

CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTION INSPECTION COMMITTEE

**ON-SITE VISIT
AND PRISON LABOR ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING**

JULY 16, 2008

GRAFTON CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTION

Prepared and Submitted by CIIC Staff

July 30, 2008

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**CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTION INSPECTION COMMITTEE
REPORT ON ON-SITE VISIT**

GRAFTON CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTION

ON-SITE VISIT PROFILE

<i>Date of On-site Visit</i>	July 16, 2008
<i>Type of Visit</i>	Announced
<i>CIIC Staff Present</i>	Carol Robison, CIIC Inspector
<i>Institutional Staff Present</i>	Margaret Bradshaw, Warden Gary Burt, DW of Operations and Administration Bradford Williams, OPI Superintendent Darlene Krandall, Institutional Inspector
<i>PLAC Members Present (for PLAC tour and meeting only)</i>	Frank Como Charlie Dozer Robert McDonald Garland Gledhill
<i>Areas and Activities Included in PLAC Meeting</i>	Entrance and Introduction Braille Shop Fragrance/Oil Shop Bow Shop Release Preparation (Reentry) Classroom
<i>On-Site Visit Summary and Administrative Exit Meeting</i>	

PRISON LABOR ADVISORY COUNCIL (PLAC) MEETING AND OPI SHOPS TOUR

Entrance and Introduction

The entrance process to Grafton Correctional Institution was efficient and without any irregularities. Staff were cordial and professional. After passing through the main entrance and sally port system to the grounds of the main campus, the PLAC members were met by the Grafton Warden, along with the Warden, Marc Houk, from the Lorain Correctional Institution. At that time, it was determined that a brief on-site visit could be arranged for the CIIC Inspector at Lorain Correctional Institution for the latter half of the afternoon.

Following the brief introduction, the PLAC members and institutional staff walked to the OPI building on the campus. The OPI building is architecturally like a warehouse, which includes an office and several ‘rooms’ or areas around the perimeter where the OPI Braille shop, OPI oil/fragrance shop, the former OPI bow-making operations, and current re-entry programming are held. In addition, there is one large area within the building that is enclosed with cage-like fencing for storage of institutional supplies. The largest and central cavity of the building is used for an occasional auto mechanic session offered to a select few inmates by a staff member who is skilled to instruct the inmates in some basic auto mechanic skills. There are two vehicles, ‘classic cars,’ that have been donated to the institution for use as training vehicles. The inmates learn to do a variety of mechanical tasks using these two vehicles as their training devices. Skills that are learned include routine work associated with shocks, oil changes, tire rotation, balancing, and alignment, and minor electrical work. There is no training provided to inmates for major auto work like rebuilding an engine. Institutional staff occasionally may bring their personal cars to the auto program for routine oil changes and routine mechanical adjustments. Approximately 12 inmates may be engaged in the auto mechanics programming at any one time. Inmates may receive a certificate of completion, but the certificate is not the same as the national auto technicians’ certification.

The welding program offers a certificate and is one of the programs that follow the modules outlined within the *Career Enhancement* program, as established by the DRC. The specific welding training is taught in the mornings, and the career enhancement modules are provided in the afternoons. It was explained that each of the DRC institutions has their own specific careers/vocational tracks that they teach, but each vocation that is part of the *Career Enhancement* program must provide the same career enhancement modules to inmates in addition to the trade or vocation-specific training.

Braille Shop

The Braille shop at the Grafton Correctional Institution is confined to a somewhat small room within the OPI building. Inmates perform translation tasks to convert alphanumeric characters into Braille. Part of the process is to first convert the alphanumeric characters into ASCII programming language, which is a mainframe computer language. A

software program is used to make the conversion from ASCII to punched dots comprising Braille text. Proofreading and keyboarding are important parts of the process. There are approximately 12 inmates who work at 10 computer stations within a room of approximately 20 by 24 feet. The room allows for just enough space to walk around a central work area, with computers lining the perimeter of the walls. The room is glass enclosed and reportedly temperature-controlled, but the inmates indicated that it can be either very hot or very cold.

The selection of inmates who work in the Braille shop is determined through an application process. Inmates must apply to an office in Washington DC for training materials, and upon completion of self-guided training, a test must be passed. Certification is under the Library of Congress. The skills included in the certification include operation of a six-key Perkins Braille machine. One inmate indicated that he trained over the period of a year, but it may take an inmate from six to eighteen months to complete the program. There is a separate math certification that may be acquired. The math program reportedly has more characters than the alphabetic system. The operation experiences some software glitches occasionally, but the inmates are able to work through them. No part of their work requires the inmates to work online. They have access to only an internal network.

One inmate reported that he has been working in the Braille shop for nine years and another inmate indicated he was new to the program, having worked in it for approximately one and a half years. Both inmates indicated that the room needs to be larger to accommodate the number of inmates and computers, and also that new equipment was needed as they experience the need for frequent repairs. Braille shop inmates work four days per week for approximately eight hours per day. Approximately four inmates are trained to do Braille graphics and line art for the blind as well. Braille shop inmates receive performance reviews.

Oil/Fragrance Shop

The OPI fragrance shop is a simple operation of re-packaging the oils by filling small vials of oil-based fragrances that are subsequently shipped to the institutions. The inmates within the DRC institutions comprise the customer base for the fragrances, and products are prepared and shipped in response to specific orders. A small fenced and locked area is used to store the large jugs of fragrances on steel shelving units.

The fragrance operation employs two inmates, who each work approximately 37 hours per week. The business reportedly generates approximately \$90,000 per year and sells approximately 30,000 vials of fragrance per year. One PLAC member asked what the average profit is per vial. Further, it was suggested that some thought be given to identifying if the customer base would tolerate an increase in the cost per vial, thus increasing the profits earned from fragrance sales.

It was noted that the sales of fragrances have increased since the current Director of OPI assumed his job responsibilities, and a one-month product review has recently been

completed. The OPI Superintendent mentioned that the fragrance operation has a difficult time competing with brands such as Landis, which produces fragrance products and sells them at an inexpensive price, relative to other similar products. The product review was begun nearly one year ago and has tracked monthly sales. The review has incorporated input from multiple sources, including the Director and Assistant Director of OPI, contracted staff, production and product managers, as well as the marketing and sales staff.

In addition to the fragrances, the OPI fragrance shop produces “chew sticks,” an item that looks like a wax-based beverage straw. The chew stick is comprised of multiple twisted bristles that may be chewed at one end to expose a cluster of the bristles that may be used similar to a toothbrush to clean teeth without water or an actual toothbrush.

Bow and Raffia Shop

In prior years, the inmates at Grafton Correctional Institution assembled ribbon and raffia bows for an individual businesswomen. The bow business, which was run as part of the OPI operations, is no longer in operation due to collapse of the businesswomen’s business.

Release Preparation Classroom (Re-Entry Classroom)

Along one perimeter area of the OPI building is a classroom with traditional student desk-chairs and a teacher’s desk used for the delivery of pre-release programming. Inmates come to this area for basic re-entry information, such as how to acquire a Social Security card, how to engage and maintain in a job search, and how to locate specific forms of training once they are “on the streets.”

EXIT PLAC MEETING

Following the tour of the Grafton OPI shops, the PLAC members, the OPI Director, and the CIIC Inspector met in the reentry classroom to review details of the collective observations and to review OPI product and production-related topics.

The PLAC Chairman sought information from the OPI Director relevant to pricing structures and price changes over the previous four years. The OPI Director explained that price increases were not addressed on a regular basis and that OPI shops could not pass along cost of materials increases to customers in product price increases. In the past, the OPI businesses were forced to absorb the increases, such as freight or raw material increases, without recouping those added costs through a price increase. The PLAC Chairman asked if some year-end data might be available regarding the increases in costs borne by the OPI businesses. In reply, the OPI Director relayed that he would seek information of this type from the available resources at DRC. With recent position collapses and personnel restructuring due to budget reductions, the individuals who would normally handle such a request are no longer accessible. The PLAC Chairman

indicated that he would like to see data on a per-shop basis. This information would help to identify which products are the best candidates for continuance. The requested data is to be available for the August PLAC meeting.

The PLAC Chairman suggested that the cardboard box shop at Mansfield Correctional Institution, could be enlarged and expanded so that more boxes are being produced. Reportedly, there has been an effort stemming from the DRC Central Office to expand the cardboard business, and an update is expected at the August PLAC meeting on the subject.

The OPI Chairman indicated that ‘trip reports’ should be instituted following each of the PLAC visits to OPI shops. Trip reports that were submitted by PLAC members following the Grafton visit included comments/suggestions that the auto shop might hold potential for expansion as an OPI business, the Braille shop could benefit from implementation of some efficiency measures, and the fragrance customer base should be expanded.

The PLAC Chairman sought clarification regarding reported plans to ‘retool’ the shoe business at Southern Ohio Correctional Facility. In response to the request, the OPI Director revealed that the shoe operation is outdated and only capable of producing shoes that are inferior and must be sold at a higher price than the shoes that inmates may purchase through the commissary. Reportedly, old equipment is breaking and is too costly to repair. Due to repair costs and challenges to obtaining foreign-made parts, some repairs are makeshift. It was noted that the Ohio supplier of leather and materials to OPI for institutional boots, has seen increases in his costs for materials, but these increases are not incorporated into an increase in price for the boots to the customer. The OPI Director requested that an inmate wearing one of the boots manufactured at SOCF, join the PLAC meeting to model the footwear. The OPI Director explained the various parts of the boot and relayed that the current OPI boot, which has no arch support, sells for \$25, while the boots sold to inmates through the commissary are of a higher quality, have arch-support, and sell for \$18.

One of the PLAC members raised the issue that with good knowledge of market-based pricing, one could leverage their position regarding both current and projected prices.

The subject of mattresses was reviewed by the PLAC members and OPI Director. It was noted that with a new vendor of materials, ‘better’ quality mattresses than the current ‘top quality’ mattresses will be able to be produced, and at a lower cost. Thus, the prior \$129 mattress will no longer be produced and a new better quality mattress will be produced. New equipment for mattress manufacturing will also contribute toward producing better quality mattresses.

Last, it was established that the objective is for the new DRC Central Office building at 770 West Broad Street, Columbus, Ohio, will be occupied by September 1, 2008. There is more work reportedly to be completed prior to full occupancy.

ADMINISTRATIVE MEETING SUMMARY

The on-site visit at Grafton Correctional Institution was an abbreviated version of a typical on-site visit, which commonly includes a walk-through of departments and housing units. On the date of the PLAC meeting, there were time constraints and previously scheduled meetings that engaged the Warden's time. Rather than a walk-through of the institution's departments, the time following the PLAC tour of OPI shops was spent in an administrative meeting.

Individuals present at the administrative meeting included the Warden, Deputy Warden of Operations and Administration, the Institutional Inspector, and CIIC Inspector.

The following topics were briefly discussed during the day and particularly during the administrative meeting.

- It was noted that Grafton and Lorain Correctional Institutions share some services in order to increase efficiency and reduce costs. Shared services identified at the on-site visit were the warehousing of supplies, recreation administration, personnel administration, and the administration work related to the pre-release of offenders.
- The grounds of the Grafton institution had recently been enhanced by new, wide, concrete sidewalks that connect all buildings on the campus.
- The horticulture program, which is relatively well developed at the Grafton institution, has plans for inmates to develop and create landscaping along the edges of all the new walkways so that the campus is lined with 'gardens.' The horticulture program is under the instruction of one teacher, who has managed this program for many years. The horticulture program engages approximately 20 inmates and uses two very large greenhouses and numerous outdoor garden plots, where floral and vegetable gardening skills are cultivated.
- Medical and dental complaints are frequently related to the length of time inmates reportedly have to wait to be seen for a Nurse sick call or a Doctor sick call. Administration relayed however, that inmates receive NSC appointments within 48 hours, and DSC appointments within 24 hours. The majority of medical complaints relayed to the Warden are about appointments to be scheduled for outside consultations in Columbus at the OSU Medical Center.
- The Therapeutic Community program at the Grafton institution was recently stopped due to a contract being cancelled. The Institutional Inspector reported that the inmates were sad to see the program go because the inmates believed the program was effective. Administrators indicated the contract was expensive and that a similar rate of success was shown at Pickaway Correctional Institution, Ohio Reformatory for Women in Marysville, and at Grafton Correctional Institution.
- Staff changes due to the reduced budget include one secretary position being eliminated from one living unit.

- The inmate population at Grafton has remained stable throughout the previous twelve months, with no radical increases or decreases.
- Inmate communication to the Deputy Warden of Operations has included comments about how boring life is at Grafton, and the Deputy believes that the structure that is in place at the Grafton institution does cause some inmates to sense a loss of freedom compared to life in other institutions.
- Further, staff members remain tense due to their perception that a second wave of job cuts could happen. In an effort to reduce staff anxiety in that regard, the Warden reportedly walks around the institution and talks to staff. It was noted that peer support workshops are being provided to DRC staff at the DRC training academy.
- Some thought has been given to the upcoming issue of television services to inmates inasmuch as by February 2009 the United States will stop broadcasting on analog airwaves and begin broadcasting only in digital. Television service will change to ‘direct TV.’ It was indicated that each institution will have to deal with the situation individually. Digital televisions manufactured after 2006 reportedly should not present an interruption in service, but older televisions that only receive analog signals will not function under the new digital system. An institutional antenna or a digital converter box attached to every television are options mentioned by the Grafton administrators. Costs were not discussed.
- The commissary prices have increased for inmate purchases, while inmate income has remained flat. The Institutional Inspector indicated that she relays the global economic conditions to inmates in an effort to help them understand the situation. In an effort to offset the impact on inmates, the DRC has reportedly increased the amount of cash an inmate may keep in his account from \$10 to \$15. In addition, the Grafton Correctional Institution increased the amount of money an inmate may spend at commissary from \$75 to \$100.
- Overcrowding was reported to have been an issue at Grafton Correctional Institution, occurring in a cyclical manner. In 1992 through 1993 additional beds needed to be added to the institution, reflecting an increase in inmate population from the time the institution was built in 1988. There was an increase in inmate population approximately one year ago, prompting the addition of beds to the floors.
- Regarding food and diet concerns grievous to the Institutional Inspector, there have only been complaints associated with the DRC-instituted ‘heart healthy’ diet, which prompted the reduction and/or elimination of high fat desserts and other foods that are deemed not to be part of a heart-healthy diet.
- The loss of the Therapeutic Community, due to recent budget cuts, has reportedly been felt by the inmates. The administration relayed that the TC program may not necessarily be reinstated even if budgets were ever increased because the funding associated with the program could otherwise be used to fill two Social Worker positions. It was the opinion of administration that a greater gain would come from two Social Workers rather than from a reinstatement of the TC program.
- A new inmate ‘activity’ at Grafton Correctional Institution is called “Day with Dad,” which is currently being offered only at Grafton, Correctional Reception Center, Marion Correctional Institution, and Belmont Correctional Institution.

- The event is a one-day event that allows children up to the age of 15 to spend the day with their father on the Grafton grounds, with special activities scheduled throughout the day. The 2008 event, held from 9 am to 3 pm on Father's Day, offered a carnival theme. Offenders qualified for participation by having no child related sex offense in his history and by being ticket-free for 90 days when applying for the program and remaining ticket-free until the event. The child/children and their escort were also required to meet specific criteria.
- Information was provided relevant to the *Career Enhancement* program provided through the DRC's Ohio Central School System. This program, provided statewide among DRC institutions, includes five-week modules covering various key components applicable to future employment of inmates. Inmates will complete the trade-specific requirements that are offered at their residential institution, and in addition to the trade specific coursework, the inmates will complete the components of the *Career Enhancement* program. All Career Enhancement programs have an introduction or safety component, and employability skills built into the (5) week curriculum. At Grafton Correctional Institution, for example, inmates may take the Welding/Cutting program, which includes seven trade-specific skill components. In addition, inmates in this program would be required to complete ten modules comprising "Employability of the Ex-Offender." The ten "Employability" modules are shown in the following list:
 - Get Motivated with Winning Attitudes
 - Seek Assistance and Become Proactive
 - Select Appropriate Job Search Approaches
 - Assess Your Skills and Identify Your MAS
 - Develop a Powerful Objective
 - Conduct Research on Jobs, Employers, and Communities
 - Write Effective Applications, Resumes, and Communities
 - Network for Information, Advice, and Referrals
 - Develop Winning Job Interview Skills
 - Negotiate Salary and Benefits Like a Pro
 - The Warden indicated that she prefers her work at the Grafton institution because of the programming that is available to the inmates and because the conduct of inmates at GCI is good. The Warden indicated that inmate groups are active at Grafton, with participation in the VVA, the Red Cross, and a good core group of older offenders who generally keep a calm and mellow demeanor among inmates.
 - There has been discussion of a potential new short-term program designed for approximately 120 short-term offenders with one year or less in time to complete their sentence. The average range of incarceration per inmate would range from 91 days to 365 days of sentence. (Inmates with 90 days or less would be placed across the road at the Lorain Correctional Institution.) The short-term group would occupy the former TC unit.