As I complete my term as chair of this terrific Section, my thoughts center once again on the people that have made us so successful and effective. I extend my most sincere gratitude to all who worked so hard to make the Section a success during the 2015–2016 program year! First is the amazing work done by our Section director, Patty Brennan. The chair probably comes closest to seeing all the behind-the-scenes work that Patty does for us and my guess is that I’ve only seen about 50 percent of it. She has worked extremely hard and is the key reason our programs are so successful. I must also acknowledge our terrific quarterly program chairs and panelists, our enterprising committee leaders, the diligent authors and editors of comment letters and publications, and the organizers of membership outreach events, all of whom have contributed to growing the Section’s reputation and footprint within the bar. Thank you for all you have done and continue to do! I would also like to thank my general counsel, Maryanne Lavan, Rob Spencer, Marcia Cepela, and my colleagues at Lockheed Martin for their support and encouragement this past year. I couldn’t have done this without them.

The Section also owes a great deal of gratitude to John Pachter for his service as Section Delegate for the past eleven years. John has always been there for the Section and has served as a mentor to many of us. His selection for the first Allan J. Joseph Excellence in Leadership Award in 2012 highlights his many accomplishments, which continue today. I extend our collective thanks on behalf of the Section to John for his tremendous efforts over the years.

In reflecting on the past year, I now look back to my chair-elect’s column from the summer 2015 issue of The Procurement Lawyer. The Section had just celebrated its fiftieth anniversary at the Annual Meeting in Chicago, where we collectively reflected on fifty years of leadership, programs, and progress, and positioned ourselves to move forward into the next fifty years. The energy of that momentous occasion would fuel the ambitious vision subsequent columns put forth for the 2015–2016 program year and beyond.

In 2014, in response to a direct request from the U.S. House and Senate Armed Services Joint Committee to the Section, we submitted a letter of recommendations for procurement reform, and recommended continuing dialogue on procurement reform. In the winter of 2015, Section leaders met with HASC staffers to explore where we could be most effective in helping the process. That meeting was productive and revealed ways the Section could meaningfully contribute to reform. In the intervening months, I along with other
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members of the Section have answered questions for the staffers when they needed assistance.

Throughout the year, the Section participated in the regulatory process by submitting comments on proposed rules and other regulatory activity. This substantive participation in the procurement process bolsters the Section’s considerable influence and helps shape and improve the procurement system. Since my last column, we have issued the following comment letters:

1. February 29, 2016, Comments on DFARS Case 2013-D018: Network Penetration Reporting and Contracting for Cloud Services
2. March 21, 2016, Comments on FAR Proposed Rule, Payment of Subcontractors
3. March 22, 2016, Comments on FAR Case 2015-012: Contractor Employee Internal Confidentiality Agreements
4. April 1, 2016, Comments on the ABA Diversity & Inclusion 360 Commission’s Proposed Diversity & Inclusion CLE Policy
6. April 18, 2016, Comments on DFARS Case 2016-D002: Proposed Rule, Enhancing the Effectiveness of Independent Research and Development,
7. April 18, 2016, Comments on Establishing Paid Sick Leave for Federal Contractors
8. May 13, 2016, Comments on GAO's Proposed Rule, Administrative Practice and Procedure, Bid Protest Regulations
9. May 19, 2016, Comments on OMB Draft Memorandum: Improving the Acquisition and Management of Common Information Technology: Mobile Devices and Services
10. May 24, 2016, Comments on DFARS Case 2016-D010: Costs Related to Counterfeit Electronic Parts

I have received both government and industry feedback on our comments and am encouraged to learn that our work reaches all stakeholders. In my remaining months as chair, I plan to solicit input on the Section’s commenting process, including broader distribution of comment drafting opportunities and workload.

We opened the year with a special focus on membership and created a new division, the Membership Outreach and Diversity Division. There were a number notable member outreach initiatives and activities, from a kick-off happy hour hosted by the newly formed Diversity Committee, to the law school outreach programs hosted by the Young Lawyers Committee in collaboration with the George Washington Law School. These and other member outreach activities were critical to attracting and welcoming the newest members of the profession to our Section.

My experience with the Air Force taught me that the best way to mentor someone was to have that person work with you. As a result of that experience, three young lawyers who have been active in the Section and our Young Lawyers Committee were offered the opportunity to be executive officer-mentees to the chair and chair-elect. Amy Conant, Rob Leahy, and Oliya Zamaray worked extremely hard in these roles where they had the opportunity to view how the Section operates and how the officers interact and work together for the Section. Their feedback on the experience indicates this was a worthwhile opportunity and encouraged me to continue the program. Please ask them about it the next time you see them.

The Section’s Annual Meeting programming is scheduled for August 4–6, 2016, in San Francisco. The program co-chairs, Sharon Larkin, Kevin Mullen, and Col. Rebecca Vernon, along with the panel moderators, have planned and developed six outstanding sessions, which are outlined on pages 15–18. In addition to the quality CLE programs offered, the Section’s networking events provide valuable opportunities for our attendees to get acquainted with fellow public contract professionals, including the numerous law firm and corporate sponsors listed on pages 16–18 who generously contribute and support our events.

I am pleased to see increased leadership succession planning efforts at the committee level, including structured transition plans to ensure future committee leaders have the knowledge and requisite experience to transition into the co-chair role. Along with the division chairs, I will encourage all committee chairs to develop a succession plan, conduct leadership interest meetings, and draft transition memoranda for the benefit of their successors.

A young Section member recently inquired if my experience as Section chair was what I hoped for at the outset. My response was a resounding “Yes!” Serving as Section chair has provided me with a meaningful opportunity to have an impact on the very system that governs and regulates my day-to-day business. Being part of the dialogue, being able to shape the conversation has been a tremendous return on my investment. The personal relationships and collegiality among the Section’s leadership have been particularly meaningful to me. Over the years, my Section colleagues and I have “grown up together” through our Section work—advocating through the comment letter process, collaborating on cutting-edge programs, co-authoring valuable publications, and nurturing and enjoying our friendships. I encourage each of you to reflect on the positive ways your Section experience has impacted your work and your life. And should the opportunity present itself, share those thoughts with a fellow Section member or, better yet, with your officers.

Finally, a word about your incoming Section chair—I have known and worked with Ty Hughes for much of my professional life. He has labored in each of the areas of law we represent—government, law firm, and corporate law. I leave the Section in great hands and look forward to his chair year. Best wishes, Ty, for continued success!  

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