunteer my services. Anyone who would like to talk about serving as a volunteer instructor, please call me at (703) 805-4511 or send me an email at clarkek@oig.treas.gov.

Why Ft. Belvoir

For these ten years, the Institute has been located at Ft. Belvoir, Virginia. We were placed at Ft. Belvoir because

inexpensive space was available there. Advantages of being at the Fort include a lovely campus-like setting, inexpensive student accommodations, ample free parking, and the Fort's many facilities and services. Also, students enjoy being far enough away from their offices to avoid having their training interrupted by calls to return to the office.

The single disadvantage is that Ft. Belvoir is located outside the Beltway, more than twenty miles from Downtown Washington. Without access to Metrorail, public transportation is limited.

For several years, the Institute has been a tenant in a building occupied by three larger schools: the Army Management Staff College, the Army Inspector General School, and the Army Force Management School. The Army has made clear that the Fort cannot accommodate our need for additional space. As Ft. Belvoir continues to attract other Army organizations, the Institute must plan for its eventual move to a new location that may lack some of the Fort's advantages but will be more accessible by public transportation.

Why IGATI Succeeds

The Inspectors General Auditor Training Institute is an entity of the PCIE and the Executive Council on Integrity and Efficiency. The Institute is uniquely and exclusively of, by and for the Federal OIG audit and evaluation community.

I have met with nearly one third of the IGs, who have shared highly favorable views about the Institute as well as suggestions for the future. At least once a month, a different Inspector General has visited the Fort to address a graduating class of students. To a person, visiting Inspectors General have been generous with their time and ideas. They share an abiding conviction that training is important. However, this community is no captive audience for the Institute.

Federal OIGs choose from many sources of training outside of the community including the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Graduate School, professional associations, and private training organizations. Also, some OIGs develop their own in-house training programs through which they derive the benefits of organizational team building.

Competition from diverse training sources provides the community with optimal training options at affordable prices. Historically, this competition has encouraged IGATI to work smarter, harder and faster to deliver high quality training at low prices.

Competition does not mean that the training we provide cannot be in harmony with the training provided by our competitors. On the contrary, one of my first initiatives was to meet with the Director of the Graduate School's Government Auditor Training Institute to seek ways in which our separate organizations can be more complimen-

tary and cooperative in curriculum planning. Twice we appeared together to answer questions at meetings of the PCIE's training coordinators. We also discussed the possibility of joint projects by which we might better serve the community.

Quality training, good instructors, competition, and working cooperatively with competitors are contributing factors to IGATI's success. To these I would add two other critically important factors: (1) the synergy derived from the OIG community coming together in this place as teams of students, teams of curriculum designers, teams of instructors, and teams to assure oversight and accountability; and (2) the heart exhibited by the people who work in this place. To amplify this last point, ask any former IGATI student about the environment they found here—people caring and working together. Perhaps in no small measure that special quality began with my predecessor, Andrew J. Pasden, Jr. As a “people person,” my friend Andy is a tough act to follow.

Where We Are Going

The stage is set. The President signed a memorandum in June that directed agency heads to incorporate human resource management goals into their October 2000 performance plans. The Comptroller General has said that human capital issues are among the greatest concerns that

the General Accounting Office sees in the federal government at a time when we must prepare for a mighty wave of pending retirements in the next few years. Will our successors be prepared to fill the coming audit management void?

To meet this challenge, the Inspectors General Auditor Training Institute and other training providers must step forward with tested methods and new techniques. First, our training needs to put the student more in a “real world” environment. Training should be integrated into—not separated from—our audit work. Second, we not only want to evoke a positive response from such training but also to find more effective ways to ensure that students apply what they learn in training when they return to their audit assignments. Third, training must effectively help students master needed knowledge, skills and abilities. Fourth, curriculum must continuously be reassessed in light of the disciplinary core competencies of auditors and evaluators. Finally, we must rise to the challenges of educating adults outside the classroom through distance learning and interactive video and audio learning.

Perhaps most important, our challenge as trainers is to provide team-focused training and the opportunity for students from various Federal OIGs to network and share ideas. The Inspectors General Auditor Training Institute excels in this respect and is dedicated to delivering both tested methods and new techniques. 🏰