

GAO Management News

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Ayers and the Full Range of FAIS Team's Work

Johana Ayers was named Managing Director of GAO's Forensic Audits and Investigative Services (FAIS) team in 2016 following the retirement of Steve Lord. Her 60-member team's goal is to provide Congress with high quality forensic audits and investigations of fraud, waste, and abuse; special investigations and security/vulnerability assessments. She came to the team with 18 years' experience having spent the first 15 years of her career working in the Acquisition and Sourcing Management (ASM) team.



While in ASM, Ayers led reviews on contracting in Iraq and Afghanistan, DOD contract management and oversight, the defense industrial base, and the intelligence community's reliance on contractors. Her team's work led to significant improvements in the efficiency and effectiveness of federal contracting efforts, contributed to the debate on technology transfer policy, and led to improved congressional oversight. Ayers also served as the head of GAO's office in Baghdad during two, 7-month periods, first in 2008 and again in 2010, representing GAO before senior defense, diplomatic, and development officials and enabling GAO to provide first-hand analysis and assessments of the U.S. government's efforts to stabilize and rebuild Iraq. Then, in 2013, Ayers joined the Defense Capabilities and Management (DCM) team. While in DCM, she helped establish the Defense Business Operations portfolio, which encompassed reviews related to management efficiencies, business transformation, and budgets at the Department of Defense.

Ayers told *Management News* that she spent the first six months on the job getting to know the team members and learning the nature of their work. She was particularly impressed with the impact and reach FAIS has with a government-wide focus and working with multiple committees. "Last year, we did work for 30+ committees and subcommittees. It was the range of work we did that really struck me," said Ayers.

FAIS is the only team with investigators that support the agency. There are six undercover investigators who work on a variety of issues and last year did work in the areas of nuclear regulation and the Affordable Health Care Act, for example.

"I'm continually impressed by the dedication and enthusiasm of the staff and am very proud of what they've accomplished individually and together," said Ayers. "FAIS analysts and investigators' work done jointly with HC, for example, resulted in statutory changes that should improve the functioning of the VA's Veteran's Crisis Line, helping ensure that America's veterans get the help they need, when they need it. Also, FAIS's work has affected the collection of federal taxes. In 2011, based on its data analytics work, FAIS reported in [GAO-11-272](#) that more than 224,000 of about 16 million individuals to whom the State Department issued passports in fiscal year 2008 owed more than \$5.8 billion in unpaid federal taxes as of September 30, 2008. State was not authorized to restrict the issuance of passports to individuals because they owe federal taxes, while federal law prevented the IRS from disclosing taxpayer information to State without taxpayer consent. So, we suggested that Congress consider taking steps to enable and require State to screen and prevent individuals who owe federal taxes from receiving passports. In response, in December 2015, the "FAST" Act, a comprehensive transportation bill, was enacted as law, and included provisions to address our matter for congressional consideration," said Ayers.

Ayers also highlighted the Fraud Risk Management Framework ([GAO-15-593SP](#), July 28, 2015) that FAIS developed to guide federal managers in taking a strategic, risk-based approach to combating fraud in federal programs." The leading practices identified in the Framework have essentially become statutorily required for federal managers thanks to requirements in the Fraud Reduction and Data Analytics Act of 2015, which was enacted last year. Ayers explained that Framework is already changing how agencies think about their fraud risks and design and implement strategies to prevent and detect fraud.

She credits her team and her FAIS predecessors for the accomplishments, "I have been building off the foundation that Steve Lord, Cathy Berrick and Rick Hillman built. This team has had its challenges and I am amazed with what they've accomplished. I am also very excited about the years to come."

Ayers originally moved to Washington DC from Portland, Oregon in 1992. She received her bachelor's degree from the American University in international studies and her master's degree in international affairs from George Washington University. She is married and has two stepsons. They are all big baseball fans who love to go to Nats games. She and her husband also enjoy the advantages of living in D.C. by attending plays, concerts and eating out. Ayers enjoys travelling and in fact, she was in Calcutta, India when the offer came to work at GAO in 1998. She and her husband take an international trip every other year, including a Caribbean cruise last fall.

2017 International Auditor Fellows Have Arrived

This year's International Auditor Fellowship Program (IAFP) began on March 22 with 15 auditors representing 12 countries.

In an opening ceremony, Comptroller General (CG) Gene Dodaro and Chief Operating Officer (COO) Patricia Dalton welcomed the 2017 fellows from Albania, Argentina, Bhutan, Brazil, Estonia, Kuwait, Nigeria, Pakistan, Rwanda, Singapore, Uganda and Zimbabwe.



CG Gene Dodaro welcomes the 2017 International Auditor Fellows.

The IAFP, designed to enhance capabilities of Supreme Audit Institutions (SAIs) to fulfill their missions and increase accountability, transparency and governance worldwide, was initiated by GAO in 1979 in response to increased federal government expenditures abroad and the related need to strengthen accountability over these funds. To date, more than 570 middle- to senior-level SAI officials from more than 105 countries have graduated from the program, many of whom have since become Auditors General, Deputy Auditors General or Government Ministers.

Fellows participate in an intensive, multifaceted learning program that includes a blend of classroom instruction, observation of key management meetings, intergovernmental auditing exposure, and the development of a strategy paper focused on implementing change in their organizations.

"The strength of GAO's fellowship program lies in its various instructional components and the support of hundreds of GAO staff. The combination of classroom training and professional networking facilitate knowledge-sharing and strategic partnerships. In addition, the fellows' strategy papers, ranging from internal controls to

leveraging technology in auditing, offer an opportunity for practical application of concepts learned to help improve audit capacity in their respective SAIs, contributing to the long-term success of the program,” said SPEL MD James-Christian Blockwood.

For more information on the International Auditor Fellowship Program, visit the [Fellows](#) intranet page, or contact [Darreisha M. Bates](#), Program Manager, at 202-512-4233.

From Here and There

Arrivals and Departures

Welcome to recently hired GAO employees:

FMA: Doreen Eng (Seattle)

ISTS: Linda Gordon-Shade

IT: John Bailey

Good luck to recently retired GAO employees:

COO: Natosha Mahoney

DCM: Laura Durland

EWIS: Julianne Cutts (Seattle)

Goodbye and best wishes to employees leaving GAO:

FMA: Vondia Godlewski

FMC: Kathleen Boggs (Chicago), Josie Carver

HCO: Nakissha Jones

Mark Your Calendar

Wednesday, April 26, Administrative Professionals Day. Watch [notices](#) for GAO events.

Financial Literacy Month Events

Tuesday, April 18, 1:30 - 2:30 p.m., Understanding the Federal Long Term Care Insurance Program 2N30 and GAOTV

Learn about the benefits, features, and costs of the Federal Long Term Care Insurance Program.

Thursday, April 20, 11:00 - 1:00 p.m., Understanding Medicare and Federal Health Benefits 5N30 and GAOTV

Learn about Medicare eligibility and how Federal Employee Health Benefits (FEHB) and Medicare coordinate to provide comprehensive coverage.

Tuesday, April 25, 12:00 - 1:30 p.m., Blast from the Past: Former GAOers Share Their Experiences about Retirement Staats Briefing Room (7C13) and GAOTV

Hear from a panel of four former GAO employees about life after retirement, including what they would have liked to have known prior to retirement, surprises they encountered after retiring, and common mistakes or myths about what retirement is really like.

See [Notices](#) for up-to-date information. Also, see [GAO's Financial Literacy Website](#), dedicated to providing information and tips on personal finance.

Job Market

GAO is seeking applicants for the following position. Detailed information may be found at [USAjobs](#).

[Management Analyst](#), PT-0343-02/02, closes 4/17

[Executive Assistant](#), AC-0301-04/04, closes 4/20

Recent Reports, Testimony, and Legal Products

Public GAO products--reports, testimony, and legal decisions and opinions--are available on GAO's [website](#) as they are released. In addition, you may sign up for [daily e-mail alerts](#) about issued products. You may also subscribe to Twitter alerts for [reports](#) and [legal products](#). Use the [search engine](#) to locate older products.

Reports

Identity Theft Services: Services Offer Some Benefits but Are Limited in Preventing Fraud.

[GAO-17-254](#), March 30

DOD Major Automated Information Systems: Improvements Can Be Made in Applying Leading Practices for Managing Risk and Testing.

[GAO-17-322](#), March 30

Defense Acquisitions: Assessments of Selected Weapon Programs.

[GAO-17-333SP](#), March 30

Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute: Review of the Audit of the Financial Statements for Fiscal Year 2016.

[GAO-17-441R](#), March 31

2016 Lobbying Disclosure: Observations on Lobbyists' Compliance with Disclosure Requirements.

[GAO-17-385](#), March 31

Highlights of a Forum: Data Analytics to Address Fraud and Improper Payments.

[GAO-17-339SP](#), March 31

Drug Compounding: Survey of State Pharmacy Regulatory Bodies (GAO-17-363SP, March 2017), an E-supplement to GAO-17-64.

[GAO-17-363SP](#), March 31

Coast Guard Cutters: Depot Maintenance Is Affecting Operational Availability and Cost Estimates Should Reflect Actual Expenditures.

[GAO-17-218](#), March 2

Marine Corps Asia Pacific Realignment: DOD Should Resolve Capability Deficiencies and Infrastructure Risks and Revise Cost Estimates.

[GAO-17-415](#), April 5

Government Auditing Standards 2017 Exposure Draft.

[GAO-17-313SP](#), April 5

Human Trafficking: Action Needed to Identify the Number of Native American Victims Receiving Federally-funded Services.

[GAO-17-325](#), March 30

Homeland Security Acquisitions: Earlier Requirements Definition and Clear Documentation of Key Decisions Could Facilitate Ongoing Progress.

[GAO-17-346SP](#), April 6

Countering Violent Extremism: Actions Needed to Define Strategy and Assess Progress of Federal Efforts.

[GAO-17-300](#), April 6

Advanced Manufacturing: Commerce Could Strengthen Collaboration with Other Agencies on Innovation Institutes.

[GAO-17-320](#), April 6

International Food Assistance: USAID Has Controls for Implementation and Support Costs but Should Strengthen Financial Oversight.

[GAO-17-224](#), March 9

Medicare Provider Education: Oversight of Efforts to Reduce Improper Billing Needs Improvement.

[GAO-17-290](#), March 10

Small Business Contracting: DOD Should Take Actions to Ensure That Its Pilot Mentor-Protégé Program Enhances the Capabilities of Protégé Firms.

[GAO-17-172](#), April 11

Nuclear Security: DOE Could Improve Aspects of Nuclear Security Reporting.

[GAO-17-239](#), April 11

Information Technology: Opportunities for Improving Acquisitions and Operations.

[GAO-17-251SP](#), April 11

Restricted

Marine Corps Asia-Pacific Realignment: DOD Should Resolve Capability Deficiencies and Infrastructure Risks and Revise Cost Estimates.

[GAO-17-107SU](#), April 5

Congressional Testimony

Veterans Crisis Line: Further Efforts Needed to Improve Service, by Seto J. Bagdoyan, FAIS, and Randall B. Williamson, Health Care, before the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

[GAO-17-545T](#), April 4

Border Security: DHS Could Strengthen Efforts to Establish Collaborative Mechanisms and Assess Use of Resources, by Rebecca Gambler, HSJ, before the Border and Maritime Security Subcommittee, House Homeland Security Committee.

[GAO-17-495T](#), April 4

Cybersecurity: Federal Efforts Are Under Way That May Address Workforce Challenges, by Nick Marinos, IT, before the Information Technology Subcommittee, House Oversight and Government Reform Committee.

[GAO-17-533T](#), April 4

Conflict Minerals: Insights on Company Disclosures, by Kimberly Gianopoulos, IAT, for the Senate Foreign Relations Committee: Africa And Global Health Policy Subcommittee.

[GAO-17-544T](#), April 5

Legal Decisions and Opinions

Bid Protest Decisions

[CRAssociates, Inc.](#), B-414171, March 16.
[TA Services of South Carolina, LLC](#), B-412036.4, January 31.
[IT Enterprise Solutions JV, LLC](#), B-412036.3, January 31.
[CJW Desbuild JV, LLC](#), B-414219, March 17.
[The University of Hawaii](#), B-414247.2, April 3.
[Zodiac of North America, Inc.](#), B-414260, March 28.
[Department of Veterans Affairs—Reconsideration](#), B-412187.2, April 4.
[Williams Building Company, Inc.](#), B-413262.2, B-413262.3, November 15.
[Rollout Systems, LLC](#), B-414145, February 24.
[Discover Technologies LLC—Costs](#), B-413861.3, March 29.
[ALQIMI National Security, Inc.](#), B-413713.2, B-413713.3, April 3.
[Premiere Credit of North America, LLC; Financial Management Systems Investment Corp.—Reconsideration](#), B-414220.49, B-414220.50, April 6.
[Cybermedia Technologies, Inc. d/b/a CTEC](#), B-413156.25, April 6.
[General Revenue Corporation; Account Control Technology, Inc.; Williams & Fudge, Inc.; Performant Recovery, Inc.; Collection Technology, Inc.; Alltran Education, Inc.; Texas Guaranteed Student Loan Corp.; Van Ru Credit Corporation; Global Receivables Solutions, Inc.; Progressive Financial Services, Inc.; Automated Collection Services, Inc.; Gatestone & Co. International, Inc.; Sutherland Global Services; Delta Management Associates, Inc.; Allied Interstate LLC; Collecto, Inc. d/b/a EOS CCA](#), B-414220.2, March 27.
[Harkcon Inc.](#), B-412936.2, March 30.
[Siemens Healthcare Diagnostics, Inc.—Costs](#), B-413774.3, April 7.
[American Access, Inc.](#), B-414137.3, April 11.

Press Releases

[Press Release GAO Bid Protest; B-414220, et al., General Revenue Corp., et al.](#),
March 31
[GAO Issues New Draft Updates to "Yellow Book," the Preeminent Standards for Government Auditing](#)
April 5

Speakers' Platform

Nancy Kingsbury, ARM, participated in a panel discussion about program evaluation in administrations in transition. The panel was sponsored by The Evaluators' Institute and Washington Evaluators, the local affiliate of the American Evaluation Association, March 10. Former GAOer Joe Wholey also participated in the panel.

Michele Mackin, ASM, delivered a keynote address at the US Coast Guard's acquisition leadership conference on March 30.

Gergana Danailova-Trainor, IAT, presented findings of "Foreign Assistance: Agencies Can Improve the Quality and Dissemination of Program Evaluations" ([GAO-17-316](#), March 3) at the Washington Evaluators Brown Bag Session at the IBM Center for the Business of Government in Washington, D.C. on March 22. Gergana and James Michels, IAT also presented the report at the Department of State Evaluation Community of Practice Meeting on March 15 and at the International Consortium on Government Financial Management Forum Speaker Series at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, April 5.

On the Air

Dave Powner, IT, was interviewed by NewsChannel 8 about his testimony on the implantation of information technology reform law ([GAO-17-494T](#), March 28), March 28.

Tim DiNapoli, ASM, appeared on NewsChannel 8's "Government Matters" program to talk about the team's report on the defense acquisition workforce ([GAO-17-332](#), March 28), April 4.

Vijay D'Souza, GAO Center for Enhanced Analytics, was interviewed by Federal News Radio about the report stemming from GAO's forum on the use of data analytics to address fraud and improper payments ([GAO-17-339SP](#), March 31).

Debbie Draper, HC, was interviewed by CNN about Veterans health care and high risk on April 5.

John Neumann, NRE, was interviewed by Federal News Radio about the report he and Andy Sherrill, EWIS, directed on advanced manufacturing ([GAO-17-320](#), April 6), April 10.

Award



Dave Powner, IT, was selected to again receive a [Federal Computer Week Federal 100 Award](#). In making these awards each year, FCW selects from the list of those receiving the awards, two Eagle Award winners—one from government and one from industry. These are the two individuals identified as having made the most substantial contributions to the federal IT community.

Powner is this year's government winner of the Eagle Award. He was honored at a ceremony in Washington, DC, March 30.

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