

Effective Minimum Security Corrections With Lay Community Oversight and Participatory Decision Making: A Case Study Blueprint for Re-Integrative Success

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Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to highlight the practices of a community correctional center housed under the authority of a state department of corrections and advised by a community advisory board. The examination employs a case study approach on how community correctional centers can be exemplars for other correctional agencies based on some principles of organizational oversight that have recently been brought to the forefront within prisons. Relying on a model of prison oversight developed by Deitch (2010), this paper documents how one community correctional center met its mandate to provide top-quality re-integrative services to offenders returning to the community from prison. It also documents, however, how the advisory board's success in working with and monitoring the activities of the correctional center became problematic and ultimately led to the collaboration's demise.

Deitch (2010) applies the concept of prison oversight and argues that without

effective oversight mechanisms, prisons can become places with limited accountability, where the possibility for arbitrary and illegal actions by correctional officials and their underlings is high (Stojkovic, 2010). Accordingly, Deitch (2010) offers the following essential elements of prison oversight. Oversight entities must:

- Be independent of the correctional agency;
- Be mandated to conduct regular, routine inspections;
- Have unfettered and confidential access;
- Be adequately resourced;
- Have a duty to report;
- Have a holistic approach to evaluating the treatment of prisoners;

from its original mission and purpose, calling into question the rationale for the existence of the advisory board, whose function was both to document positive practices and activities but also to expose unacceptable practices and activities. In the end, the community advisory board was suspended. The following analysis shows how the end of the advisory board altered the mission and purpose of the community correctional center.

The Felmers O. Chaney Correctional Center (FCCC) and Advisory Board (FCAB)

After obtaining authorizations from various indigenous community organizations

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- Have the means of fulfilling both the investigative function and the monitoring function of an institution, and
- Have the cooperation of the institution, which must respond promptly and publicly to any and all findings.

This article documents how one community correctional center offered the promise of being a very successful reentry facility for offenders returning home from prison, but how, in the end, the presumed oversight function of the advisory board became illusory and this led to the board's demise. This case study reviews both the strengths and limitations of community advisory boards, applying the principles of effective prison oversight described above. The insights provided are rooted in the history and early functions of the advisory (oversight) board and describe how the community correctional agency both thrived and deviated

to build a centrally located prison in a Milwaukee neighborhood, the Felmers O. Chaney Correctional Center (FCCC) began operations in June 2000. The FCCC is a 105-bed minimum-security prison located in the heart of the City of Milwaukee. It houses a spectrum of offenders who generally have between six and 12 months left to serve on their sentences but excludes sexual predators currently incarcerated for sexual assault. One condition secured by a local organization, the Sherman Park Community Association, prior to granting its approval to construct the prison, was that a community advisory board would be established at the Center. That volunteer board, the Felmers O. Chaney Correctional Center Community Advisory Board (FCAB), commenced operations in August 2000.

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There was initial confusion as to whether the board would be a submissive guild operating under the authority of the prison's superintendent or a self-directed board charged with taking action to achieve re-integrative and other desirable correctional goals. The emphasis on re-integration was borne of the decision to name the facility in honor of Felmers O. Chaney, who had insisted privately to Wisconsin's governor of the time, Tommy Thompson, that he was agreeable for the prison to be named after him only if the prison focused on re-integration. Indeed, he was advised, as was the initial membership of the FCAB, that the Chaney Center would be the state's quintessential re-integration facility. This mission is especially pertinent today because more than two-thirds of state prisoners are rearrested

bank, North Milwaukee State Bank, and he became its first president. Later, as president of the Milwaukee Branch of the NAACP, he successfully intervened in many race-related disputes, including stewardship of an anti-redlining campaign and subsequent litigation resulting in a \$15 million settlement. As a pillar of Milwaukee's community, Felmers O. Chaney was a person whose opinions were taken seriously. Consequently, when the FCAB established its mission, that mission focused on re-integration as a central core.

The FCAB's Mission and Conceptual Underpinnings: Coordination and Oversight

The FCAB adopted a mission statement, however, that included a bit of a penumbra beyond the central core. Specifically, the object and purpose of the FCAB, within a framework mindful of metropolitan safety,

pursued by public bureaucracies are best achieved when those bureaucracies are supported by viable community constituencies and community groups (Litwak & Meyer, 1966; McNeely et al., 1998). Police departments, for example, are much more likely to achieve goals of crime detection and crime prevention when they operate within neighborhood milieus that encourage neighborhood vigilance and "tips" to the police from residents (Brandl, 2017). Similarly, departments of public education are more likely to succeed in efforts to educate the young when parents work with teachers by reinforcing instructional goals (Kozol, 1991). Thus, when public bureaucracies are supported by community stakeholders, and their respective activities are coordinated, those bureaucracies are much more likely to be successful in achieving desirable goals (Rainey, 2014). There is more to it, however, than merely having the two entities working together, hand-in-hand.

Strengths and Weaknesses. The strengths of one group are the weaknesses of the other. Bureaucracies are notoriously stodgy in responding to non-routine events, whereas community stakeholders can respond speedily. Public bureaucracies are more likely to have desirable specialized expertise that community members are unlikely to possess (Wilson, 2000). Yet, although community stakeholders may lack specialized expertise, when stakeholder groups are composed of community opinion leaders, they are likely to be more credible to the general public than representatives of the bureaucracy. The trick is to get the bureaucracy and the stakeholders working together to achieve a bureaucracy's mission.

Monitoring and Professionalism. Part of achieving the bureaucracy's mission lies in the ability of stakeholders to monitor the activities, at least some of the activities, of the entity in question. Such monitoring is important not just for purposes of encouraging and maintaining humane conditions in institutions such as prisons, which have total control over the well-being of individuals, it should also be seen as part of the effort to professionalize the field of corrections. After all, as noted by Deitch (2010), capable prison management occurs when internal accountability and external scrutiny operate hand-in-hand. In addition, propagation of public independent entities that monitor and inform the public about the operations of correctional facilities—functions that encourage professionalism—is consistent with recent recommendations of the American Bar Association (Saltzburg, 2008).

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within three years of release (U.S. Dept. of Justice, 2013), and current three-year recidivism rates in Wisconsin are allegedly at 30.1% (Jones & Rogers, 2014). Additionally, the operating premise of the FCAB was based on its independent status, which would enable it to freely comment on the practices of the facility (Deitch, 2010).

Felmers O. Chaney

Chaney, an African-American second lieutenant WWII veteran, had a distinguished post-war 36-year career in the Milwaukee Police Department (MPD) during which he gained fame in the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s. His fame came about because beat-cop Chaney would walk children home from school and talk to their parents to keep them out of trouble, would assist intoxicated individuals in getting on buses for their own safety, and always abided by his personal rule to treat others fairly, all while fighting a long personal battle against racially discriminatory MPD policies. Chaney, a police sergeant and, later, a detective, was the first African American promoted to the rank of sergeant in the MPD, and he was promoted during a time when African Americans were not allowed to drive squad cars or operate police motorcycles. After retirement, he helped create Milwaukee's first black

were (and are) to: (1) identify and encourage the adoption of correctional policies, procedures, and programs that enhance the rehabilitation and community re-integration of inmates, (2) identify and encourage policies, procedures, and programs that harmonize the Chaney Center's relations with indigenous neighborhood residents, and (3) identify and promote policies, procedures, and programs with businesses, schools, churches, and other organizations that serve to enhance the attainment of desirable inmate rehabilitative and community re-integration goals, including employment (FCAB, *Bylaws*, 2004). Such goals are facilitated when a center's activities are transparent not only to the neighborhood immediately surrounding the facility but also to the broader metropolitan community (Deitch, 2010). To achieve these goals, the FCAB successfully negotiated the oversight function of monitoring the FCCC and assumed responsibility for the community-wide dissemination of information pertinent to community re-integration (FCAB, *Principles, Goals and Operating Standards*, 2004).

Coordinating Community and Prison Cooperation. The underlying framework guiding the FCAB was quite simple. Activities of the board were predicated on the assumption that the goals

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Unfortunately, as subsequently turned out to be the case, the failure of the FCAB to operate in accord with several of the ABA's recommendations ultimately proved fatal. Especially pertinent recommendations, among others, were that (1) the FCAB, as a monitoring agent, should be removed as a monitoring agent only for just cause, (2) pertinent governmental offices, such as the department of corrections (DOC), should be required to cooperate fully with the FCAB, and (3) the FCAB should have operated with the authority to obtain and inspect any and all records related to the confinement of inmates and their subsequent re-integration.

The FCAB's History at a Glance

The FCAB met only twice per year when it commenced operating. It was, in the beginning, largely composed of neighborhood residents and various DOC professionals. It intentionally eschewed efforts to obtain external funding because it wanted its image to be pristine, so that no one could consider it as yet another entity seeking money. The agendas of FCAB meetings were set by the Chaney Center superintendent, and minutes were taken by the Chaney Center's secretary. The Chaney Center, at start-up, did pursue re-integration programming. For example, inmates were initially allowed to attend off-grounds Sunday church services with vetted volunteer escorts and were allowed to take monitored off-site courses (one to six credit hours per semester) from the local technical college or four-year schools. But, a mere three years later, these and other re-integrative programs had been administratively eliminated, and community transitioning mechanisms—e.g., inmates being allowed to independently use bus transport to work rather than being conveyed by the prison's van—had been terminated.

Guild or Advocacy Organization? These changes were occurring amid an internal dispute within the FCAB as to whether the FCAB was to be an advocacy-oriented board or a board that would be subservient to the DOC. This was resolved during the FCAB's third year, with a vote by board members rejecting the subservient operational model. The board then began meeting every other month. Another important outcome was that bylaws were subsequently drafted (by an attorney board member). These served to codify the FCAB's modes of collaboration, as well as conflict if needed, yet both were designed to encourage the DOC's adherence to said bureaucracy's

expressed organizational goals. The bylaws also were constructed in a manner that eliminated the FCAB from liability should the DOC be sued. The bylaws not only served to set up operational rules for the FCAB; they also provided FCAB members with a sense of formal organizational structure as well as of evolving organizational maturity. Meanwhile, as retrenchments in the provision of re-integration programming began to occur toward the end of the second year of the Center's operation, the possibility was suggested that the DOC never took the FCCC's promised and expressly stated mission seriously. Programmatic convenience had definitely eclipsed earlier promises.

Gaining Official Recognition. Following the resolution of the FCAB's

about various matters. As these components began to meld and the advisory board began to be taken seriously, the benefits of the partnership began to be apparent.

Securing Recognition: Selected Benefits

Oversight Function. One initial strategy designed to encourage DOC recognition of the FCAB involved media appearances on local television shows during which various practices of the DOC were revealed and decried. Following a number of those appearances, the DOC began grudgingly meeting with the FCAB, and the FCAB was able to negotiate the quarterly use of an institutional monitoring instrument. That instrument was a two-page questionnaire,

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internal dispute, the next challenge confronting the FCAB was to secure DOC recognition that the FCAB was a legitimate stakeholder. FCAB efforts to be taken seriously by the DOC commenced with a shift in the composition of the board. DOC staffers and affiliates were replaced by a mix of lawyers, community and neighborhood opinion leaders, two former DOC wardens, criminal justice and other university professors, police force leaders, independent DOC consultants, social service providers, former court commissioners, and elected state representatives. All were residents of metropolitan Milwaukee, and some members had either worked previously for the DOC or had provided consulting and other services to the DOC. The state representatives were particularly effective because of their ability to organize town hall meetings during which information could be disseminated. Those meetings focused on the DOC's failure to promote practices that were harmonious with re-integration programming and, thereby, militated against the DOC's stated re-integration mission. The FCAB's attorney members tended to be quite effective in public forum settings by providing persuasive commentary when DOC officials sought to "spin" their informational comments. The former wardens, too, were very helpful in apprising board members unfamiliar with the DOC as to how DOC executives typically thought

which was to be used by the FCCC's superintendent when he reported at FCAB board meetings. Among the items to be reported were the facility's population and racial demographics, the number of inmates on work release, staff and inmate disciplinary actions, revocations, inmate social service programming, vetted volunteers, community support projects, etc. A system was thus set in place that helped to mitigate the possibility of untoward staff/inmate interactions. This helped to protect the prison from gruesome public relations blunders (cf. Marley & Stein, 2016). Thus, the FCAB, unlike most lay citizen boards in the United States (Deitch, 2010), successfully secured an independent monitoring capability, albeit one without permanent sanction. This failure to secure codified monitoring authority was a mistake. Effective volunteer lay monitoring boards elsewhere are statutorily authorized (Stern, 2010).

From "Warehousing" to Rehabilitation. A second strategy involved penning a concise five-page report and proposal that outlined the Chaney Center's departure from being the state's quintessential re-integration facility to being more of a "warehouse" for soon-to-be released ex-offenders. True, inmates could secure employment, but there was little else to help them transition back into their families

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and communities. Inmates were leaving Chaney without driver licenses, social security cards, birth certificates, and state I.D. cards, thereby suffering a substantial impediment to re-integration. Inmates were no longer allowed to attend parent-teacher conferences involving their children. Holiday visitation, whereby family members had been allowed to visit inmates and bring holiday food on the Fourth of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas, had been eliminated. This practice had been regarded as a particularly effective family- and community-bonding mechanism. Escorted off-campus barbering and church attendance were also no longer allowed. Numerous other re-integrative mechanisms had also been eliminated (FCAB, 2008).

The proposal did not merely describe the destruction of re-integration programming; it provided an opportunity for discussion with various local and national prominent organizations and individuals who were asked to endorse the proposal, thereby achieving public awareness of the DOC's retrenchments. It also provided the basis for print media coverage as well as local radio and television broadcast media discussions and presentations. Because inmates had begun to be placed at Chaney with as few as 30 days left before release, one caustic question effectively asked during these presentations by the FCAB's articulate and research-knowledgeable criminal justice professors was: "What can be done in a mere 30 days to effectuate re-integration?" Eventually, the FCAB moved from the status of being unable to elicit a response to its inquiries from executive DOC staff to having meetings arranged with the secretary of the DOC and his executive staff to discuss the FCAB's proposal.

When the FCAB met with the DOC, it succeeded in persuading the DOC to adopt nearly every one of its proposed suggestions. Not only was virtually all of the re-integration programming eventually restored, but new programming initiatives were launched and additional funding, even during a time of budgetary constraint, was provided to the Chaney Center. One successful strategy involved delineating differences between correctional centers located in rural areas versus those in urban areas. Because the two types of centers operate under different circumstances, bureaucratic pressures to unify protocols for centers located in rural areas and centers located in urban areas often did not work. Even the need for lay monitoring boards might be different. As noted by Deitch (2010), lay monitoring boards appear

to "make the most sense . . . when it comes to the oversight of prison facilities located near sizeable cities."

Protection From Sensationalizing Media Attacks. As time went on, other benefits of the board became apparent as when the Center was attacked by a local newspaper, for example, because several inmates had walked away from the facility. The news story's title ("State Baffled by Spate of Escapes from City Prison") conjured up images of something akin to an Alcatraz-style prison escape (Marley, 2004). This story was completely diffused by the FCAB's speedy response. That response was the release of a reply, quickly drafted by the FCAB, titled "Reporter's 'Spin' Confuses Prison's Real Purpose." The reply article (McNeely, 2004), which emphasized that the so-called escapees were merely inmates who had walked away to visit a girlfriend, or attend a relative's birthday party, was published by a neighborhood newsletter that had a circulation of several thousand residents, many of whom resided near the prison. The reply was sent to the offending newspaper as an editorial as well. Nothing more came of the reporter's story, and neither the FCCC nor the DOC found themselves on a contrived "hot seat." This was because the FCAB had responded more quickly than the bureaucracy of the DOC could. The fact that known community opinion leaders were supporting the Chaney Prison was also persuasive to the public.

Delegated Function. Another benefit recognized by many DOC staffers was the fact that the FCAB could take public positions on matters pending before the state legislature, whereas the DOC, as a public bureaucracy, often could not. This was so even when those pending matters were recognized as being anachronistic and counterproductive—such as prospects for legally authorizing employers to discriminate, across-the-board, against ex-felony offenders (FCAB *Statement*, 2011) and for permitting nonviolent first-offender 17-year-olds to face adult court and adult incarceration (FCAB *Statement*, 2014). The FCAB not only opposed such proposed legislation in print and broadcast media, it also mobilized various organizations to oppose such initiatives. Many DOC staffers would thank the FCAB anonymously for its efforts inasmuch as they felt they could not voice their own opposition.

Improved Organizational Milieu. But there was something even more important occurring within the milieu of the prison that escaped the attention of most board members for quite a while. The presence of a multiracial metropolitan community board

composed of men and women from varied walks of life who visibly met every two months within the facility signaled to inmates that there were unknown people of means who were concerned about them (McNeely, 2008). Importantly, inmates were aware of the concessions that the FCAB had been able to wrest from a largely sympathetic DOC leadership (at least at the time the concessions were granted). Thus, the typical, unhardened, minimum-security inmates of the Chaney Prison almost always met FCAB members with broad smiles. What is important here is that there were two evidence-based outcomes: Very few of Chaney's inmates were returned either to higher security for rule violations or new offenses, and Chaney's measured recidivism rate, as reported below, ended up being very low.

"Pearls" of Wisdom

Through its experiences, the FCAB has learned several guiding principles for advocacy-oriented community advisory boards seeking both to collaborate with a correctional bureaucracy as well as to spur it on when need be. These principals are as follows:

- Initially, there must be someone on the board who understands DOC process and culture. Former DOC staffers and those formerly serving the DOC in consultant roles are especially effective.
- The board should seek, from the onset, to establish a pristine image. It is helpful to refrain from seeking external funding in creating and preserving such an image. Use fees collected from the board's membership instead. The fact that the board is not interested in money will generate respect both within and outside of a DOC.
- The board must be composed of professionals, not just lay folks, and it is desirable for there to be a critical mass of attorneys participating on the board.
- Have attorneys write bylaws to provide structure and a process that also serves as a tool for managed rather than haphazard growth. Bylaws also create a perception of evolving organizational maturity and of importance to members of the board.
- The business portion of board meetings should not last longer than 90 minutes in order to ensure members' continuity of attendance.
- If a pristine image has been successfully cultivated, well-intentioned but frustrated DOC staffers will feel very good that the board is taking on issues that the staffers, themselves, cannot address, due to

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hierarchical authority. These same staffers will provide information anonymously that will include critically enlightening knowledge.

- Political representation on the board is a must, both to draft proposed statewide legislation and to call for and organize town hall meetings. State representatives also vote on the budget for a department of corrections.
- Utilize opinion leaders. Elected politicians and ministers of local churches are natural opinion leaders, as are long-term residents in reasonably stable neighborhoods who have carved out images of being wise and shrewd. Also, procure ministerial associations and other prominent voluntary associations as supporters of initiatives.
- Put proposals to the DOC in writing, and use the proposals as mechanisms to generate face-to-face discussion within the community.
- Utilize the media to make correctional operations transparent. In responding to the public's need for information, media presentations can reach the largest number of people, far more than can be reached face-to-face by opinion leaders. But if the board has not cultivated a pristine image, readers or listeners might simply throw away the print article or change the channel.
- Do not rely, if at all possible, on verbal agreements to anchor affirmation to monitor and oversee, because new DOC administrations, or new gubernatorial administrations, may renege on said agreements. Seek to codify, statutorily, the capability of a lay citizen board to monitor and oversee.
- Repeatedly demonstrate to a new superintendent how the advisory board can help to achieve desirable goals. One way to do this is to advocate for programs, policies, etc., that are aligned with the board's objectives and that coincide with the superintendent's vision. Also, provide support when a correctional facility is unfairly attacked.
- It became apparent, in the course of time, that resistant superintendents were likely to distort the minutes of meetings and set agendas in injurious ways. Consequently, the community board, not the superintendent's staff, must draft its own minutes and set its own agendas, although revisions should be capable of being initiated by anyone.

It may be useful to point out that maintaining official recognition will be a constantly recurring task. One reason it will be a recurring task is because the occupants of top leadership positions in public bureaucracies tend to be transitory. Hence, the message that there is definite value in working with community stakeholders must be demonstrated repeatedly. This is especially so when one considers that a very typical response of public bureaucracy middle-level managers, who typically wish to retain as much autonomy in decision making as possible, is one of irritation, as evidenced in the statement: "Who do these arrogant people think they are?" One way, of course, to address this problem is to anchor, statutorily, the role of the community advisory

the Center became vested, involved, and empowered, meaning that they realized the effects they had on their own work environment. Staff members came to recognize the adverse effects on everyone's work environment if they or someone else came to work every day with a contentious attitude.

Transitioning from the strife inherent in a warehousing organizational milieu where staff job dissatisfaction or burnout is rampant and the antecedent effects, such as humiliating inmates, are common, was achieved by allowing staff to participate in setting their own clear expectations, consistency, and follow-through. In other words, staff developed their own systematic approaches to accomplish the goals they set and then held each other accountable for the

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board as the facility's external monitoring mechanism. In that case, a board's oversight function becomes magnified in comparison to its discrete advisory role.

Staff and Management Participatory Philosophy at a Glance

One of the indirect effects of the FCAB's presence was that it helped Chaney's superintendent institute various programs that succeeded in improving the culture of the institution without expedience-driven shortsighted obstruction or obfuscation from central-office middle-managers. Put differently, the presence of the board helped to professionalize the prison and counter short-term solutions by central office staff that were antithetical to the DOC's mission. Because of the advisory board, the prison was able to hire a credentialed educator; it could not regress to being a "warehouse"; the DOC could not place at the FCCC inmates without enough time remaining for effective re-integration programming; and the DOC could not use the FCCC as a dumping ground for sex predators. Most importantly, the FCAB's monitoring helped the FCCC administration by assisting in identifying problem areas and ways to improve performance. In addition, unlike most correctional facilities, where the staff and superintendent have a contentious relationship akin to the labor-management disputes of many unionized settings, uniformed staff (sergeants and captains) at

accomplishment of those goals. This transitioning did not happen overnight. It was partly the presence of a committed advisory board that helped transition the organizational milieu, but team-building activities jointly planned by the advisory board, such as barbecues where the superintendent was the grill master, and other team-building activities, orchestrated by the superintendent, were of critical importance. In addition, recognition events, jointly planned by advisory board members and Chaney staff, where deserving inmates received public accolades, helped to positively transition the milieu. The physical presence of advisory members at such events did not go unnoticed by staff and inmates. Increasingly, inmates acting with contentious belligerence garnered group ostracism. But these advances did not occur until after the superintendent had demonstrated that he was consistently impartial in disciplinary matters and that he, personally, was not a "pushover."

Inmate Orientations: Emphasis on Personal Responsibility

Another factor that makes Chaney different is that inmates are considered to be stakeholders with regard to their own programming and case management, and in the processes of the Center. Thus, the implicit message to inmates is that their input is valued and, therefore, they also are

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of value. But it is not just that inmates placed at Chaney are likely to be having their first opportunities since incarceration to make decisions on matters of importance to themselves, they are also required to demonstrate initiative and self-discipline with respect to completing necessary tasks. The following paragraphs, detailing Chaney's programming, are illustrative.

Overview Orientation. Unlike at most facilities, Chaney inmates are responsible for knowing what to do to obtain services. It is they, themselves, who are responsible for their own matriculation process. It comes as a surprise to most new inmates that they are personally responsible for attending the Center's activities. Unlike in other institutions, they have the discretion not to attend, but they are expected to know the information supplied at the sessions. They are surprised when advisory board members, as concerned community members, appear and make presentations that reinforce the idea of their responsibility. If they do not know and have failed to attend the session(s), they are considered culpable and transferred back to the medium-security institutions from whence they came. In other words, it is they, not others, who are personally responsible for their own decision making and for themselves.

Program Needs and Educational Assessments. The Chaney Center's teacher makes assessments of the programmatic needs of inmates. Having a teacher in an institution is not automatic. In Chaney's case, having a teacher was a result of one of the FCAB's community-supported proposals that was presented to the DOC. At Chaney, the teacher checks to determine for each arriving inmate if any of the DOC's 10 required reentry classes (known as "modules"), such as education, health, and family support, have been completed prior to an inmate's transfer to the Center. But Chaney, itself, also provides two optional classes not required at other institutions. These are classes focused on the responsibilities of fatherhood and the attributes of healthy relationships. Additionally, Chaney's teacher coordinates GED/HSED preparation and test taking for those who need it, and she/he provides computer literacy training to interested inmates. Social workers assess an inmate's individual unmet but identified programming needs, such as alcohol and other drug abuse (AODA) counseling or anger management counseling and financial obligations (e.g., restitution, child

support). Chaney is the only DOC facility that allows an inmate's individualized programming plan to be provided by off-site community-based treatment agencies. The provision of services via vetted off-site agencies is considered to be facilitative of re-integration.

Community Service and Community Re-Integration. Clear expectations are also provided about the community service to be completed, including a minimum of eight hours of community service at a Milwaukee nonprofit organization, a requirement unique to the Chaney Center. Inmates also engage in painting neighborhood structures in need of painting, providing grass cutting and snow removal for elderly neighborhood residents, gardening, picking up neighborhood litter, and general clean-up activities such as sweeping dirty neighborhood areas. Such activities are regarded by staff and board members less as labor and more as indirect re-integrative tools. It should be noted that the Chaney Center is located in a zip code area that is an indigenous area for many of Chaney's inmates.

Work Release Orientation. The work release orientation provides information on employment expectations, employment, and also a vital records assessment. Records or cards needed for employment are sought if inmates lack them. It comes as a surprise to many that they are expected to be actively engaged, with staff assistance, in seeking needed records and/or cards as well as in seeking their own employment once they are approved for employment.

Superintendent's Orientation. The superintendent's orientation reinforces previous orientations. It also details what the Chaney Center was (a warehouse) and what it is now. An institutional philosophy that covers what the superintendent calls his three pillars of residency is presented. In covering the "pillars," the culture of Chaney is anecdotally illustrated. That "culture" focuses the responsibility for making decisions affecting the inmates' lives as being squarely on their shoulders. Abundant "give and take" with inmates asking questions always occurs. The implicit message is that they will be treated like, and expected to act like, adults while at Chaney. Inmates are informed that assistance is available from the social worker, teacher, or correctional sergeant if an inmate is having difficulty making a decision. The FCAB has appeared at this orientation on occasion, urging the men that they have the credibility, and, consequently a responsibility upon re-integration, to try to reduce youth violence in their neighborhoods.

Post-Orientation Services

Work Release Staffing. The work release staffing is a formal staffing that uses a multidisciplinary approach to determine the inmate's readiness to be approved for work release. Numerous staff are involved, including the social worker, work release coordinator, the captain, the community service sergeant, uniformed security staff representatives, the teacher, community program facilitator, and superintendent. The presence of the inmate's probation and parole agent is also required. No other facility in the state requires the inmate's probation and parole agent to be in attendance. The agent's presence allows the agent to be more integrally involved in the inmate's personal journey to stable re-integration. If the inmate is deemed to be not ready for employment, another staffing date is set.

Individual Programming. Individual programming is inmate specific for those who have identified unmet treatment needs. It is a plan approved by the superintendent but developed by the inmate, probation and parole agent, and social worker. Thus, the inmate must interact harmoniously with the probation and parole agent and the social worker. The program (responsible fatherhood, anger management, AODA counseling, etc.) is provided in the community by a local agency with expertise in the needed area. It is important to note that the program can begin at the Chaney Center and continue after the inmate has returned to the community. This programming is unlike that provided at any other facility in the state.

Employment Search and Placement. The Employment Search and Placement program is based on an individual's capabilities and work history as determined by the work release coordinator. Consequently, inmates have to interact in harmonious conjunction with the work release coordinator. "Search and placement" is a sustained phase of being domiciled at Chaney, meaning that the majority of an inmate's time will be spent on this phase. Contrary to other institutions, inmates participate in seeking out their own employment opportunities, including taking the lead role in finding employment. However, those unsuccessful in securing employment are assisted by the work release coordinator and by an employment support specialist (a purchase-of-service position), both of whom also seek to procure employment.

Another Chaney practice that is different from any other facility in the state is that all Chaney staff, uniformed and otherwise,

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are charged with the responsibility of continuously seeking job opportunities for inmates. The work release coordinator has the primary role in finding jobs, but all staff seek jobs. This has a somewhat harmonizing effect on inmate-staff relations. But inmates also are stunned when they discover that FCAB members also have sought out inmate employment opportunities, leading to other salutary effects on Chaney culture, such as improved inmate-staff relations.

Another Chaney difference, compared to other facilities, is that Chaney does not pursue job contracts with employers because, with a contract, once an inmate finishes his job upon release, he would simply be replaced on that job by another inmate. Chaney's goal is for an inmate to feel that his job is his job, not the facility's job. Thus, an inmate's employment continues after release.

Once placed, an unannounced goal is for inmates to learn how to take the bus unaccompanied to and from their employment sites. They are, of course, expected to return on their own. Inmates who have earned privileges for unaccompanied transport are not forced to take a bus to employment, however. A Chaney Center van is also provided for those inmates who do not want to encounter aggressive bus riders who are from their pasts and for those who do not wish to be exposed to criminal peer enticement. Many inmates declined bus transportation because bus transit fares are more expensive than riding in the Chaney van. The FCAB was distressed as this preference became increasingly apparent, given the fact that the FCAB had lobbied robustly with the DOC (and against the county sheriff's position) in order to secure bus ridership opportunities for inmates.

Since the programming detailed here has been incorporated into Chaney's programming, there has been a dramatic reduction in the number of inmates who have simply walked away from the facility, and no one who walked away has been shown to have engaged in any illegal activities while away.

More "Pearls" of Wisdom

Some keys to effectuating a high-morale milieu, with a focus on staff, include the following additional "pearls" of wisdom:

- Staff should actively participate in meetings and assist with establishing agendas. Relevant external actors, such as probation agents, should be included when appropriate.
- Administrators should expect staff to take ownership by setting their own performance benchmarks.

- Staff should be encouraged to embrace community partners/stakeholders (because stakeholders and partners can help to professionalize the Center, identify problem areas via monitoring, protect the facility from unwarranted criticism, help to generate inmate employment opportunities, become escort volunteers, etc.).
- Staff should communicate with each other on a daily basis about ways to maximize organizational effectiveness—this requires setting up structure and processes.
- The superintendent should mentor staff who start off as correctional officers in order to help them get promoted. This facilitates staff development and militates against internal administrative/staff conflict.
- Staff should be continually encouraged to operate with professionalism, which is defined at Chaney as acting based on thought versus emotion, and acting based

driver's license assessment, and the like. It is important to note that more than 90% of programming provided to inmates at the Chaney Center is provided through community-based volunteers. On the other hand, there were 61 inmate complaints in 2011 but only 26 in 2005. FCAB and Center staff believe that this may be indicative of increased inmate trust, in that it is possible that inmates feel much more empowered to tender complaints now as compared to the past. More recent data have not been supplied by the DOC.

Conclusion

The current superintendent assumed his post in 2006, and it took only one year of FCAB/Chaney Center cooperation to start realizing the "fruits" of working together. As the superintendent has pointed out in many staffing meetings:

The ultimate goal is to make the transition back into the community as

Another Chaney practice that is different from any other facility in the state is that all Chaney staff, uniformed and otherwise, are charged with the responsibility of continuously seeking job opportunities for inmates.

on the vision of making re-integration as "seamless" as possible for inmates.

- Leadership must be willing to embrace the community and develop community partnerships.

Preliminary Outcomes

The outcome data supplied herein were produced by the DOC's Division of Records. First, out of more than 1,050 inmates, there were only eight recidivists in the five-year period from 2007 to 2011 (Cockroft, 2013). This amounts to a five-year return-to-prison rate for this cohort of ex-offenders of less than 1%. Additionally, there has been a steady decline in the number of walk-aways, from a height of 30 in 2005 to a low of three in 2011. This amounts to a 90% reduction. Third, it is common practice for DOC facilities to receive some form of purchase of service (POS) funding to provide programming for inmates. Since 2006, however, the Chaney Center has used community-based volunteers, at no cost to the state, for interventions such as AODA counseling, anger management, cognitive intervention training,

"seamless" as possible. . . . [and] it is essential that we (inmates, staff, stakeholders, DOC community) function as part of a collective rather than in a vacuum or on an island by ourselves.

Based on the measures presented above, the thought is developing that the Chaney Center has an excellent ("best practices") re-integration program as it currently exists. The willingness to have local leadership and community stakeholders work together provided the basis for the positive outcomes that have been achieved. Additionally, inmates and staff need to be engaged in some degree of participatory decision making, and stakeholders must also serve as independent monitors capable of disseminating information to the lay public and the bureaucracy. It should go without saying that the process and transition from a "warehouse" was not always smooth.

Obviously, more data need to be provided by the DOC for analysis. The FCAB has been seeking such data, without success, for

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a considerable period. It seems counterintuitive that the DOC would want to obstruct or obfuscate information showing such a positive result emanating from the FCAB and Chaney Correctional Center partnership. However, as indicated in this article's initial remarks, the FCAB has been viewed as either a help or a hindrance depending on the time period.

Initially, superintendents were instructed to: "Get that advisory board under control!" The failure to accomplish this turned out, in the end, to be a blessing. A main reason why it was a blessing is because the FCAB repeatedly used its print and media appearances to extoll the virtues of the Chaney Correctional Center. One result of this is that the Chaney Center was transformed from being that mysterious building on the avenue, or yet another warehousing prison, into an institution that rightfully garnered community respect. Significant, also, was the fact that the FCAB's presence made for a more pleasant workplace for many staff and inmates.

Nonetheless, because the FCAB's media appearances also included recommendations for policy and/or procedural changes for the DOC as a whole, the FCAB was also viewed as a dangerously recalcitrant voice, particularly starting in 2014, when it repeatedly garnered broadcast and print media time publicizing what it regarded as the various systemic ills of the state's criminal justice and correctional systems. Wisconsin, for example, has hovered between being the worst or next-to-worst state in the nation in disparate per capita incarceration of African-American males (Mauer & King, 2007; McNeely et al., 2011; Pawasarat & Quinn, 2013; Wisconsin Office of Justice Assistance, 2008). Many in very visible leadership positions did not want this, among other things, to be publicized. Also, the DOC has repeatedly declined to provide data to the public on a whole host of system-wide issues, such as the number of potential compassionate-release inmates in the state, the number of inmates who are eligible to be released but are erroneously still incarcerated, and the number of individuals, by race, sent back to prison for *questionable* technical violations of their parole or probation (McNeely, 2015). The result of FCAB advocacy for correctional transparency on these and other issues was the disaffiliation, in March

2015, with the Chaney Correctional Center (Kaiser, 2015). Perhaps this was inevitable during a period when Wisconsin's governor was engaged in a presidential candidacy, and supporters did not want any voices spewing facts about the inadequacies of the state's bureaucracies.

Many of the FCAB's members regret the disaffiliation. One unanticipated outcome by a number of board members was a feeling of loss in not being able to exert a presence at the Chaney Center. Many felt that their physical presence was helpful for offenders seeking to chart a re-integrative course back to their families and neighborhoods. However, a number of board members feel relieved to be relieved of any DOC affiliation. One result has been that the FCAB has rewritten its bylaws and renamed itself. It is now known as the Felmers O. Chaney Advocacy Board. It remains committed to "encouraging" the Wisconsin Department of Corrections to pursue productive evidence-based pathways in achieving its own mission.

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