Laura Odell Receives Prestigious Award for Excellence in Research

ALEXANDRIA, VA (April 2020) – Laura Odell received Institute for Defense Analyses' (IDA's) 2019 Andrew J. Goodpaster Award for Excellence in Research.

"This award reflects Laura's role as a pioneer in artificial intelligence-enabled decision making," said IDA President and CEO Norton A. Schwartz. "Through her work, she has inspired IDA researchers, sponsors, and others to continue their advancements in the information age."

The award is named in honor of the former IDA president and trustee and is presented annually to an individual who has demonstrated exceptional analytic achievement within the IDA research community.

"I am honored to receive such a prestigious award and be a part of an organization in a unique position to work the seams between industry, government, and academia. Research is a team sport here and IDA is truly committed to the sponsors we serve," said Odell. "As a hands-on, operationally focused leader, I am privileged to provide decision makers with feasible solutions that advance our national security posture."

An assistant director in IDA's Information Technology and Systems Division, Odell instinctively knows where to find the relevant data, what analytic tools to apply, and how to help sponsors visualize the outcomes to inform and improve decision making. Her leadership has improved IDA's ability to create solutions that are timely and actionable by its sponsors. In addition, she dedicates her efforts to developing projects that are of interest to her team, creating opportunities to expand their skills. Odell is exceedingly generous with her time, helping other project leaders in their career progression across IDA.

Odell earned her bachelor's degree in electrical engineering from the Institute of Technology (now the College of Science and Engineering) at the University of Minnesota, a master's degree in contract acquisition management, and another master's degree in management from the Florida Institute of Technology.

She is a member of the Acquisition Professional Community, the Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers, a ThanksUSA board member, and a graduate of the MIT Seminar XXI.

IDA is a nonprofit corporation that operates three Federally Funded Research and Development Centers in the public interest. IDA answers the most challenging U.S. security and science policy questions with objective analysis leveraging extraordinary scientific, technical, and analytic expertise.