



U.S. Department of Justice

National Institute of Corrections

Washington, DC 20534

**Larch Correctional Center Culture Assessment
Technical Assistance Report**

October 31, 2017

Technical Assistance No: 17P1017

Project Title: State of Washington Department of Corrections
Technical Assistance – Site Assessment
Larch Correctional center (LCC)

Submitted to: Stephen Sinclair, Secretary
State of Washington Department of Corrections
P.O. Box 41101
Olympia, Washington 98504

Submitted by: Susan Poole, Criminal Justice Consultant
14562 Nevada Court
Fontana, CA 92336

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U.S. Department of Justice
National Institute of Corrections

Washington, DC 20534

Disclaimer

RE: NIC TA No.17P1017

This technical assistance activity was funded by the Prisons Division of the National Institute of Corrections. The Institute is a Federal agency established to provide assistance to strengthen state and local correctional agencies by creating more effective, humane, safe and just correctional services.

The resource person(s) who provided the onsite technical assistance did so through a cooperative agreement, at the request of the Washington Department of Correction, and through coordination of the National Institute of Corrections. This direct onsite assistance and subsequent report is intended to assist the agency in addressing issues outlined in the original request to enhance the effectiveness of the agency.

The contents of this document reflect the views of Susan Poole and the assessment team. The contents do not necessarily reflect the views of the National Institute of Corrections.

**ON-SITE VISIT TO STATE OF WASHINGTON DEPARTMENT OF
CORRECTIONS
LARCH CORRECTIONAL CENTER
National Institute of Corrections
September 25-28, 2017**

Reference: NIC Technical Assistance Request 17P1017

I. **Initial Request:** Technical Assistance to complete a cultural assessment of Larch Correctional Center (LCC). Specifically, in February 2017, NIC received a request from former Secretary, Jody Becker, MSW, PhD. The request was for technical assistance to conduct an external review, provide recommendations, and assist leadership to further develop strategies that will foster cultural change. Further the request for assistance was to include meeting with agency administrators, facility staff and inmates, and community stakeholders to gain perspective from each group. Some of the specific areas of concern include:

- Allegations of institutional racism
- Lack of open and honest communication between management and staff
- Discriminatory hiring practices
- Allegations of retaliation

II. **NIC Consultant Team**

Susan E. Poole (Lead)
Criminal Justice Consultant
susan.poole@sbcglobal.net

Pete Curcio
Criminal Justice Consultant
petec33@oponline.net

Larry Reid
Criminal Justice Consultant
lreidccs@comcast.net

Heather Simons
Criminal Justice Consultant
shotcreek@gmail.com

Note: Consultant Bios provided in Appendix

III. Background/History of the Facility



WA DOC - Larch Corrections Center (LCC) is a state prison. This penitentiary is operated by the State of Washington Department of Corrections (DOC) and is used to house and rehabilitate criminals sentenced by a judge to a specific commitment term. The state's prisons are funded by state tax money to provide food and clothes to inmates and to train and hire employees to operate the prison efficiently.

Larch Corrections Center (LCC) is classified as a minimum security facility in Yacolt, Washington. It opened in 1956 and houses 480 male inmates and employs 150 staff. The facility houses inmates who are serving the last four years of their sentence in a camp setting. The Superintendent is Lisa Oliver-Estes. Superintendent Oliver-Estes joined the Department of Corrections in 1990, starting as a mental health intern from Eastern Washington University before taking a full-time position at the Washington State Penitentiary. Over the years, she has held positions as Correctional Mental Health Counselor, Classification Counselor, Corrections Specialist (Ad-Seg), Correctional Unit Supervisor, Captain, Correctional Program Manager, eventually leading to her appointment as Larch Corrections Center Superintendent in October of 2015.

Facilitating classes for correctional staff since 1994, Supt. Oliver-Estes has taught at the Criminal Justice Training Academy (CJTC), Correctional Worker CORE, Annual In-Service, and continues to teach for the department as a Supervision & Leadership facilitator, teaching curriculum for new first-level supervisors.

Supt. Oliver-Estes is a strong supporter of offender education and Cognitive Behavioral Interventions (CBI), as well as, vocational programs that will assist offenders in obtaining gainful employment upon release. As an avid supporter of animal welfare programs in the community, Supt. Oliver-Estes is proud to collaborate with the Humane Society of Southwest Washington on basic training and socialization programs within LCC, affording offenders the opportunity to give rescue animals an opportunity at a "forever home." In addition to her love of corrections work and animals, Lisa is a strong supporter of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES) advocacy programs in her community.

IV. Preparation of Work:

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Before arrival at the site and while on site, a variety of policy and procedural documents and memoranda provided by the Larch Correctional Center (LCC) staff were reviewed. **(Refer to Attachment A)** Comments regarding these reviews are included under specific areas in the observations provided throughout the report.

A series of telephone contacts and discussions were held to identify the scope of the review and target areas for assessment.

Methodology: Consultants established an agenda for the three day site visit in conjunction with Lisa Oliver-Estes, Warden. **(Attachment B)** The assessment consisted of an entrance meeting with Warden Oliver-Estes and her Executive staff. The Executive Staff were asked to complete a survey entitled "Employer Checklist on Workplace Environment and Satisfaction" **(Attachment C)**. The checklist is designed to evaluate the workplace environment and satisfaction level. The more affirmative statements that are checked off, the closer an organization is to achieving a more positive and productive workplace. A positive workplace means less absenteeism and turnover. This means increased productivity. The results of this survey were reviewed and summarized as follows:

The checklist responses revealed overall satisfaction in the work place from the employers' perspective. There were no indications of an unsafe work place, and safety doesn't appear as a concern. A few surveys indicate that there is sometimes difficulty communicating about work place concerns. A commitment to individual and career development is less positive than the other categories, but in most cases those are scored as "sometimes". This is evidence of progress, and an indicator that managers are recognizing when creativity and inspiration is showing up at work. Overall, management's belief is that employees would like to be paid more and afforded more opportunities to advance. Reward and recognition questions indicate that there is room to improve, as well as categories for bullying and addressing harassment. Employers also responded that employees not having enough time to complete work, is also a concern, and drives overtime. A few responses clarified this as relates to staffing needs.

These comments were utilized as the basis for comparison with the feelings and beliefs of staff and formed the basis of comparison to how staff and inmates view the facility operation.

- V. During the three day period individual interviews with selected members of the LCC staff were held. **(Refer back to the Agenda)**. In order to obtain a balanced assessment of the operation, several focus groups were also held with a cross section of staff representing custody, non-custody, and supervisory personnel. In addition focus groups were scheduled with a group of inmates and community volunteers. **Note:** On the last day of the assessment an open invitation was extended to any staff members that had not been selected to attend the prior focus groups, to participate in a separate group discussion. This way any staff member that wanted to have access to the assessment team would have an opportunity to be heard.
- VI. **Focus Groups** The focus groups were conducted using established protocols and the names and identities of the participants were not captured to ensure anonymity. Their responses were utilized

as one source of information to assist consultants in exploring/assessing policy, operations and institution culture. As a part of the focus group the following activities occurred:

A. Staff Focus Group Exercise

Word Association Exercise

Participants were asked to write down the first thing that comes to mind when they heard the following words spoken by the consultant. The purpose of the exercise was to provide quick identification of areas that may be "hot button" issues for further discussion within the group. Written responses were analyzed to determine patterns and variety of opinions across these issues. The words chosen for this exercise were announced quickly, allowing participants a brief period to record their "first" reactions. The words chosen for this exercise were:

Facility Management Team
 Teamwork
 Offenders/Residents
 Culture
 Investigations
 Staff Morale
 Inmate Programs
 Health Services
 Inmate Programs
 Staff Training
 Respect/Fairness

The words were chosen to elicit opinions and perspectives on a sampling of areas that may affect the effectiveness of the staff functioning in productive ways. Some words are used to gain insight into the participants' understanding of the organization of the agency and relevant to the subject matter being explored.

B. Guided Written Questions

This exercise consists eliciting participants' thoughts about the running the facility and their own remedies. Consultants introduced the exercise by explaining that everyone in an institutional setting has responsibilities; that their function and where they fit gives them a unique perspective on ways that the institution could continue to improve.

Participants are asked to write their responses to the following question:

- 1) If you were sitting in the warden's chair and could do anything you wanted to improve the facility, what three things would you do? (**Attachment D**)

Comments and responses from both staff and inmates during the focus group processes are analyzed and are used in part, as a basis for discussion under Summary of Observations. (**Attachments E and F**)

- C. Consultants also walked and talked with staff that they encountered while on tour and during down time between interviews

VII. General Observations



General Observations

- The overall appearance of the facility was clean and it appears this was the practice rather than the exception.
- Interaction between the warden and inmates we encountered on the tour were generally cordial and she appeared to be known on the compound.
- The informal culture at Larch includes communication challenges between uniform and non-uniform staff.
- There appears to be varying approaches to accountability and support for the inmate programs.
- Larch has some unique circumstances which take a toll on staff resiliency. The commute in the winter makes access to the facility additionally stressful for some employees.
- In the focus groups many staff spoke candidly and felt comfortable doing so. It appears that they were willing to share their views with consultants. However, some were reluctant to speak up depending upon who was also present in the room. This would be shared in one on one encounters while consultants toured.
- Consultants found many staff hard at work and they genuinely seemed to care about each other. Consultants encountered many staff that were knowledgeable and passionate about their work
- There were many references to comradery among staff
- While the communication with consultants was respectful, there were undertones of disrespect in some of the responses expressed by staff about inmates, overheard while speaking with staff.
- Staff and volunteers indicated that for the most part they felt safe working at this facility.

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LEADERSHIP AND PHILOSOPHY

The Leadership team articulated their commitment to the department's mission to successfully re-enter offenders and prepare them for work. They were open about their concerns that security staff are having difficulty adjusting to the new team and, realize this will take time. Discussions with the workforce revealed a community commitment to improving communication, work opportunities and competing missions. The workforce, whether in focus groups, or individual interviews was clear there was more optimism about the leadership than there has been in a long time, and they hoped that the superintendent will make herself more visible in the units, the chapel, foods service, and around the facility overall. Below are a few of the major themes.

1. Ongoing concern that the facility will close
2. Competing missions between security staff and Work/Programs and education
3. Medical clearances for work are at times in conflict with the work required.

There were re-occurring statements about the facility mission centered on the complexities with maintaining a safe and secure facility and staying committed to overarching point of Larch as a work camp. Staff are frustrated about their areas of responsibility and admit that they regularly find themselves competing for inmates.

Examples of this include:

1. Department of Natural Resources (DNR) requirement to maintain a certain number under contract
2. Clark college requires a certain number enrolled
3. Thinking for Change needs enough inmates to hold the groups
4. Residents need to be classified appropriately and placed into appropriate work assignments to be useful and meaningful.
5. Facility criteria for Therapeutic community

There is anxiety regarding the implementation of the therapeutic community, and the lack of communication about this may cause barriers to its success. Simultaneously, there isn't any resistance to the concept or the usefulness of TC', but rather concern for unintended consequences that could impede its success. Communication is a challenge and the change in leadership has created some continued confusion regarding the direction of the facility.

Strengths: During the facility analysis, consultants were primarily exposed to facility level leadership, However, the fact that the agency head had endorsed and requested this on site analysis from the National Institute of Corrections, that request validates that the WADOC values a true independent analysis and desire to invoke improvements, if necessary. On the facility level, it is obvious that Superintendent Oliver-Estes provides dynamic leadership and has under her charge a qualified and enthusiastic senior leadership team. It should be noted that there was only one minority present for the senior leadership forum among approximately 10 members of the leadership team in attendance on the first day of our review.

Larch Correctional Center staff has undergone a unique period of uncertainty of the facility status, i.e. remaining open or closing, by the previous two Department of Corrections Secretaries. The facility staff had begun the process of shuttering the facility, reducing the offender population and staff when the decision to close was reversed and Larch Correctional Center was to remain open. In addition, during this period of time to the present, there have been five different superintendents assigned to the Center. Each superintendent brought their management style and philosophy to the Center. Despite the reoccurring leadership turnover and operational changes, the remaining staff managed to meet the department's directives in a relatively safe and secure manner.

Challenges : It appears there is a disconnect between the positive culture Superintendent Oliver-Estes is trying to promote with her leadership team and what may actually be in effect through first line supervisors and line staff. The same positive messages and direction exhibited by senior leadership was not echoed by the resident population and first line supervisors. The remoteness of the facility presents a significant challenge to recruitment of staff which may offer more candidates who share the philosophy of the same mission and goals of the current superintendent.

Instability of leadership at Larch Correctional Center and the differing management philosophies of the previous superintendents, has weakened the "buy-in" particularly of the custody staff who have been at the facility for the longest period of time. Those staff represented the stability within the operations of the center, and was considered by less seasoned staff as the actual leadership of the center. This created a "divide" between administrative, custody and program staff. Also, Education and Treatment staff assigned to Larch are not in the chain of command of the superintendent. They are directly supervised independently at the headquarters level.

Opportunities: It appears that some cultural change has taken place at LCC under the current leadership, but it is evident that much more work needs to be done to foster a sense of trust in custodial staff by the offender population and for line staff and first line supervisors to develop an understanding on why the residents need to be treated firmly but fairly. There are opportunities for cross training, external training and in service training and education.

With a concerted effort of Management by Walking around (MBWA) by the current Larch Leadership there is opportunity to restore confidence in the leadership, provide explanation, clarification and to seek contributions from all staff in achieving the department's vision and mission

That EXTERNAL SUPPORT (STAKEHOLDERS) Community partnerships are encouraged and valued.

Volunteer and Community Focus Group

Participants	Volunteer Program Area
Robin Jenson	Celebrate Recovery Christian Motorcycle Association
Ron Borders	Christian Motorcycle Association

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Janna Brown	Sustainability Programs Larch Training Program for Cats and Dogs
Charles F. Sparks	Jehovah's Witness Program
Lynn Marzelle	NAACP Vancouver Chapter
Bob Andrews	NAACP Vancouver Chapter

General Comments/Observations

Two of the participants had family members that were incarcerated at one time. In both cases, that experience provided the incentive to work within the system to provide enhanced opportunities for offenders to have "hope" about their future. One stated their Attitudes changed from "Lock them up" to "they need help".

Another participant was a former inmate that found religion while incarcerated and through participation at church in the community began to volunteer for Celebrate Recovery Program about two years ago. He also operates a Transitional Housing program in the community for former inmates that is cost free.

Another participant was a former employees at Larch Correctional Center in Food Services, and who retired nine years ago. He is currently is member of the NAACP Vancouver Chapter, and offered a unique perspective on the facility operation over time.

All seemed interested and committed to positively impacting the lives of the inmates at LCC and expressed a willingness to work with the current Administration and staff at the facility.

Strengths

The mission of the facility in their opinion is to prepare offenders for their eventual return to the community as productive citizens. LCC is different than others institutions, they say, because the staff are more willing to work with volunteers. The volunteers expressed that the programs offered at the LCC provide offenders with employable skills and the ability to get in touch with their humanity by interacting and caring for something outside of themselves. This is in reference to the sustainability programs. In addition these programs teach responsibility and accountability.

The volunteers have confidence in the Management staff of the facility and feel they are approachable.

Challenges

The community members from the NAACP stated that they visited the facility recently and it appears that there are some excellent programs e.g. woodworking etc., but on that visit they did not see "people of color "(inmates) participating in those programs. These inmates were mostly in the gym and recreation areas. They could not say whether or not this is routine or if the inmates are offered opportunities to participate. If they are and choose not to participate that is out of management's control. On the other hand, if they are not afforded the opportunity to participate in programs, that would be a legitimate concern.

From a cultural standpoint they reported hearing negative feedback from employees about their experience with the institution such as:

- An employee that was recently terminated who feels he was not treated fairly
- From people who were moved out during the downsizing efforts that claim they can't get back to the facility, although they have an interest in doing so
- From a current employee that states that he feels he is in prison there rather than an employee.

Note: Time did not permit an exploration of the validity of these statement, nor did the participants suggest that these were factual representations of the situation. They were provided as examples of the types of concerns that have been brought to the NAACP.

Because there are so many programming opportunities for offenders at the facility, there are sometimes scheduling conflicts which limit participation in the religious services and programs offered.

Volunteers are appreciated by the facility, however, some of the requirements for becoming a volunteer are sometimes overly burdensome and may dissuade some people from participation. In addition, it would be helpful if the necessity for some of the requirements were fully explained to volunteers. **Example:** "We were asked to sign six documents, but not given time to read through what we were signing. We were told we could read them at our leisure."

The religious volunteers provided an example of a process that would allow inmates to document prayer requests and have them delivered via the volunteers to their respective churches for members of the congregation to pray for them or a member of their family. This has been disallowed. They state that other institutions allow it, but they have not been given an opportunity to discuss any alternatives with facility management that would allow this to happen. They are disappointed that there is no ability to air their concerns and get a reasonable response.

Opportunities

In September 2017 Superintendent Lisa Oliver-Estes invited representatives for the NAACP, Vancouver Chapter to come out to tour the institution. The tour was very informative and served to open lines of communication between the two entities. The NAACP representatives gave kudos to the Superintendent and her staff for their efforts in trying to make a positive impact in the lives of the offenders by offering programming opportunities. While they acknowledge that there is and has been some conflict between management and a segment of the staff population, they could not specifically pinpoint the source of the conflict or offer a ready solution. They stated that they stand ready to work with the Superintendent to make progress in continuing to create a positive culture. They hope that together they can bring staff closer together and that their involvement can shed some light on the longstanding culture differences. They are aware that changing the culture of an institution does not occur overnight and they trust that they will continue to see the Superintendent follow through on the goals that she has expressed.

It was suggested to Superintendent Oliver-Estes that she make a concerted effort to forge additional partnerships with community groups such as the NAACP, Kiwanis, and Toastmasters etc. Her outreach to these and other groups can be a bridge to forging new relationship between the institution and the community it serves. There are members of her staff who belong to these organizations and they can assist her in building these dynamic partnerships if she is willing to engage them in the process

The religious volunteers are passionate about their work with the facility and dedicated to making a difference. They are supportive of the Superintendent and say they have seen positive change under her leadership. They would like to see her remain there.

STAFF TRAINING

Strengths. All staff attend the DOC academy. This cross training is required for all staff and is well thought of by management and line staff. The facility offers drug detection, intel training, as well as inmate recovery and people speak highly of this training as well. There was also positive feedback about the department Advanced Corrections training. There is however no competency based assessment or testing yet, but consultants understood this to be a work in progress.

Challenges: Competing missions within the facility appear to be adding to the confusion about priorities, for example there's a considerable amount of security training offered but not a lot of training regarding strength based approaches to reentry, motivational interviewing, case management, positive reinforcement and re-entry readiness for inmates.

Opportunities

There is a need for other corrections training associated with case planning, TC's, PREA, communication, professionalism, demystifying the investigation process, professional boundaries and preventing undue familiarity.

HR Practices/ Staffing and Employee Discipline

HR staff work closely with the executive team and very closely with the superintendent. There are two HR consultants on the property, and both of them are specialists. One is designated senior and serves as the supervisor. They appear to have more of a partnership than supervisor/subordinate relationship, and work closely together. This is strength for this office which serves to consult the Superintendent and the executive team regarding personnel issues, PREA allegations, and EAP referrals. The HR Supervisor was the only one aware of the NIC scheduled visit. HR staff recognized the change in leadership as a positive for the facility the workforce, and the mission of the department. The HR has a fair amount of autonomy, flex schedules and considerable latitude which they admit make things easier for them especially in the winter with weather, ice and snow.

Strengths: The HR staff are included in Monday and Thursday staff meeting with the Superintendent. This allows for ongoing involvement with operational decisions. This is important to gain a better understanding of the facility challenges and workforce wellness. It was also good to see the mission statement posted in the HR office as well.

Challenges: The department structure requires that HR report directly to central office, this can make situations like performance evaluations, coaching and development for HR staff more difficult. Recruitment and retention were named as HR responsibilities but specific activities to improve in this area haven't been developed yet. There is a diversity advisory committee, and HR plans to expand their activities associated with this group.

HR in conjunction with leadership is involved with workforce wellness and culture. One area for improvement is to address confusion about Employee Assistance Programs (EAP) and the staff psychologist program. There may be some additional opportunities for HR to market the mission of each of these programs and be clearer about how these programs can help employees. Employees can't access EAP directly and go through HR for referrals. This is problematic for employees who may not want to include DOC in their wellness concerns. Below are additional examples of areas that may need further review.

- The nepotism policy for the department does not disallow couples and family members from working at the same site. HR consultants revealed that it's not uncommon to manage personnel issues related to relatives or couples working together.
- Create a better understanding of the DOC psychologist program and EAP

Opportunities: With regards to staff culture and HR connection. Additional training and support for HR regarding PREA would help them have a deeper understanding of the imbalance of power that happens within a facility. This is an important consideration for HR given they felt strongly that inmates had manipulated staff and "compromised" them. There are resources and information available if there is interest in improving the integrity of the hiring process and QA with the interview questions.

CO interviews and hiring all happen on the same scheduled day. If Applicants are late because they have trouble finding the site, they're rescheduled. If they don't fill out their forms accurately, they're returned to the back of the line. An applicants should plan to spend an entire day waiting. There may be some opportunities to discuss a more welcoming process to encourage the qualified and eager candidates to stay.

OFFENDER MANAGEMENT (SANCTIONS, DISCIPLINE, AND GREIVANCES))

Strengths: The facility has extremely low violence levels from the perspective of both offenders and staff. This is testament to the primary mission of corrections which is care, custody and control. The facility had good order with a sense of control which provides for a safe and secure environment. The facility leadership, for the most part, seemed to have a good working relationship with common mission and goals.

Sanctions and discipline seem to be administered when needed and undoubtedly help the facility maintain its low violence levels.

Challenges: First line supervisors and some line staff seemed less motivated than senior management to engage in a positive culture. This was an obvious disconnect that was echoed in sentiment by the offenders and witnessed by NIC consultants. There are several inherent reasons such as differences in pay, scope of responsibility, etc. Other reasons could include an "us vs. them" mentality, longstanding bias which may come from some tenured staff who have been at the facility their entire career and/or for long periods of time and have not been exposed to progressive correctional best practices. Consultants did not view statistics on offender grievance levels and history, from the offender's perspective the grievance system is essentially nonexistent as a viable tool for reviewing complaints.

Facility staff report that some line staff go out of their way to be disruptive in doing room searches and intentionally destroy inmate property. It was also reported that there was an incident where a staff member intentionally planted a weapon in an inmate's cell and bragged about it to other staff. Consultants were not able to verify the degree to which incidents of this type occurred. However, this type of behavior is certainly contraindicated in a healthy culture and does not reflect professionalism.

Opportunities: Whether real or perceived, if the offenders have no faith in the grievance process then it should be reviewed with an open perspective geared towards reviewing and improving the process to alleviate offender concerns. The origin behind the offender grievance process is to satisfy issues before they get to the level of litigation or affect offender behavior. Making improvements can resolve more issues on the facility level, prevent the furtherance of litigation and further improve staff/offender relations and further violence levels while increasing intelligence gathering.

Facility management should make every effort to ensure that staff are aware of and understand their duty to perform in a professional manner. All incidents that violate policy should be immediately addressed and progressive discipline employed.

SECURITY /STAFF & INMATE SAFETY

Strengths: From the perspective of both the offenders and staff, resident safety is in good order with minimal violence activity in the facility. This is testament to the communication and enforcement of the rules and regulations of the agency and the facility.

Challenges : Some supervisors expressed that they are 'caught in the middle" between senior management who are pushing a change towards developing positive staff/offender mentoring relationships with the offenders and their role which they see to be strict on security and step back from progressive correctional ideology. One supervisor expressed in summary that he doesn't really want to talk to any of the offenders and rarely sees them while another sat blindly staring at the wall when asked to provide feedback on things that can be improved in the facility. Some senior management expressed that prior to their arrival, staff were penalized strictly for mistakes and therefore were reluctant to make decisions. This culture is

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changing they said with more staff are feeling empowered to make decisions that would normally be within their scope. The offenders expressed strongly that these supervisors and line staff abuse their authority over the residents. Whether real or perceived, this belief needs to be addressed.

Opportunities: There appears to be ample opportunity to bridge the gap between the progressive ideology of the senior staff with the uncooperative attitude exhibited by some supervisors and the abuse of power sentiments of the resident population. It might be beneficial to further explore this disconnect in this regard through further research and study and then address identified root causes.

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING /LABOR/MANAGEMENT RELATIONS

Strengths: With a concerted effort of Management by Walking around (MBWA) by the current Larch Leadership there is opportunity to restore confidence in the leadership, provide explanation, clarification and to seek contributions from all staff in achieving the department's vision and mission

Challenges: The perception of entitlement of correctional sergeants by the current Larch leadership team. Information provided by the Larch Leadership indicated that the majority of the sergeants have utilized nearly all of their vacation and sick leave, some with less than one day remaining on the books. This is perceived by the leadership and administration as abuse which hinders the ability to adequately staff each shift and creates a deficit in the ability to provide adequate correctional staff supervision.

It was reported that the Union successfully negotiated the doing away with shift roll calls. Leadership and the majority of staff i.e. programs, custody and treatment staff would prefer a standardized process to share and receive information with on-coming shifts.

Opportunities: There seems to be a relationship currently of open and direct communications in this area. This should provide opportunity for the leadership team and labor management to routinely meet to openly discuss and address the perceived or actual issues.

LITIGATION AND EMPLOYEE GREIVANCES/COMPLAINTS

Strengths: The current leadership team expressed that they inherited sexual misconduct cases upon their arrival. These cases are being addressed and some have been resolved through the department's investigations.

Larch has promoted a highly skilled and enthusiastic Administrative Assistant for this area. She is developing a facility level tracking system which will accurately depict when grievance/complaints arrive, who it was assigned to for investigation and timely response. This tracking system will inform the person assigned of time requirements to be met and also alert the CPM and the Superintendent of the grievance/complaint status.

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Challenges: None

Opportunities: To ensure and account for timely and legitimate responses to both staff and inmate grievances/complaints.

Consultants utilized the following additional criteria/factors to assess the culture:

Do staff feel they have a voice?

Premise: *Generally, organizations with highly rated cultures give their employees, regardless of rank or level, the opportunity to speak their mind. Whether it's getting their feedback for a new policy or allowing them to voice concerns on a matter, providing a platform for employees to say their piece gives them more control and helps effectively guide company policy.*

Strengths: The superintendent and her team all seem approachable. It was evident through observation that they knew the facility well, had good knowledge of the resident population and their individual issues and history.

Challenges: It appears line and some first line supervisors may not share the same philosophy as the superintendent and her senior staff. Senior staff seems to be working hard towards favorable offender/staff relations and mutual respect where some line staff and supervisory staff may be harboring animosity and resistance towards changes in policy and philosophy which may be more beneficial to the offenders. Part of this challenge may be rooted in the frequent turnover before the approximate 2 year tenure of Superintendent Oliver-Estes and some staff in our first line supervisor focus group seemed to question how much longer the current superintendent would be around, seemingly hoping she would be transferred soon.

There appears to be disconnection with communications within Larch divided by departmental silos. As mentioned previously, the supervision and direct reporting of program, treatment, business services, and human resources staff do not report directly to the superintendent. With that being said, the receipt, succinctness, clarity and accuracy of information varies tremendously by each department represented at the facility. Facility staff are reporting and giving feedback up their chain of command.

Regarding departmental policies, consultants review of the policies provided for this project were dated 2015 and signed by a Washington Department of Corrections Secretary that is no longer with the department. There appears to be a systemic issue with updating policies and seeking staff input. This is based, in part by conversations with staff at all levels at Larch. Staff commented that rarely are the asked to contribute to the development of department or local policies "under the current administration."

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Opportunities: Changing the culture of an institution is ever evolving. It appears that some progress has been made. However, in closed interviews and from personal observations, all the staff across the various ranks and disciplines may not share the same philosophy. Staff also feel they are overworked and don't have time or energy to invoke positive changes during these periods of high demand with less resources while wearing the various "hats" each staff member must bear in a smaller command where resources are scarce. There is ample opportunity to further reinforce positive changes, reward desired behavior and work to align everyone in the facility in furtherance of the same goals.

One opportunity to positively impact the culture would be for the current administration both local and departmental to engage and solicit comments from staff in the policy development process.

Do supervisors feel they have autonomy their position?

Premise: Not all jobs lend themselves to independence, but some positions in an organization allow for at least some level of autonomous decision making. Are supervisors trusted to make the right call when questions or problems come up?

Supervisors make a lot of operational decisions. The impression of the supervisors by non-uniform staff and inmate focus groups is that the supervisors make a lot of decisions that don't make sense or are excessively punitive. Again this may be an opportunity for improved messaging and cross training.

Strengths: Ironically, senior staff conveyed a feeling that when they were first assigned to Larch, they felt staff did not feel empowered to make their own decisions for fear of being disciplined for the wrong decision. Senior staff conveyed that they worked hard to change this culture and now empower staff to make decisions within their scope of authority. There was no evidence witnessed that would suggest staff do not feel empowered to make their own decisions.

Particularly with custody staff, our impression is by default they have had to make independent decisions regarding the facility operations by shifts that impact in their opinion the overall safety and security of the center.

Challenges: Staff may feel too empowered and may be exposing their personal philosophy or ideology of corrections and not that of senior staff. The offenders strongly expressed that they feel like they walk on egg shells because lower level staff exaggerate the rules to maintain oppression over the offenders.

The absence of current facility leadership making rounds and building trust with staff means that these perceptions go unchallenged.

Opportunities: There are ample opportunities to conduct off tour inspections, temporarily redeploy staff to other shifts to conduct tours and further examine if there is any validity or substance to the offender concerns.

While staff at LCC s may have differing opinions and points of view, they appeared deeply committed to the facility operations. The current facility leadership could benefit from management by walking Around (MBWA). This would increase the likelihood of ensuring that their messages that they are sending out are being accurately conveyed to staff.

Increased presence by managers on the weekend and second and third shift can serve to increase communication by gaining an understanding of the environment and operational concerns that the staff may be experiencing.

Is facility communication clear and transparent?

Premise: Institutions dedicated to building a good culture make a point of communicating all decisions in a manner that is easily understood and as transparent as possible. This shows that they care about their employees enough to thoroughly explain their rationale and reasoning behind a decision and not just keep people in the dark who may not 'need to know'.

Strengths: There was evidence of communication between employees, primarily by email which is a good method but not always favorable in all instances of communication. Email is fast and permits the same message to go out to multiple staff members simultaneously.

The leadership team is optimistic about changes and committed to being transparent. There is less enthusiasm regarding these efforts down the chain. The opportunities to create more stability and improve messaging could be addressed by being more visible and walking around. There are efforts being made to create more clarity around roles as well

Challenges: Larch Correctional Center is lacking in organizational chemistry due to the lack of organizational communications.

In just about every communication method discussed by all staff consultants spoke with, email communication seemed to be the number one method of communication. This was to the extent that it may be relied on too heavily and doesn't always provide adequate feedback or solid interpretation for staff, if in fact it is even confirmed as received.

Opportunities: Effective communication requires specific instructions with little to no room for interpretation, acknowledgment of the message, an understanding of the message and an opportunity to provide feedback and in some cases to understand the emotions of the author or sender. There appears to be ample opportunity to employ other effective communication methods other than email.

Do employees feel valued?

Premise: *Some organizations go above and beyond with employee appreciation, but an organization doesn't need to break the bank to show their employees they care about them. The value isn't necessarily in what the organization does, just the fact that they're offering something can show they care.*

Strengths: The superintendent and the senior staff seemed to know their junior and line staff and their functions well. They came across as genuine and supportive of subordinate staff and reflected a positive attitude and care for staff.

Current administration supports staff activities occurring at the facility such as pot lucks, cooking competitions etc.

The degree to which staff feel valued, varied a great deal. Administrative staff and staff in the administrative building were most positive about the support they get. They expressed satisfaction with the job trade program, flexible work hours, and support in professional development. Training staff appear to be happy with the job duties and the opportunities offered to them

Challenges: Not all staff participate in the staff activities held at the institution. This may be due to lack of interest or an inability to access the activities due to performance of their duties. Time did not permit further exploration of the underlying reasons.

With employee recognition there is always room for improvement especially when trying to change the culture of an institution. Some staff seemed to be less engaged than others and it is always a challenge to identify and enlist the cooperation of those holdouts.

Kitchen staff, Chaplain, Education, and Medical appeared less concerned about the support they are receiving, but also felt optimistic about the new leadership team and would like to see more of them. They're interested in improving respectful communication by the security and operations staff, as well as having a better understanding of inmate accountability. This was evident with DNR and the unintended consequences of inmate sanctions and frustration about what constitutes a legitimate reason to remove someone from the fire crew.

Opportunities: There are various ways to engage reluctant staff in culture changes such as appointing them to committees, trying to identify what motivates them and soliciting buy in, discussing their philosophy of their opposition, among others. These persons and practices should be further explored with the goal of improving the facility culture by targeting those most resistant to change. Some other options include:

- More information about the difference between EAP and DOC staff psychology program
- Increased visibility in areas where there isn't a lot presence i.e. Kitchen, Education, Chapel
- Assessment of the DR process for work removal

Are policies uniformly enforced?

Premise: *Organizations that pass down decisions or mandates and then only selectively reinforce send the message to their employees that they are not all equal. When an individual in a leadership position doesn't follow the rules, an organization committed to promoting a good culture will intervene to show that no special treatment is allowed; everyone is in this together and has to abide by the same guidelines.*

Strengths: This is an area that the current Corrections Program Manager (CPM) is working to improve.

Consultants did not observe any evidence to support selective discipline.

Challenges: While there was no evidence to support selective discipline, there was concern exhibited through interviews and forums that suggest some discipline issues are distracting the goals and mission of senior management. Some staff feel the discipline and staff grievance process is in some cases being exploited for personal gain or personal defense and is distracting to core functions and fostering teamwork among units and employees.

Opportunities: Training, education, a speedy and transparent discipline process along with the establishment of clear expectations, effective communication of those expectations and reinforcement of those objectives in concert with a robust employee rewards and recognition program can foster a positive environment for discipline, training and education.

Provide Mission, Vision and Leadership training. Become proficient in explaining the "why."

A more fluent understanding of the policies and their fit could potentially bring facility groups together.

Do leaders practice what they preach?

Premise: *Poor organizational cultures often play host to hypocritical or insincere leadership. If an individual in a position of power is encouraging or requiring their subordinates to adhere to a certain process or rule, they set the tone for the situation when they either act as a role model by making a point to do so themselves, or set a bad example by ignoring their own advice. Good culture fosters behavior similar to the former.*

Strengths: The request for NIC TA, and the openness that leaders displayed indicates that this facility is heading in the right direction. The transition has been complicated and busy. Generally staff were eager to talk about the positive work, their optimism and hope for the future of Larch, with few exceptions. The changes that have been made are well received and people like their jobs. Potluck events, the DAC meetings, and the opportunities being created for cross training are all evidence based activities that support leadership's direction to support the workforce. There is healing happening and there is acknowledgement that things are more peaceful. There was

reference to a previous employee who yelled regularly and acknowledgment that the energy is better since they retired.

There was no evidence to suggest that leadership does not practice what they preach. We observed earnest correctional leadership professionals that conveyed a clear sense of teamwork towards what are believed to be common goals.

Challenges: Time is a challenge, as well as leftover trepidation about the department's willingness to stay open. There's a perception of exclusivity within the executive team because the core group worked together at other facilities. On the other hand there's some concern that the superintendent is judged too harshly and deserves some time to make adjustments. These are symptoms of change and reveal the varying abilities to cope with transition

There is always a concern that line staff may not fully understand the reasons for the actions of senior management. This goes back to effective education and understanding of the catalyst behind the policy or procedure and an in depth understanding by the line staff of why it has value to the agency and why it must be followed.

One example of inconsistencies that have been allowed is; Supervisors particularly in custody have been held accountable for the completion of staff performance evaluation. Consultants were informed that some evaluations are in excess of two years in arrears, which obviously affects staff morale and possible promotional opportunities.

Another example provided is the perception that although the superintendent says she has an open door policy, she also has a select group of people, not just those staff that report directly to her, with whom she spends time. Staff feel these people receive preferential treatment when it comes to assignments and discipline.

Opportunities: Leadership's willingness to be present and visible is essential in moving forward, this is low hanging fruit and will reap benefits right away. Staff and inmates were positive about the idea that they could connect with leadership more often with more leadership visibility everywhere in the facility

1. More aggressive info sharing and messaging i.e. the department plan for therapeutic community
2. Clarity regarding inmate accountability
3. Additional PREA training to reinforce staff knowledge of the dynamics of a culture with an imbalance of power and the responsibility to protect inmate safety
4. Transparent hiring and interview practices
5. Top down involvement in DAC and action planning for inclusivity

There appears to be ample opportunities available to further educate staff on the basis for leadership behavior and amplification of practicing what leadership preaches by touring on off tours, being more demonstrative in training and education and making more frequent tours of inspection to obscure areas of the facility to ensure all tours, areas and programs are explored and challenged to perform the facility mission and goals.

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Management should hold supervisory staff accountable and set a level of expectation for supervisors to complete evaluations per policy and line staff to receive their evaluations as required.

Consultants recommended that institution based social activities be considered to expand the interactions between a wider variety of staff. A few examples discussed for include, attending subordinate staff meetings, hosting birthday and retirement reception (cake and punch) for any staff with a birthday during the month or quarter, sending out birthday cards or holding interviews with subordinate supervisors over time to discuss their goals, interest and special skills. All of these activities would send a message of inclusion.

Is learning and development encouraged?

Premise: *Organizations with good culture recognize their employees as their most valuable asset, and as such devote resources to promoting opportunities for the development of that asset. Encouraging employees to expand their knowledge and skills in work-related areas displays a commitment to and appreciation for the contributions of their employees.*

Strengths: There is a desire for additional training in all areas. Discussions with employees did not reveal any measureable or consistent training in case planning and casework. Facility staff would like to continue to take advantage of the opportunities to move around as a way to enhance their career path. More support for job training and evaluation could help with the perception that it's not always seen as a fair process

There are departmental specialized and routine training requirements which are being followed however, at this point specialized facility training for staff is not occurring.

The program that permits staff members to "test drive" a vacancy in a temporary capacity provides a great opportunity for learning and development along with promotional opportunities. Consultants did not see any examples of external development or in service training.

Challenges: There is a need to identify facility specific training and curriculum.

While the program described above provides opportunities it also provides challenges such as creating another vacancy elsewhere, putting an unqualified employee into a role they are learning at the wheel, putting an employee in a position in a temp capacity which may not be perceived as having the same permanent power of authority in that position by others. Another training challenge presented by both supervisors and offenders was that new staff are being trained by new staff. Supervisors complained that there was a former training program that offer a 5% bonus for field training supervisors but when the funding was cut, so was the effective training.

Correctional Specialist 2 (C2s) are not clear about, case planning or case noting as a way to show progress and identify barriers for Re-entry efforts with regards to community support, work

readiness. Evidence based practices might assist with the cultural shift regarding successful reentry.

Opportunities: The Larch Facility is a learning facility. Programs, education, work training and skill building is priority and directly connected to the positive morale, motivation and credibility of the facility. The Larch/DNR firefighting program trains approximately 200 to 250 inmates a year. The anecdotal data from DOC and with DNR is that this is an empowering program, and not just useful to reentry efforts but also for the state of WA. There's considerable pride about this program by everyone.

There are many suggestions that can be offered for learning and development. These would include those opportunities presented by the National Institute of Corrections, seeking relevant external training opportunities, creating relevant in service training opportunities, step up training programs etc. With respect to the line staff training program, self-funding opportunities to reintroduce that formal training program should be explored.

Is the organization adaptable?

Premise: This last item may be the most important. If an organization makes a decision or tests out a new policy, they need to be prepared to deal with the results of that action. Nobody is perfect; senior leadership in an organization being no exception, and when the decision makers of a facility refuse to acknowledge mistakes and investigate alternative solutions, they're only shooting themselves in the foot. Staying open to the possibility that they might be wrong demonstrates humility, which can help you, as the employee, relate to them. Being flexible and adaptable to changing circumstances is what keeps leaders at the forefront, those that are reluctant to change are destined to falter and fade away given enough time.

Strengths: All entities of the facility are eager to have more information and support. Staff and support services and programs, for example, are not opposed to Therapeutic Communities but expressed concern that the facility is not ready. The belief is that there will be a number of ramifications to DNR, Education, Clark College and other facility jobs and programs. The Chaplain, Humane Society, Educations, Food service, and DNR all expressed a deep commitment to the successful reentry of the inmate population as well as their optimism and pride about being involved with this kind of work

From on sight observations, the facility management is obviously working hard to continue to change the culture of the belief of constantly rotating leadership and continuing efforts towards create and fostering a positive work environment. They seem receptive to tolerance for staff making earnest errors and to train, educate and empower staff.

Challenges: It was evident that not all staff have the same ideology and vision and prefer to stay in their own "silo" while change is attempted and/or effected around them.

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Communication between leadership is complicated and confusing. There were a number of conversations regarding, policy implementation, hiring practices, training practice, and accountability. Facility overall would like to see some more formal follow up about the Monday and Thursday leadership meetings. Additional barriers to communication appear to be competing missions between custody staff (wanting more accountability) and DNR seeing the potential with their program that requires substantial training and support

Opportunities: Every challenge presents an opportunity and the opportunity here is to identify those staff members resistant to change and win them over by outreach, inclusion, oversight, enhanced supervision, training and other methods of motivation to continue to change the culture of the facility.

There are strategic planning exercises that can assist in improving communications of leadership and operations. While it is clear that everyone is committed to the potential and future of the facility, varying staff groups at have differing views about how to achieve these goals.

VII. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The consultants wish to thank Superintendent Oliver-Estes and her staff for their preparation and hospitality to the team, before and during their time on site. The assessment required the redirection of staff and coverage for programs and services. While consultants attempted to be minimally disruptive, they appreciated the accommodation of flexibility demonstrated by the leadership team. It allowed them to accomplish a great deal in the short time allocated for this process.

The majority of our recommendations are included as a part of the findings and opportunity statements. However, there are a couple of issues that are important to emphasize in closing.

- The consultant team spent a total of three days on site. In that time it was not possible to uncover all of the nuances of the culture that exists, particularly given the longstanding nature of some of the issues. However, the team brought to bear a considerable amount of correctional expertise and knowledge of best practices, given their collective work in institutions across the country. Please note that they were careful to assert that some issues reported to them could not always be fully validated. But where they could negatively impact the culture, if true, they were brought to your attention. In that way you can take steps to further evaluate and draw your own conclusions.
- Superintendent Oliver- Estes has been in the position for approximately twenty four months, and it is noted that this was her first assignment as an appointing authority. As such she was put into a tough environment and basically had to learn on the job. The request from the agency stated that she has done an admirable job. Nonetheless, managing an extremely complex environment can be a challenge for even an experienced leader. Setting goals and having vision alone will not ensure smooth operations. Implementation requires a specific set of skills that is either learned over time, which can be costly, or through leadership development and training. It is recommended that the agency identify a same gender mentor that can support Superintendent Oliver-Estes' continued leadership development.

- It is also recommended that the agency evaluate the facility organizational structure as there appears to be a gap in leadership experience in positions reporting directly to the Superintendent. The position of Lieutenant, although a second level supervisor, does not typically have the depth and breadth of experience necessary to provide administrative support. A management level position with the required administrative skills and vision would go a long way to support the Administration's implementation of its stated mission and goals.
- NIC also offers onsite Technical Assistance (TA) to provide Leadership Sustainability training for supervisors and managers at a facility. Following application, if approved by NIC, A team of consultants would come on site to provide training in leadership development. This would afford the institution leadership the opportunity to develop their team and increase subordinate buy in and participation in achieving shared goals.

In closing, I would also like to acknowledge and thank Mr. Russell J. Scott, Deputy Director, Command B, for coming to the facility on the last day of the assessment to meet with the team. It provided an opportunity for debrief and candid discussion of some of the more sensitive issues. His availability and interest in the progress of the assessment and recommendations demonstrated support of Superintendent Oliver-Estes and commitment to effecting a positive change in the culture.

We trust that the information provided herein will be of value in assisting your agency to facilitate positive culture change. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Susan E. Poole

SUSAN E. POOLE
Criminal Justice Consultant
(951) 217-4628
Susan.poole@sbcglobal.net

cc: Evelyn Bush
Correctional Program Specialist
National Institute of Corrections

ATTACHMENT A**Summary of Documents Reviewed**

- WMS Policies and Procedures Manual
- LCC Investigations Information
- AA Diversity Advisory Committee Goal 2017
- Organizational Chart; Race and Shift information included
- Appointing Authority Diversity Advisory Committee Goals for 2017
- Demographics by Appointing Authority – Statewide
- Employee Engagement Survey Result for 2016 (shows prior year comparisons)
- Policies for hiring and promotions, diversity and inclusion
- Disciplinary Actions since October 2015 (includes cases still pending)
- Job Posting-NEOGOV Insight (For Corrections Specialist 2 at LCC)
- Washington DOC Policy 530.155 Family Councils
- Washington DOC Policy 810.800 Recruitment, Selection and Promotions
- Washington DOC Policy 810.005 Diversity
- Washington DOC Policy Guidelines PULEHES Codes
- Position Descriptions/Washington General Services (WGS & Non Management for Corrections Specialist 2 (Varied Duties-4 total)
- Article: “A New Life for Larch” by Kathy Durbin, published July 11,2011 in the Columbian

ATTACHMENT B

Larch Corrections Center: On-Site Agenda

Monday September 25 – Wednesday, September 27, 2017

Monday, September 25, 2017

Observations and informal interviews will occur throughout the duration of the assessment period.

- | | |
|----------|--|
| 8:15 AM | Arrive at Larch Correctional Center
<i>(Meet with Facility Liaison/Team set up and logistics briefing)</i> |
| 9:00 AM | Meet with designated Facility Executive Team – Admin Conference Room
<i>JC Miller (Classification/Programs), Rosa Villena-Bendezu (Food Services), Daniel Delp (Medical), Jason Richer (Unit Manager), Mark Bean (Unit Manager), Lisa Oliver-Estes (Supt.), Daniel Scheetz (Human Resources), Kathy Froehlich (Business Office).</i>
<i>Missing: Shane Maitland (Custody), Terry Hettinger (Plant Maintenance)</i> |
| 10:00 AM | Facility Tour (Warden Lisa Oliver-Estes) |
| 11:00 AM | Break (Team check in) |
| 11:15 AM | Interview 1 – Warden – Lisa Oliver-Estes
Interview 2 – Security - Shane Maitland
Interview 3 - Classification – JC Miller |
| 12:30 PM | Lunch |
| 1:30 PM | Focus Group #1 Supervisory staff – <i>James Brown, Unit Sergeant; Stacy Decoteau-Conley, Warehouse Manager; Barb Olson, Shift Commander/Relief Sergeant; Justin Thibodeaux, Visiting Sergeant/Shift Commander; Barbara Rhyne, Records Manager; Diana Hoiberg, Clerical Supervisor.</i>
Admin Conference Room |
| 1:30 PM | Interview 1 – Medical/Mental Health – Daniel Delp, PA (No MH) |
| 3:00 PM | Interview 1- Reception/Intake – JC Miller, Correctional Program Manager
Interview 2 – Human Resources – Daniel Scheetz, Human Resource
Interview 3 – Substance Abuse Program – Michelle Merrill |

4:15 PM **Focus Group #2-** Inmate Discussion Group **Inmate Roster will be provided the morning of arrival**
Family Room – Programs Building

Visit target Areas of facility for Observation/Walk and Talk

Tuesday, September 26, 2017

Observations and informal interviews will occur throughout the duration of the assessment period.

8:30 AM Arrive at facility /Staff Briefing

9:30AM **Focus Group # 3** Line Staff
Nancy Simmons, Community Involvement/Family Friendly; Aaron McFarland, Classification; TBD, Cook; Elsa Isaac, Secretary Senior; Jason Koivisto, Warehouse; TBD, Program facilitator; five officers representing all three shifts.
Training Room

Focus Group #4 – Community Volunteers – Representatives for the NAACP, Vancouver Branch
 Admin Conference Room

11:15 AM Interview –**Inmate Appeals/Training** – Mike Agloro, Corrections Specialist 2
 Interview- **Employee Discipline** – Supt. Estes, HRC Scheetz
 Interview – **Prison Industries** – Virginia Sigafos, Laundry Supervisor

12:45 PM Lunch

1:45 PM Interview – **Investigations/PREA/Sexual Safety** – JC Miller/CS2 Ribera
 Interview – **Chaplain** – Zilvinias Jakstas, Chaplain

3:15 PM Interview - **Education** -- Doug Helmer, Education Director
 Interview – **Litigation/Legal Staff** – Public Information Officer
 Visit- **target Areas of facility for Observation/Walk and Talk**
 Reception, Culinary, Library, Central Control, Dormitories
Chapel, Factory, Canteen (Store) (

4:30 PM Consultant Debrief

5:00 PM Depart the Facility

Wednesday, September 27, 2017

Observations and informal interviews will occur throughout the duration of the assessment period.

8:30 AM Arrive at facility /Staff Briefing

9:30AM Interview - **Self Help/Inmate Programs** – Program Staff

10:45 AM Interview: **Department of Natural Resources (DNR)**

11:00 AM **Focus Group #5-** Employee Open session for any available staff that
wish to participate Discussion Group
Training Room

12:30 PM Lunch

1:30 PM **Policy/Document Review** – Team

2:30 PM Team debrief/prepare for Exit Briefing – Admin Conference Room

3:30 PM Exit Briefing with Warden

4:00 Pm Exit Briefing with Executive Team and designated staff

5:00 PM Depart the Facility

ATTACHMENT C

Employer Checklist on Workplace Environment and Satisfaction

The checklist is designed to evaluate the workplace environment and satisfaction level. The more statements that you check off, the closer you are to achieving a more positive and productive workplace. A positive workplace means less absenteeism and turnover. This means increased productivity. Addressing factors that cause absenteeism and turnover increases productivity.

Employer Checklist on Workplace Environment and Satisfaction

Satisfaction and Engagement

Statement	Yes	No	Sometimes
Our workplace inspires our employees to be the best workers that they can be.			
Our workplace allows workers to do interesting and challenging work.			
Managers encourage employees to work in a way that allows employees to get a sense of personal accomplishments.			
Our workplace is a positive place to work.			
Our workplace is a good place to work.			

Quality of Work-Life Balance

Statement	Yes	No	Sometimes
Managers encourage employees to balance their work and personal/family life.			
Our workplace affords employees the opportunity to get the support that they need when they need it.			
Our workplace allows employees enough time to complete their work without requiring them to do overtime.			

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Our workplace provides employees with the resources, tools and support that they need to do their jobs to the best			
Our workplace helps employees manage any stress that may arise at work.			

Personal and Professional Growth

Statement	Yes	No	Sometimes
Our workplace enables all of our employees to fully apply their knowledge and skills to their jobs.			
Our workplace provides our employees with opportunities for training and professional development.			
Our workplace provides our employees with opportunities for advancement and growth in their careers.			
Our work environment enables our employees to be fully productive.			
Career opportunities in our workplace go to those who deserve them (merit).			

Compensation and Recognition

Statement	Yes	No	Sometimes
Our workplace communicates clearly how each employee's work contributes to the overall goals of the work place			
Managers give employees sincere and effective feedback about their work performance.			
Managers are encouraged to recognize employees for the work that they do.			
Managers are encouraged to make their employees feel valued and appreciated at the workplace.			
Our workplace offers our employees an appropriate wage/salary for their work.			
Our workplace offers equitable compensation when compared with the work available in the surrounding community.			

Workplace Health and Safety

Statement	Yes	No	Sometimes
Our workplace provides a safe workplace.			
Our workplace discourages and does not tolerate any harassment or discrimination based on (age, gender, sexual, racial, etc.).			
Our workplace discourages and does not tolerate workplace bullying (verbal, emotional, physical).			
Our workplace knows how to deal with workplace safety, health, harassment and discrimination issues			
Employees are comfortable discussing any workplace concerns with their supervisor / managers without fear of reprisal.			
Our workplace is committed to responding to any concerns raised from our employees.			

ATTACHMENT D

Larch Correctional Center Focus Group Exercise (Staff)

Participants were asked to respond to the following question:

If you were sitting in the warden's chair and could do anything you wanted to improve the facility, what three things would you do? Listed below is a summary of their response.

Communication

- Institute a monthly Warden/CO meeting where no other managers or supervisors are allowed. Have it be a safe place where anything can be discussed and where legitimate issues brought are discussed.
- Actually go out into the facility and sit down with line staff in a real way to know what's going on and how decisions are affecting it.
- Get input from staff line staff before making decisions that affect their work
- Have time to spend with our staff "our most valuable asset"
- Listen to staff AND act when issues such as staff manipulation is reported
- Make email more directive in nature
- Be seen within the fence more frequently
- Eliminate barriers between line staff and management
- I would make myself visible and available to staff at all levels
- Do something to help build more comradery/teamwork
- Work on being more inclusive, have executive staff visit unit staff regularly. Check in with different staff and different shifts.
- Meet with staff and ask what works or not and how can we fix it together?

Staffing

- Do a staffing level study
- Stop hiring unqualified people because that is all that applied.
- Hire more staff so we don't wear too many hats
- Transparent hiring process based on merit, qualification, ability

Staff Training

- More in person training and less online refresher courses, especially on important topics
- Have staff that have been here longer train new staff

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- Re-institute In –Person, In Service Training.
- Intensive training/development for managers /leadership

Salaries/incentives

- Pay increase for all staff
- Pay for miles driven
- More money
- Pay increase comparable to county

Treatment of Staff

- Treat all staff equally in all areas and show you care with substance rather than symbolism
- Bridge the gap between uniform and support staff.
- Work on building morale between all staff
- Better working relationship with Business Services and Superintendent. Business Services boss says I don't work for the Superintendent. I say I work with her!
- Snow days of for non-custody staff
- Coach/Staff Training
- Fire bad employees/ "Hold accountable"
- Hold staff accountable (swiftly)
- Implement physical fitness test for new hires/medical screening
- I would look to affirm good behavior

Other

- Have a shuttle to take people to work on snow days (inclement weather days) @ fire department.
- Do away with Temporary counseling
- Cancel implementation of Therapeutic Community
- Appoint a Building Manager
- Up-date position descriptions for staff
- I would not make major changes. Even if not deserved, I would respect prior administration until I gain the trust of employees before making changes
- Have staff (Housing Unit Staff) move between the housing units to improve continuity between housing units.
- More vocational programs for inmates
- Hold managers accountable
- Hold myself accountable
- Value all staff, not just those in my personal bubble
- Show respect towards people of color

ATTACHMENT E

Staff Focus Group Summaries

Group One

General Observations

The staff that attended didn't understand why they were there. Most participants said they were there because there was a training scheduled by headquarters that was cancelled, and they were directed to this meeting. There was further discussion about the purpose of the NIC visit and consultants attempted to reduce any anxiety and confusion as to the purpose of the visit and the focus group. Consultants were advised of a rumor that NIC was visiting because Larch might again be considered for closure.

There was a slow start to the meeting, and consultants had to work to thoughtfully engage with staff to build trust, and by the end of the meeting there were several staff wanting to stay and share ideas and observations. Consultants had to back up and revisit some of the basics... "How long have you been here? Where did you work before? What do you like about your job? By the end there was a tendency to get off track and a fair amount of emotion in the room dating back several years. It was a tricky group to facilitate, a lot of body language and pauses in the beginning.

Ultimately consultants were able to engage the group and build enough trust to initiate what ended as meaningful discussion with passionate and committed staff. One female officer finally said to the group "you have to check on me once in a while, I'm down there (kitchen) alone, I MATTER." Consultants facilitated a high emotion discussion about safety and kept them on track. There was a cross section of program, education, security and supervisors who were in attendance.

Focus Group Discussion/Interaction

- **What's the mission/purpose of this facility?**

There was varying degrees of frustration expressed about communication and direction from leadership. There appears to be underlying mission with uniform staff that confiscating and drugs and holding inmates accountable is the priority at Larch.

- **What are some of the facility's strengths? Challenges?**

Strengths of the facility are the infrastructure dedicated to staying open. Commitment of staff to each other and the DNR program that is skill building and empowering the inmate population to think about the future.

Heather

- **Challenges:** Some questions revealed some longstanding concerns from individuals about Leadership favoritism, safety concerns particularly in the kitchen that is not regularly checked on, and PREA issues including concerns regarding lack of cameras and trainings. The stress of the drive to and from the facility is consideration with attrition. Wrecked cars, vandalism when car-pooling, and lack of funds to purchase safe and sturdy vehicle for winter driving.

What do you like best about working here?

1. Opportunities to learn different jobs
2. Inmate recovery and Intel training
3. The work is interesting and for many, including considerable opportunity to learn skills and cross train in different jobs and career paths

What about working here makes you feel proud?

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2. Successful intel to confiscate drugs
3. SRT training.

To what extent are you comfortable in working with male offenders?

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Are there training topics that would be useful in improving how you work with men?

1. Women staff need more training on boundaries
2. Women staff need to learn how to no be comprise

Do you feel comfortable responding to an incident of sexual abuse or sexual harassment?

1. Staff expressed frustration that they had been reporting and addressing staff (PREA) harassment and misconduct to no avail.

- **Do you feel comfortable reporting an incident of sexual abuse or sexual harassment?**

Inmates are manipulative and staff get compromised. We've been reporting but nothing happens.

DNR is rewarding and the food is better. Humane society and the pet training. Cooking program out on DNR. Firefighting.

- **Tell me what the relationship is like between custody and non-custody staff.**

- Custody staff felt strongly that the Chaplain shouldn't be marrying inmates and the administration should not be allowing it.

- **How would you describe the leadership here at LCC?**

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- Better than before.

Staff stated repeatedly that they think the leadership here is better than it was before they are not clear that information is moving up the chain and they want to see them more often,

Do you feel like that your ideas will be heard by management?

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When questioned about offender management, the focus group estimated that about 5% of the staff treats the residents poorly to some extent. The supervisors exhibited a conflict in their personal philosophy against the philosophy of senior management in that they object to referring to the offenders as "residents". They also expressed that their own philosophy conflicts with their perceived direction from senior management to be "buddy, buddy" with the offenders. Yet another shift commander expressed that he only sees inmates if there is a problem and rarely if ever enters housing units.

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Methods of communication were discussed. Staff elaborated on the various methods:

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- **Share Point:** Online communications
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ATTACHMENT F

Inmate Focus Group Summary/Core Questions

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First impressions were that the offenders in general, were unhappy with the overall conditions at Larch with the primary reason offered is that they felt they are harassed for petty issues and that the restrictions being imposed on them by staff are more representative of a medium/maximum security level than that of a prison camp. They felt in the absence of violence, staff has more idle time to harass them and expressed a strong fear of the line staff and supervisors on the 1400 x 2000 tour.

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were waiting around to “drop the hammer” on them for minor rule violations such as too many lemon juice packets and that retaliation was prevalent when they made complaints or expressed concern about a policy or practice. They said the superintendent is nice but is out of touch with how staff here operate out of common sight.

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Safety:

The offenders said they are generally safe from each other but not always safe from staff who they feel target them for infractions without cause and retaliate if they question things. They expressed a concern for a lack of cameras throughout the facility which they perceive as a lack of oversight for safety.

Wrap Up:

While it is common for offenders to complain about valid institutional rules they may not understand the basis for, the overall consensus of the offenders reporting out was that in comparison to other WADOC facilities, they felt they were being unreasonably targeted for petty issues at Larch; more so than at other facilities, even those with a higher security level. They expressed that in their opinion, there was a disconnect between the message of positive reinforcement they felt the Superintendent was trying to promote which is in contrast to contrast degradation by custodial staff.

APPENDIX

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Susan E. Poole, Retired Warden**CRIMINAL JUSTICE CONSULTANT**

Susan.poole@sbcglobal.net

Ms. Poole is a retired warden and for the past sixteen years has worked extensively as a Criminal Justice Consultant, providing direct services to agencies in the areas of *Executive Leadership Development for Women*, *Staff Sexual Misconduct with Inmates/PREA*, *Working with Female Offenders*, *Institution Culture Assessment*, *Strategic Planning*, and *Managing a Multi-Generational Work Force*. Appointed to the position of Warden by the Governor of the state of California in September 1988; Ms. Poole served 13 years at the California Institution for Women in that capacity. She was the longest tenured warden to serve at a women's prison in California.

Ms. Poole's background includes 30 years in the field of Corrections with the California Department of Corrections (CDC). She began her career as a Teaching Assistant and promoted through the custody ranks. She served at two correctional institutions and with three divisions in headquarters: Institutions, Administrative Services, and Manpower Services. Her experience and assignments have included both, a wide variety of field operations and staff assignments in Correction's headquarters, including Assistant Chief of Personnel, Classification Staff Representative, Chief of Institution Services, and Assistant Deputy Director Institutions Division. For the last thirteen years of her career in Corrections she served as Warden of the California Institution for Women (CIW). CIW is an 1,800 bed correctional facility, which at one point reached a capacity of 2700 inmates.

Ms. Poole is a member of the American Correctional Association (ACA), the Association of Black Correctional Workers (ABCW), the Association of Women Executives in Corrections, and the National Association of Blacks In Criminal Justice. Ms. Poole was selected as one of the Outstanding Young Women of America for 1983 and participated in the 1995 Leadership California Program. She was California's nominee for Warden of the Year to the North American Association of Wardens and Superintendents, in 1999. Ms. Poole has received numerous awards and recognition for her work in the community. She has provided consultant services to the National Institute of Corrections (NIC) and the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), The Moss Group, The Center for Innovative Public Policy, and Correctional agencies in 45 plus states. She is a featured speaker at many community and academic programs and was selected by the Who's Who Historical Society as a member of their International Who's Who of Professionals for 2001.

Ms. Poole holds a B. A. in Liberal Studies/Public Service Management from the University of Redlands, Redlands, California. She has dedicated most of her career to advancing the cause of women and is a passionate and caring advocate for appropriate gender responsive services for women offenders.

Peter Curcio, Professor of Correctional Science
Briarcliff College, Patchogue, New York
CRIMINAL JUSTICE CONSULTANT
Petec33@optonline.net

Peter Curcio currently serves as a professor of correctional studies at Briarcliffe College in Patchogue, New York. His former roles include serving as a warden at several 2,000 bed detention facilities and then subsequently as the regional director for the 13 jail facilities that make up the New York City Department of Correction. In this role Peter had supervision over the agency's Health Management Division (HMD) and Critical Incident Debriefing Unit (CARE). Peter is an FBI Executive Fellow and served as the author of the agency's pandemic flu plan as well as heading the agency's emergency response to 9/11. Peter has over 33 years' experience in the correction field since joining the NYCDOC as an officer in 1984.

A multifaceted law enforcement Senior Executive with 30 years of experience leading 11,000 uniformed personnel in all aspects of law enforcement operations within the second largest uniformed agency within the City of New York. Achieved three star chief positions as both the Bureau Chief of Facility Operations and Bureau Chief of Administration within the New York City Department of Correction, a uniformed law enforcement agency which maintains care, custody and control of over 14,500 prisoners and 11,000 personnel throughout 13 jail commands with an annual budget of 1B spread demographically across the 5 boroughs of New York City.

EDUCATION

M.A. University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, Ohio June, 2012.

John Jay College, New York, N.Y. - B.S. in Police Science 2005. Bestowed honors included the Albert Elias award for the highest G.P.A. among law enforcement graduates in the field of Criminal Justice.

New York City Technical College, Brooklyn, N.Y. - A.A.S. in Advertising awarded 1982.

Harvard Kennedy School of Government, Cambridge, Mass. - Driving Government Performance for Executive Level Managers 2008.

Federal Bureau of Investigation, Washington, D.C.- Executive Fellowship Program serving at FBI Headquarters and with the Department of Justice, Executive Office of Weed and Seed.

Security Management Institute, John Jay College, New York, N.Y. - Coursework specialized in physical plant security, 2004.

Larry E. Reid
President
Correctional Consulting Services, LLC
lreidccs@comcast.net

Larry E. Reid is an independent correctional consultant who provides expert witness, consultation and training for correctional jurisdictions and other criminal justice entities. As a consultant and trainer, Larry has worked nationally and internationally with a number of jurisdictions and countries on facility operational plans; contemporary programs for high risk and segregated populations; staffing analysis; policy and procedures development; security assessments; critical incident assessments; organizational management; and correctional security programs.

As a subject matter expert, Larry has worked with the National Institute of Corrections (NIC) in the areas of high security classification, facility activation, security auditing, development of offender programs, creating positive prison cultures, and management of high risk segregated and special needs populations. Larry has co-authored two editions of NIC's Security Auditing Program Manual, participated in the updating of the Security Audit Instrument and has contributed to a number of publications for the National Institute of Corrections. In 1998, Larry was instrumental in the development of the first comprehensive "Supermax" national training program provided by NIC. The training focused on the 1st, 4th, 8th and 14th Amendments of the United States Constitution, Incentive Based Behavior Management, Cognitive Programming, Offender Reintegration and Management of Offenders with Mental Illness. Today, Larry continues to consult and provide correctional training nationally in this highly sensitive and evolving area.

As an expert witness, Larry has successfully represented correctional services in various jurisdictions over a wide range of legal matters. He was prominently involved in a "benchmark" case regarding conditions of confinement and management of segregated inmates for the Florida Department of Corrections.

Larry has an undergraduate degree in Psychology and a Master of Science Degree in Criminal Justice Management. He began his career with the Colorado Department of Corrections 1987 as a correctional officer and over the next 15 years he held the positions of Case Manager, Shift Commander, Program Supervisor, Facility Security Manager, Program Manager and Director of Support Services, which entailed management and supervision of; Central Classification, Special Operations Response Team, Emergency Management, Private Prison Monitoring, Food Service, Laundry, Transportation, Faith Based Services and Security Operations. Prior to his appointment to Deputy Director of Prison Operations, Larry served as Warden from 2001-2010. Seven of those years as Warden of Colorado's two high security prisons, Centennial Correctional Facility and Colorado State Penitentiary. For the remaining three years he served as Warden of San Carlos Correctional Facility, a mental health facility, La Vista Correctional Facility, a female facility and Trinidad Correctional Facility, a Minimum Restricted Custody facility.

From 2006-2010, Larry participated as a member of the advisory board for a funded research project titled: Evaluation of the Psychological Effects of Administrative Segregation. As an advisory board member, he helped guide the highly controversial research project through the design phase, implementation and conclusion of the project.

From 2010-2014 Larry worked at Colorado Department of Corrections, Central Office. He had a brief stint as Assistant Director of Prisons prior to being appointed to Deputy Director of Prisons. In his departmental executive leadership role Larry had numerous responsibilities to include prison operations oversight and supervision of wardens. As Deputy Director of Prisons, Larry served on several local, state and national advisory and advocacy boards. He continued to professionally train, consult and represent emerging evidenced based and promising programs to the Criminal Justice System.

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Larry retired from the Colorado Department of Corrections as Deputy Director of Prison Operations in January 2014 after serving twenty-seven years. Larry has gained a distinctive correctional and criminal justice background having worked in a number of positions with the Colorado Department of Corrections and through working collaboratively with criminal justice agencies throughout his career. In recognition for his dedicated work to improve Corrections, Larry received numerous awards and recognition for his contributions to include, the Colorado Criminal Justice Association's prestigious Harry Tinsley Award.

Heather Simons, Director of Training and Professional Development
Vermont Department of Corrections
Heather.Simons@state.vt.us

Heather Simons began her career with the Ontario Ministry of Corrections in 1990 in Toronto Ontario conducting pretrial supervision. Her work in Toronto was largely out of City Hall Court, with a caseload concentration on mainly gang activity, prostitution, and refugee victims of torture.

In 1993 she returned to Vermont and began her career with the Vermont Department of Corrections as a Probation Officer. In 1995 she was promoted to central office as a Trainer and Training Coordinator. Over the course of her career she has lead several of the departments major training initiatives including Non abusive physical and psychological interventions, Restorative Justice, Advanced Communication Techniques, Addressing the Toxic Work Environment, Staff Sexual Misconduct, and PREA. She has trained and consulted both in the public and private sector in the areas of conflict resolution, supportive supervision, managing the problem employee, safety and de-escalation techniques. She has presented for Northeast Association for Correctional Administrators, Corrections Association for Massachusetts, New England Council on Crime and Delinquency, and National Institute of Corrections. She has consulted and trained for the Vermont judicial court managers, Department of children and family services and any number of management teams in Vermont.

In more recent years Heather served as the Principal Assistant to the Commissioner which included overseeing the department policy development unit, and inmate access to courts. In her current position as Director of Training, and Professional Development, she's also responsible for the Vermont Department of Corrections Training Academy, and is Chair of Collective Bargaining. Heather is a member of ACA, AJA, and AWEC. Heather is currently certified in Corrections Fatigue to Fulfillment, and is concentrating on leadership and healthy work environments as part of all her assigned duties with the DOC and additional duties with the state.

Staff Focus Group Summaries

Group One

General Observations

The staff that attended didn't understand why they were there. Most participants said they were there because there was a training scheduled by headquarters that was cancelled, and they were directed to this meeting. There was further discussion about the purpose of the NIC visit and consultants attempted to reduce any anxiety and confusion as to the purpose of the visit and the focus group. Consultants were advised of a rumor that NIC was visiting because Larch might again be considered for closure.

To There was a slow start to the meeting, and consultants had to work to thoughtfully engage with staff to build trust, and by the end of the meeting there were several staff wanting to stay and share ideas and observations. Consultants had to back up and revisit some of the basics... "How long have you been here? Where did you work before? What do you like about your job? By the end there was a tendency to get off track and a fair amount of emotion in the room dating back several years. It was a tricky group to facilitate, a lot of body language and pauses in the beginning.

Ultimately consultants were able to engage the group and build enough trust to initiate what ended as meaningful discussion with passionate and committed staff. One female officer finally said to the group "you have to check on me once in a while, I'm down there (kitchen) alone, I MATTER." Consultants facilitated a high emotion discussion about safety and kept them on track. There was a cross section of program, education, security and supervisors who were in attendance.

Focus Group Discussion/Interaction

- **What's the mission/purpose of this facility?**

There was varying degrees of frustration expressed about communication and direction from leadership. There appears to be underlying mission with uniform staff that confiscating and drugs and holding inmates accountable is the priority at Larch.

- **What are some of the facility's strengths? Challenges?**

Strengths of the facility are the infrastructure dedicated to staying open. Commitment of staff to each other and the DNR program that is skill building and empowering the inmate population to think about the future.

Heather

- **Challenges:** Some questions revealed some longstanding concerns from individuals about Leadership favoritism, safety concerns particularly in the kitchen that is not regularly checked on, and PREA issues including concerns regarding lack of cameras and trainings. The stress of the drive to and from the facility is considered with attrition. Wrecked cars, vandalism when car-pooling, and lack of funds to purchase safe and sturdy vehicle for winter driving.

What do you like best about working here?

4. Opportunities to learn different jobs
5. Inmate recovery and Intel training
6. The work is interesting and for many, including considerable opportunity to learn skills and cross train in different jobs and career paths

What about working here makes you feel proud?

4. Keeping the facility open
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The offenders said they are generally safe from each other but not always safe from staff who they feel target them for infractions without cause and retaliate if they question things. They expressed a concern for a lack of cameras throughout the facility which they perceive as a lack of oversight for safety.

Wrap Up:

While it is common for offenders to complain about valid institutional rules they may not understand the basis for, the overall consensus of the offenders reporting out was that in comparison to other WADOC facilities, they felt they were being unreasonably targeted for petty issues at Larch; more so than at other facilities, even those with a higher security level. They expressed that in their opinion, there was a disconnect between the message of positive reinforcement they felt the Superintendent was trying to promote which is in contrast to contrast degradation by custodial staff.