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**REVIEW OF THE
MARYLAND PAROLE COMMISSION**

NCJRS

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State of Maryland

Department of Budget & Fiscal Planning

Division of Management Analysis & Audits

December, 1986

**REVIEW OF THE
MARYLAND PAROLE COMMISSION**

**State of Maryland
Department of Budget & Fiscal Planning
Division of Management Analysis & Audits
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Preface

Data collection for this study was undertaken in April, May and June, 1986. The report depicts the situation as it existed at that time.

Acknowledgement

We wish to acknowledge and note our appreciation for the assistance provided by the Parole Commission, their staff, and other Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services personnel.

Table of Contents

	<u>Page</u>
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	
I. INTRODUCTION	1
A. Purpose, Scope and Objectives	1
B. Methodology.....	1
C. Recent and Upcoming Changes.....	2
D. Report Format.....	2
II. OVERVIEW: COMMISSION ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES	3
A. Authority, Composition and Responsibilities	3
B. Authorizing Parole	3
1. Parole Hearings.....	3
2. Predetermined Parole Release Agreements	8
3. Parole in Absentia.....	9
4. Releases on Parole	9
C. Post Release Responsibilities	10
D. Clemency Actions.....	11
E. Recent Commission History and Activity Levels.....	12
III. GENERAL MANAGEMENT ISSUES	17
A. Staff Turnover	17
B. Morale.....	20
C. Management Staff.....	21
1. Delegation	22
2. Problem Recognition and Prevention.....	23
3. Strengthening Agency Management	24
D. Training	25
E. Operating Procedures.....	27
F. Performance Expectations.....	27
G. Position Responsibilities and Assignments	28
H. Time Accountability	29
I. Overtime	30
J. Space and Equipment	31
K. Regulation and Policy.....	32

Table of Contents**(continued)**

	<u>Page</u>
IV. STAFF ORGANIZATION AND RESPONSIBILITIES	33
A. Hearing Officers	33
B. Administrative Services Unit	38
1. Automation Coordination.....	38
2. Training	39
3. Personnel Services	39
C. Institutional Parole Services (IPS)	43
D. Parole Services Unit (PSU)	44
1. General Findings and Recommendations: PSU.....	45
2. Findings and Recommendations: CPD Unit	47
3. Findings and Recommendations: IDU	54
E. Support Services Unit (SSU).....	56
1. Steno Unit	57
2. Decision Unit.....	58
3. Administrative Specialist.....	59
Appendix A	
List of Recommendations	63

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Secretary of Public Safety and Correctional Services requested the Department of Budget and Fiscal Planning to conduct a management audit of the Maryland Parole Commission. The audit report includes an overview of Commission mandates and activity levels but focuses primarily on staff operations and agency management. Parole philosophies and policies were excluded from review.

The audit identified several management problems which are in need of address and are discussed below. These problems have combined to produce a work environment that is somewhat chaotic and unpleasant, and have resulted in significant backlogs in virtually all key areas (e.g., case opening, sentence status change, correspondence, documents to be filed, decisions to be typed, cases to be closed). Both statutory and policy deadlines are violated as inmates and parolees are not scheduled for timely hearings, the typing of parole decisions is often behind schedule, and correspondence sometimes sits for inordinate periods of time before a response is generated. The Commission's problems will not be quickly or easily resolved. Their resolution will require strong leadership and management skills.

Turnover

Turnover among staff at mid-management levels and below has been extreme to the point of disruption. There has been 102% turnover during the past 28 months among this group; an annual turnover rate of 45%. Among vacancies which occurred and were filled during this 28-month period, 28% remained vacant for 20 weeks or longer. Turnover and recruitment problems have meant vacancy rates ranging from 4.3% to 27.3% and averaging 12%. Until turnover problems are resolved, the Commission cannot hope to operate efficiently. Certainly there is an interrelationship between turnover and many of the other management and work environment problems identified in this report. Resolution of these problems should have a positive impact on reducing turnover.

We have recommended that the Chairman establish an exit interview process through which to identify the specific reasons for such high turnover and to obtain information useful for hiring and training practices. Once causative factors are clearly identified, management will need to begin addressing retention problems. Furthermore, the Commission will need to initiate more timely recruitment efforts to provide for

prompt staff replacements. We have also recommended that the Personnel Services Unit staff in the Office of the Secretary assist the Commission in identifying ways to enhance recruitment practices.

Overtime

Overtime is not well controlled or properly managed. Some staff routinely work the equivalent of 14.7 and 15.4 days per pay period, and have increased their earnings by as much as 60% to 80% through overtime payments. Overtime at these levels is likely to have reached the point of diminishing returns as staff work so many hours that productivity suffers. In fact, it is likely to be counter-productive as staff suffer from "burnout."

More effective overtime controls are recommended in the report, including: 1) limitations on the amount of overtime individual employees may work during a given period, and 2) documentation and management review of work accomplished during overtime hours. This latter recommendation should allow management to assess both the need for and effectiveness of overtime.

Procedural Documentation

Procedural documentation is poor to non-existent for many staff tasks and responsibilities. This makes training and adjustment more difficult for new employees and is a source of concern to experienced employees.

The Commission has recognized the need for procedural documentation and is in the process of addressing this deficiency. We recommend that the Commission continue to place a high priority upon completion of procedural documentation, and further recommend that the Commission use this process as an opportunity to identify and address problem areas and inefficiencies, several of which are noted in the report.

Training

On-the-job training has been hindered by the lack of adequate procedural documentation, the lack of sufficient time to train the continual stream of new employees, and by managers and supervisors themselves not being adequately trained or sufficiently familiar with subordinate responsibilities.

Several recommendations are provided to address these problems, including the address of turnover problems and completion of good procedural documentation. It is also recommended that individual staff training needs be systematically assessed, beginning with management and supervisory staff. Once identified, a plan must be developed to meet specific training needs. On a broader perspective, it is recommended that training in basic personnel matters be required for all management staff. It is also recommended that the Commission's institutional staff members be required to attend appropriate portions of the Maryland Correctional Training Academy and further, that they receive training on PARIS (the Parole Information System) so that they can access necessary information directly.

Performance Expectation

Performance expectations have not always been established or clearly communicated to staff. This leaves employees unclear as to management's expectations and makes more difficult: 1) the evaluation of employee performance, 2) the assessment of employee training needs, and 3) the identification of problem areas and resource needs.

We have recommended that both qualitative and quantitative standards be established for each position and operating unit. Employees and their supervisors should be involved in the development of quantitative standards and, to be of value, these standards must be validated periodically under typical working conditions. We have also recommended that management place more emphasis on providing employees with more timely and meaningful performance feedback.

Job Assignments

Job assignments are in a constant state of flux as responsibilities are continually juggled to accommodate vacancies and are frequently shuffled (both laterally and vertically) to: 1) provide job enrichment and staff development opportunities, 2) address unmet performance expectations, and 3) obtain position reclassifications. Such changes are disruptive as staff are continuously learning and adjusting to new duties and workload imbalances develop. Furthermore, such changes obfuscate accountability.

Assignment of job responsibilities should be logical and commensurate with grade levels. Staff appropriate to the responsibilities should be recruited, hired and trained. It is recommended that management utilize the development of written operating procedures and performance standards as an opportunity to closely review individual staff responsibilities, particularly as PARIS provides some positions with more efficient procedures for accomplishing current time-consuming tasks. It is further recommended, where possible, that responsibilities be clearly vested with single individuals or within single units to enhance accountability. Several specific recommendations relative to position assignments are provided in the report.

Management Staff

Management staff (the Administrator and Administrative Specialist staff) is in need of strengthening. Some managers appear to function largely as a pass-through, with little value contributed. Under the auspices of staff development and job enrichment a considerable amount of work and responsibility is delegated to staff at too low a level to be effectively performed. Furthermore, such delegation is often not accompanied by essential management direction, support or follow-through.

We have recommended that management staff be strengthened through: 1) effective hiring selections, 2) enhanced training which focuses on both development of management skills and knowledge of subordinate responsibilities, 3) an appropriate alignment of specific responsibilities and tasks, and 4) establishment of clear management performance expectations. Additional pay flexibility may be necessary to enable the Commission to retain good management staff, and we have recommended that the Office of the Secretary review the appropriateness of current classifications.

Morale

Morale problems are pervasive and significant, and are impacting on turnover and productivity.

We have recommended that Commission management take positive steps to: 1) identify and become more sensitive to the concerns and perceptions of employees, 2) reinforce good work efforts by acknowledging and showing appreciation for staff accomplishments, and 3) diplomatically deal with performance deficiencies. In addition, management must address each of the other deficiencies noted in the report in order to provide a more desirable work environment that is conducive to high morale.

Personnel Services

Personnel services have not always been timely or efficiently handled; the result being wasted staff time, lingering vacancies and disgruntled employees. The lack of adequate training and supervision of the personnel clerk operates to compound these problems.

We have recommended that the personnel clerk and the attendant personnel functions performed by this position be consolidated within the Personnel Services Unit in the Office of the Secretary. This should result in enhanced services to the Commission, as a larger, more experienced and better supervised staff is available to meet needs. We have further recommended that staff in the Personnel Services Unit work with Commission management to: 1) enhance recruitment practices, 2) develop internal reclassification policies and effective disciplinary procedures, and 3) identify and address management and supervisory training needs relative to basic personnel matters.

Case Opening and Scheduling

Inmates, particularly those with short sentences, are not being scheduled for timely hearings and, in some instances, are not being scheduled for hearings at all. This violates both Commission policy and the interpreted legislative mandate. Several factors contribute to this problem as discussed in the report.

To assist in the more efficient and timely scheduling of parole hearings, it is recommended that the two case opening clerks be relocated from the Commission's office to the DOC Reception Center where, with benefit of a PARIS terminal, they can begin working with inmate case files from the inmate's date of intake. It is further recommended that the case opening clerks be assigned responsibility for scheduling inmate parole hearings as the commitments are received and files are opened. If this recommendation is implemented, the Commission will need a full-time contract worker for six months to assist in the transition to new case opening procedures.

Parole Services Unit Staff

An additional clerical position is recommended for the file room to process sentence status change and detainer notices.

Additional Recommendations

Several additional recommendations are provided in the report and are listed in Appendix A. The report also identifies several operations in need of management review, including: 1) file room operations, 2) the scheduling of timely parole hearings for noncadre inmates housed at the Reception Center, 3) the scheduling of revocation hearings, and 4) the processing of parole in absentia cases.

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Purpose, Scope and Objectives

This review was requested by the Secretary of the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS). Its purpose is to review and assess the administration of the Maryland Parole Commission.

Specific objectives of this review are to:

1. identify, document and measure the responsibilities of the Commission;
2. evaluate the organizational structure, staffing and general administration of the Commission;
3. assess the effectiveness and efficiency of existing administrative policies, procedures and practices of the Commission; and
4. provide recommendations, where appropriate, to enhance Commission operations.

Excluded is a review of the desirability and effectiveness of specific paroling policies and philosophies. While there are both many purposes to be served and benefits to be gained through parole, this review does not attempt to look at them. The budgetary impact of parole, however, is worth noting. Specifically, as inmates are paroled, demand for both DOC and local jail bed space is lessened.

B. Methodology

Data was collected for this review during April, May and early June, 1986. Numerous documents and work products were reviewed. All Commissioners and most of the Commission staff were interviewed, as were other DPSCS personnel in the Office of the Secretary, the Division of Corrections (DOC), the Division of Parole and Probation (DPP), and the Data Center. Several prior Commission employees were also interviewed. Additionally, some parole hearings, MAP negotiation meetings and revocation hearings were observed.

C. Recent and Upcoming Changes

The Commission had undergone several changes just prior to this audit. These changes included appointment of both a new Chairman and Commissioner in December, 1985, and relocation of the Commission office in January, 1986. The Commission's prior Chairman served a little over half his term (approximately 3-1/2 years) before resigning. The chairmanship was vacant for about six months before the current Chairman assumed the role.

Several upcoming changes will soon be impacting upon the Commission. These changes include: 1) the opening of Eastern Correctional Institution, 2) implementation of Chapter 128 Laws of Maryland 1986, which will shift, on a phased basis, all inmates with sentences of 12 months or less from the jurisdiction of the Division of Correction to local jail authorities, and 3) the transfer of responsibility for preliminary hearings from the Division of Parole and Probation to the Parole Commission. These three changes will impact primarily on hearing activity and scheduling logistics.

In addition, the Commission will soon be the beneficiary of PARIS - the Parole Information System. This system, supported by the DPSCS Data Center, will obviate the need for maintenance of several sets of control cards as well as their repetitive and time-consuming update. This system will also provide the Commission with opportunities to streamline some current operating procedures, allowing them to more effectively schedule inmates for timely parole hearings. Finally, PARIS should also prove valuable to the Commission as it enhances management and evaluative information capabilities.

D. Report Format

In Chapter II, a brief overview of Commission mandates and activity levels is provided. Chapter III discusses several general management issues of agency-wide concern. The final chapter reviews specific staff operations and provides recommendations for organizational and procedural change.

II. OVERVIEW: COMMISSION ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Authority, Composition and Responsibilities

The Commission operates under authority of Article 41 of the Annotated Code. It consists of seven members, each appointed for a term of six years by the Secretary of DPSCS, with the approval of the Governor and the advice and consent of the Senate. Members serve full-time and are compensated at an FY 1987 rate of \$46,700, with the Chairman receiving \$49,300.

The Chairman generally does not participate in scheduled hearing activities, but rather functions as agency head, liaising with the General Assembly and other external parties and overseeing matters of policy, Commission activities, and - through the Administrator - staff activities. The Commission has an authorized support staff of 56 merit system employees and an FY 1987 budget appropriation of almost \$1.9 million.

Commission duties and responsibilities fall into three basic categories: 1) authorizing parole, 2) monitoring parolee behavior and revoking parole as appropriate, and 3) advising the Governor on clemency matters.

B. Authorizing Parole

I. Parole Hearings

Article 41 provides the Commission with exclusive powers to "Authorize the parole of individuals sentenced under the laws of this State to any penal or correctional institution, jail or other place of confinement in the State."*

* The Commission does not have parole authority over inmates of Patuxent Institution or inmates ineligible for parole as a result of sentencing under Article 27 § 286 and 643B. The Commission's paroling authority is also limited with respect to inmates sentenced to life imprisonment who may only be paroled with the Governor's approval after serving at least 15 years less institutional time credits or 25 years less institutional time credits if sentenced pursuant to Article 27 § 413.

The law also places a responsibility upon the Commission as follows:

"It shall be the duty of the Commission of its own initiative to request the Division (of Parole and Probation) to make such investigations as may enable the Commission to determine the advisability of granting parole to persons sentenced to a term of six months or more under the laws of this State to the jurisdiction of the Division of Correction, or to any other place of confinement or detention of violators of the criminal laws of the State whenever the prisoner shall have served in confinement one-fourth of the term or consecutive terms."

While the wording of the statute dictates only that the Commission initiate an investigation into the desirability of parole by the time the inmate has served one-fourth of his sentence, the Commission has generally interpreted this latter provision to mean that inmates should receive a parole hearing by the time the inmate has served one-fourth of his sentence. While the most recently enacted hearing policy (2-1) provides for an initial parole hearing at the one-fourth of sentence date, various Commission policies implemented in the past have provided for an advancement of the initial parole hearing date. The Commission has not always been successful in providing inmates with parole hearings within the interpreted statutory time frame (by one-fourth of sentence) or their policy established time frames. In fact, many of the shorter sentence inmates (those with sentences of six months to two years) complete their sentences and are mandatorily released without ever being scheduled for a parole hearing. As discussed later in the report, this is sometimes the result of circumstances beyond the Commission's control.

The law requires that parole hearings be held at least once each month at DOC institutions and as often as necessary at other places of confinement. This criteria is met through the establishment of an institutional/jail hearing rotation as shown in Table 1.

Table 1

**Institution and Jail
Hearing Rotation Schedule**

1st week of month	MCI-H, MP, MRDCC, BPRU, BCC, CARC, Central MD Jails
2nd week of month	MCTC, Western MD Jails
3rd week of month	MCPRS, RCI, MCI-W, MRDCC BCJ, Eastern MD Jails
4th week of month	MHC, MCI-J, Montgomery Co., Southern MD Jails

Source: Parole Commission Monthly Schedule

By law, the Commission must provide inmates with adequate and timely written notice of the date, time and place of the hearing and the factors that will be considered at the hearing. The Commission must also provide inmates with the opportunity to review their file (with the exception of certain privileged information). Commission Casework Associate staff located in regional institutional offices are responsible for providing these services. Scheduling logistics are such that the Commission has not been able to give inmates written notice of the actual date and time of hearing, but generally only notice of the hearing week. This practice appears to not meet the precise requirements of the law. With the changes in scheduling activity recommended later in this report and better planning, the Commission may be able to meet the specific legal scheduling requirements without too much additional effort. This is something the Commission should explore when other more significant agency problems have been addressed.

The law provides that parole hearings for inmates convicted of homicide or sentenced to life imprisonment must be held before a panel of at least two Commissioners. All other inmates may receive a parole hearing before a single Hearing Officer, whose recommendation must be summarily reviewed by a Commissioner. Hearing Officer recommendations may be appealed by either the reviewing Commissioner or the inmate. Cases in which an appeal is filed must be reviewed on the record by a panel of at least two Commissioners. The law further requires that written reports of Hearing Officer recommendations be provided to the inmates within 21 days of the hearing and that written reports of Commissioners' decisions in which parole is refused, be provided to inmates within 30 days of the hearing. **While Commission policy and practices do provide for hearings and appeals to be held as required, the Commission has not always been successful in providing written decisions to inmates within the statutory time frame.** This issue is discussed later the report.

A summary of parole hearing and appeal activity levels for the past nine years is shown in Table 2. As can be seen, activity levels fluctuate from year to year, with hearing activity for FY 1986 21% below the FY 1985 level and almost 26% less than the FY 1978 level. Some of this fluctuation may be explained by expedited parole release and hearing projects in 1979, 1980 and 1981 and by statutory changes which expanded parole hearing eligibility in FY 1982 and FY 1983 to inmates serving sentences of 90 days or more. The low hearing statistic for FY 1986 is likely attributable, at least in part, to the case opening and scheduling backlogs discussed later in the report.

A review of monthly hearing activity reports for a recent 32-month period revealed that approximately 86% of the hearings were for DOC inmates, the remaining 14% being local jail inmates. Six percent of the hearings were held by Commissioners, with the remaining 94% being held by Hearing Officers.*

Appeals also fluctuate from year to year, with roughly 14% of the FY 1985 and 15% of the FY 1986 Hearing Officer recommendations being appealed. FY 1986 appeal activity was considerably below prior year activity levels.

Table 2

**Parole Hearing and Appeal Activity
(FY 1978 - FY 1986)**

	Parole Hearings	% Change from Prior Year	Recommendations Appealed	% Change from Prior Year
FY 1978	7,749 (1)		1,617	
FY 1979	6,763	-12.7	1,593	-1.5
FY 1980	6,777	0.2	839	-47.3
FY 1981	6,560	-3.2	984	17.3
FY 1982	7,217	7.5	1,536	56.1
FY 1983	7,233	0.2	1,711	11.4
FY 1984	6,521	9.8	1,270	-25.8
FY 1985	7,300	11.9	987	-22.3
FY 1986	5,761	-21.1	894	-9.4
Net Change from FY 1978	-1,988	-25.7	-723	-44.7

Source: State of Maryland Budget

(1) This statistic is taken from Commission activity records and does not equate to the FY 1978 total of 8,252 as reported in the Budget. It is unclear which statistic is correct.

* It is important to note that while Commissioners hear only about 6% of the parole hearings, they do review all Hearing Officer recommendations and conduct all MAP negotiations and renegotiations as well as all revocation hearings. Furthermore, Commissioners engage in several administrative tasks such as parole hearing appeals, clemency actions, evaluative reviews and office appointments. Statistics for these activities are summarized in Table 7 on page 15. Finally, it is noted that Commissioners also devote time to committee activities, meeting en banc each month.

2. Predetermined Parole Release Agreements

The law also authorizes the Commission to negotiate and sign predetermined parole release agreements, better known as MAP (Mutual Agreement Programming) agreements. A MAP agreement is a contract between the Commissioner of Corrections, the Parole Commission and an inmate which provides for the inmate's release on parole at a predetermined time if, during the period of confinement, the inmate fulfills the conditions specified in the agreement.

MAP negotiations and renegotiations involve a face-to-face meeting in the institution between the three parties. The Commission, although not required by law according to an Attorney General's Opinion, sends two Commissioners to each MAP meeting. It is the Commission's opinion that two Commissioners are necessary for consistency, in that all other parole decisions require the consensus of either two Commissioners or a Commissioner and a Hearing Officer. Amendments to MAP contracts are processed administratively and do not require a three party meeting. MAP activity levels are shown in Table 3. While FY 1986 saw significantly more negotiations than FY 1985, MAP activity levels have generally decreased in recent years.

Table 3

MAP Activity (FY 1978 - FY 1986)

	<u>Negotiations</u>	<u>Renegotiations</u>	<u>Amendments</u>
FY 1978	559	141	*
FY 1979	860	249	*
FY 1980	926	328	493
FY 1981	622	502	524
FY 1982	688	354	384
FY 1983	660	281	377
FY 1984	619	274	452
FY 1985	430	184	484
FY 1986	580	140	417

Source: State of Maryland Budget

* Statistics not available

3. Parole in Absentia

The Commission is also statutorily authorized to parole, in absentia, those individuals with a Maryland sentence who are serving their time in correctional institutions of foreign jurisdictions (e.g., other States and the Federal Government) and individuals with a Maryland sentence concurrent to a foreign sentence being served in the foreign jurisdiction.

This is an administrative process initiated by inmate request wherein information is collected and reviewed by a panel of two Commissioners who ultimately either grant or refuse parole. There have been only 20 such cases scheduled for hearing in the past 32 months.

4. Releases on Parole

The ultimate result of the above noted activities has been the release on parole of those numbers of inmates show in in Table 4. As can be seen, recent year releases are well below previous levels.

Table 4

Releases on Parole (FY 1978 - FY 1986)

	No. Inmates Released
FY 1978	2,858
FY 1979	2,787
FY 1980	3,087
FY 1981	2,785
FY 1982	1,773
FY 1983	1,961
FY 1984	1,550
FY 1985	1,720
FY 1986	1,738

Source: State of Maryland Budget

C. Post Release Responsibilities

The Commission is charged with the responsibility of evaluating information on the activities of parolees as reported by parole agents in the Division of Parole and Probation (DPP). Reports are generally provided on an exception basis when parolees have been alleged to have violated the conditions of their parole. Violations may be technical (i.e., violation of a specific parole condition such as substance abuse treatment) or new offense related. As can be seen from Table 5, there were 3,707 such reports during FY 1986.

DPP reports resulted in 784 revocation hearings during FY 1986. Revocation hearings, as provided by law, are held before one Commissioner and are the only hearing at which the individual may be represented by counsel. Commissioners may take any action they determine appropriate including continuing or revoking parole. As can be seen in Table 5, there were 514 revocations during FY 1986. (Note: These statistics include not only parolees but also inmates mandatorily released from prison - prior to sentence expiration - as a result of institutional time credits. Mandatory releasees are subject to general parole conditions until the expiration of their sentence.)

Table 5
Post Parole Reviews and Revocations*
(FY 1978 - FY 1986)

	Special Reports	Revocation Hearings	Paroles Revoked
FY 1978	**	672	440
FY 1979	**	782	452
FY 1980	**	745	364
FY 1981	4,066	837	510
FY 1982	5,030	1,096	710
FY 1983	3,159	986	711
FY 1984	2,972	1,024	788
FY 1985	2,943	975	698
FY 1986	3,707	784	514

Source: State of Maryland Budget

* Includes mandatory releasees as well as parolees

** Statistics not available

Depending on the circumstances and severity of the alleged violation, Division of Parole and Probation reports may request the Commission to subpoena the parolee to appear at a revocation hearing or may request a warrant either for his retake or to be lodged as a detainer against an already incarcerated parolee. If and when a Commission warrant becomes the sole detaining document, the alleged violator is given a preliminary hearing (generally within about 72 hours) to determine whether there is probable cause to detain him pending revocation proceedings. This is necessary because revocation proceedings are generally not held for inmates charged with new offenses until those charges have been adjudicated. During FY 1985, there were 240 preliminary hearings, the vast majority of which were held in Baltimore. The Baltimore hearings are held every Tuesday and Thursday. The preliminary hearings traditionally have been held by DPP staff, usually Field Supervisor IIs. An Advice of Counsel dated October 14, 1985, however, has determined that this function should be transferred to the Commission. As this responsibility transfers, it will impact upon Hearing Officer activity levels and scheduling logistics. The two agencies are reviewing the number of positions to be transferred along with the duties.

D. Clemency Actions

The Commission is also charged with responsibility for advising the Governor on clemency actions, including commutations and requests for pardon.

Commutations are typically considered at Christmas time and involve a file review on those inmates whose names have been submitted by DOC (and local jails) as meeting the established criteria. Recommendations are forwarded to the Office of the Secretary for review and transmittal to the Governor's Office.

Applications for pardons are periodically received by the Commission who in turn asks DPP to investigate if the petition fulfills criteria for consideration as suggested by the Governor. The investigation report is reviewed by the Commission and a letter is forwarded to the Governor recommending for or against the pardon.

Clemency action activity levels for the past few years can be seen in Table 6. These statistics do not represent all cases reviewed but rather only those approved.

Table 6
Pardon and Commutation Activity

Pardons	
FY 1984	29
FY 1985	68
Commutations	
CY 1984	86
CY 1985	184

Source: State of Maryland Budget and Executive Orders

E. Recent Commission History and Activity Levels

As can be seen from Table 7, Commission activity levels across the years have fluctuated. Statistics for MAP amendments and Evaluative Reviews (DPP reports) were not maintained until FY 1980 and FY 1981 respectively. Current levels for these two activities are below FY 1980 and FY 1981 activity levels. Current activity levels for all other functions are generally about the same level as or below FY 1978 activity levels, with the exception of MAP and revocation hearings which are somewhat higher in FY 1986 than they were in FY 1978.

In addition to internal factors (e.g., Commission philosophy), there are several external factors which influence and/or impact upon Commission policy and activities including public perception, legislative actions, Executive Branch policies and practices (e.g., policies and practices of DOC, Office of the Secretary DPSCS, and the Governor's Office), and judicial sentencing practices. Some of the more tangible legislative and structural changes impacting upon Commission activities in recent years include the following:

1976 - The Parole Board was restructured as the Parole Commission. Hearing Officers and the appeal process were authorized.

- 1979 - Parole hearings (previously required only for inmates sentenced to 180 or more days) were required for inmates serving sentences of 90 or more days.
- The 15 position Parole Services Unit was transferred to the Commission from the Division of Parole and Probation.
- 1981 - The 15 position Institutional Parole Services Unit was transferred to the Commission from the Division of Parole and Probation.
- 1982 - The power to hear cases for parole release, in absentia, was modified to empower the Commission to hear cases in absentia, regardless of whether or not an inmate serving a Maryland sentence had a concurrent sentence to serve in the foreign jurisdiction.
- 1984 - Parole eligibility was changed back to inmates serving sentences of six months or more.
- The Commission was required to file copies of parole release orders with the clerks of the sentencing courts.
- 1985 - Provisions for automatic notification of parole hearings and decisions are available to certain victims upon request.
- 1986 - Provisions for automatic notification of parole hearings and decisions are available to all victims upon request.

As can be seen, the Commission has not only grown in size, but has become administratively more complex over the years.

Table 7
Summary of Commission Activities

FY 1978 - FY 1986

Hearings:	<u>FY 1978</u>	<u>FY 1979</u>	<u>FY 1980</u>	<u>FY 1981</u>	<u>FY 1982</u>	<u>FY 1983</u>	<u>FY 1984</u>	<u>FY 1985</u>	<u>FY 1986</u>
Parole	7,749 ^a	6,682	6,706	6,560	7,217	7,233	6,521	7,300	5,761
MAP (neg. and reneg.)	700	1,109	1,254	1,124	1,042	941	893	614	720
Revocation	701	782	745	837	1,096	986	1,024	975	784
Administrative Activities:									
Appeals	1,617	1,593	839	984	1,536	1,711	1,270	987	894
Admin. Reviews ^b	125	130	160	136	137	116	97	64	86
MAP Amendments	-	-	493	524	384	377	452	484	417
Eval. Reviews ^c	-	-	-	4,066	5,030	3,159	2,972	2,943	3,707
Hold Cases ^d	1,107	1,520	1,577	1,182	1,266	1,496	938	1,039	737
Pardons	55	67	43	51	103	26	29	68	44
Releases	2,858	2,789	3,087	2,785	1,773	1,961	1,550	1,720	1,738
Office Appts.	868	789	679	538	515	414	326	87	30

Source: State of Maryland Budget

Notes: ^a This statistic was taken from Commission reports and does not agree with the figure of 8,252 reported in the budget.

^b This is a file review conducted by Hearing Officers (primarily to ensure all necessary data is available) every 5 years for inmates sentenced to life or to more than 25 years and who fall under Commission policy 2-7 or 2-1.

^c Reports from Division of Parole and Probation

^d Cases where parole hearing decisions are denied pending receipt of necessary information

III. GENERAL MANAGEMENT ISSUES

The Parole Commission suffers from several serious management problems. Chief among them are high turnover and low morale. These two particular problems both are related to and complicate other agency problems which include: weak management in need of strengthening, inadequate procedural documentation and training, a lack of clear employee performance expectations, frequent reassignment of responsibilities, inefficient and counter-productive personnel practices, and excessive use of overtime. In addition, policies and regulations are in need of update and revision, time accountability is sometimes lacking, and there are unmet space and equipment needs.

While many of these issues appear basic, they are nonetheless critical to the efficient and effective operation of any agency; and they are issues which the Chairman will need to address. Each issue is discussed below and recommendations are provided.

A. Staff Turnover

Turnover is probably the most significant and challenging of problems facing the Commission. This single problem has undoubtedly either led to or aggravated all other management problems.

Turnover among Commissioners is planned around six-year terms and turnover among the Administrator and Hearing Officer positions has been minimal. Turnover among staff at mid-management levels and below, however, has been extreme to the point of disruption. Among this latter group, there has been an effective turnover rate of 104% during the past 28 months.* This translates to an annual turnover rate of 45%. Among the 46 positions in this group, there have been at least 48 job changes.** Eight of these job changes were internal reassignments significant enough to require training in new duties. The remaining

* January, 1984, through April, 1986

** The number of positions in this group ranged from 44 to 48 during this 28-month period and averaged 46. One of the 48 job changes occurred as a result of a Hearing Officer vacancy to which an Administrative Specialist was appointed in an acting capacity. In addition, a couple of the changes were reportedly a result of the January, 1986 relocation.

40 job changes were employees terminating from the Commission. Not only have 48 experienced staff either left or changed jobs, but 48 employees have had to be trained in new responsibilities.

Turnover, as shown in Table 8, has significantly impacted on every unit. The Case Preparation and Docketing Unit and Inmate Data Unit have been hit the hardest, with respective turnover rates of 129% and 167% during this period. Within the Inmate Data Unit, the two-person Release Desk has experienced five job turnovers (250%) during this 28-month period. Within the Case Preparation and Docketing Unit, the one-person Parole Violation Desk has had at least five occupants during the past 12 months; a 500% rate of turnover in one year.

Table 8
Staff Turnover
by Unit
(January, 1984 - April, 1986)

	FY 1986 Positions	Job Changes	% Turnover	Annual Rate of Turnover*
Administrative Staff**	7	7	100 %	42.9 %
Institutional Parole Services	14	10	71 %	30.4 %
Steno Unit	7	5	71 %	30.4 %
Decision Unit	7	7	100 %	42.9 %
Case Prep. & Docketing	7	9	129 %	55.3 %
Inmate Data Unit	6	10	167 %	71.6 %

Source: Compiled from agency vacancy reports

* Based upon FY 1986 authorized staff level.

** Includes the Administrative Officer III, 5 Administrative Specialist III's and the personnel clerk.

The impact of these high turnover rates is exacerbated by the fact that it often takes the Commission an excessive amount of time to fill job vacancies. For those jobs vacated and filled during this 28-month period, the periods of vacancy ranged from 0 to 48 weeks, and averaged 13.3 weeks. About 67% of the jobs were vacant in excess of eight weeks, with 28% remaining vacant for 20 or more weeks. (This problem is discussed further in the personnel section of this chapter.)

High turnover and recruitment problems have combined to produce vacancy rates that have ranged from 4.3% to 27.3%, but have averaged almost 12% during this 28-month period. Added to this 12% vacancy rate is an unknown percentage of staff who, at any given time, are new to their jobs and not yet fully productive.

To illustrate the gravity of the situation, we note that when this audit started there were eight vacancies among this staff group of 48 (17% vacancy rate). During the audit, two new employees were hired (dropping the vacancy total to six) but two other employees resigned (raising the vacancy total back to eight). Additionally, two existing employees were reassigned to new positions. The vacancies combined with the employees in training meant that at least 23% of the jobs were either not productive or not fully productive. Yet three additional employees submitted resignations near the end of this audit.

More telling, perhaps, is the impact of turnover on particular units. Note, for example, the Case Preparation and Docketing (CPD) Unit with a staff of six plus one supervisor. As discussed in the next chapter, most of these positions perform single person jobs. At the start of this audit the CPD unit supervisor had two new employees to train (on two different functions) and one vacancy to cover, in addition to performing her own duties. This supervisor was also very busy participating in a special time-consuming effort to produce unit desk procedures. We note that the unit supervisor left from work one day via ambulance, and has been out on sick leave since. Thus, this unit of seven was left without a supervisor and with only three fully trained and experienced employees, one of whom resigned near the end of this audit.

Vacancy rates averaged 16.5% during the first half of 1984 and reached 27.3% during the latter half of 1984, suggesting that the above described turnover and vacancy problems are not of recent advent nor atypical. Such instability in the

workforce has resulted in coverage and training problems, chronic and/or recurrent backlogs, and violation of both statutory and policy deadlines. Work is not managed, but juggled in efforts to cope with the instability.

We note that the Commission's turnover rate is more than double the turnover rate among comparable positions in the Division of Parole and Probation. Average Commission vacancy rates are almost double those at the Division of Parole and Probation. This suggests that the problems are agency specific rather than inherent to the system. The solution to Commission turnover problems is not additional staff. In the current environment, additional staff would only lead to additional vacancies and necessitate additional recruitment and training efforts. The solution lies in stabilizing the workforce through reduced turnover. The Commission cannot hope to operate with any degree of normalcy until the workforce is stabilized.

It is recommended that the Chairman establish and implement an exit interview process that is meaningful and allows employees to be candid. Through this process the basic reasons behind turnover should be identified, and information useful for hiring, training and management practices should be obtained. Once the causative factors are identified, management must begin to address retention problems. It may be that the problem, in part, will require address through some classification and compensation adjustments that will allow the Commission to hire and retain good employees. Other management and administrative deficiencies (discussed later in this chapter) will also have to be addressed along with morale problems, in order to provide a more desirable work environment. When vacancies do occur, the Commission will need to initiate recruitment efforts on a more timely basis to provide for prompt staff replacements.

B. Morale

The Commission has a serious staff morale problem. This problem was noted frequently and repeatedly by employees interviewed, and is probably the single greatest issue of concern among staff. The morale problem is pervasive, existing in all units throughout the agency and at all levels. Furthermore, the problem appears to be a rather long-standing one, dating back at least to 1980, at which

time a psychologist was brought in to assist in identifying morale problems. While the psychologist's report signaled an alarm on this topic, it is unclear what, if any, corrective action was taken.

Of significance is that while morale problems exist to some degree in most agencies, at the Commission these problems are not only prevalent, but appear to be having a significant impact on turnover and productivity and therefore must be addressed.

An agency's personality (i.e., the tone, attitude and general quality of work environment) in large part is determined by top management. It is therefore up to the Chairman and Administrator to establish a more positive work environment. Concerns expressed during this audit suggest that management staff at all levels must begin to acknowledge and appreciate staff accomplishments and positively reinforce good work efforts; become generally more sensitive to the needs, feelings and perceptions of employees; and deal more diplomatically and constructively with the employee performance deficiencies.

Considering the detrimental impact that poor staff morale is having on agency productivity and turnover, it is recommended that the sensitive issue of addressing staff morale problems be a high priority of the Chairman. Toward that end, it is recommended that the Chairman take positive steps to identify and address the issues of concern to staff. The recently initiated Employees Council* could prove a useful forum for exploring employee problems and concerns. A suggestion box might also prove useful as would implementation of the earlier recommended exit interview process.

C. Management Staff

While accomplishment of management's responsibilities is undoubtedly complicated and at times frustrated by the high rate of turnover, it is our assessment that the Commission's management staff is generally in need of strengthening. By management staff, we mean the Administrator and Administrative Specialist staff. Interviews conducted during this audit, coupled

* The Employee Council was recently created for the laudable purpose of stimulating ideas and encouraging improvements.

with review of agency documents and observation of agency operations, suggest that agency management staff is not always informed as to general management roles and responsibilities, knowledgeable about subordinate duties and responsibilities, nor cognizant enough of what is going on to be able to effectively manage. This situation of events is compounded at times by supervisory staff who themselves are not sufficiently familiar or comfortable with their subordinates' duties. Needless to say, such conditions make training, supervision, evaluation, and general management of work difficult.

Symptoms of the above noted management problems include inappropriate delegation and the fact that operating problems often grow to unnecessary magnitudes before they are recognized and addressed.

1. Delegation

Delegation, a common and useful management method, is both highly espoused at the Commission and inappropriately used.

We note that in some instances management staff appear to function largely as a pass-through, with little value contributed. They are busy performing essentially clerical functions while tasks requiring more complex management or problem-solving skills are delegated or filtered down to the Office Supervisor level. In fact, a disproportionate share of responsibility appears to rest with the Grade 7 Office Supervisors who are often either too busy or ill equipped to handle the delegated duties and responsibilities. Inappropriate delegation appears to be a particular problem within the Parole Services Unit.

First and foremost, workload imbalances have developed at the supervisory level. It is noted that supervisors are responsible for performance of their own unique and specific task assignments, as well as for the training, supervision, counseling and evaluation of their subordinates. As supervisors are delegated additional duties from above (often those assigned to the Administrative Specialist) and must continually assume additional tasks from below as necessitated by vacancies, they find that not only are they very busy, but that they are criticized for being inadequate supervisors.

Secondly, inappropriate delegation has occurred as too much responsibility has been delegated without the necessary management direction, support or follow-through, to staff with neither the resources nor capabilities to meet the responsibilities. We note for example, ongoing problems in the file room.

Management directed the Office Supervisor in charge of the file room to develop a plan to address file room problems. File room problems are both long-standing and significant in nature (as evidenced by excessive backlogs in sentence status change notices, correspondence and general filing) and include both staffing and turnover problems, each of which is beyond the supervisor's control and in need of top management's attention. While lower level staff often do have insight not available to management and therefore should be involved in problem identification and resolution, such staff often do not have the expertise or capability to resolve such problems without necessary management assistance, particularly problems of such magnitude. We note that while the supervisor did submit a plan detailing work prioritization and staff assignments, the plan also noted the need for additional full-time permanent staff. While management has provided periodic part-time assistance from staff in other units, such assistance has not proven sufficient and file room problems still exist. As discussed in the next chapter, our review reveals that file room problems will require address through additional staff on a permanent full-time basis and through more hands-on involvement and assistance of management staff.

2. Problem Recognition and Prevention

Despite a system of weekly activity reports and periodic staff meetings, problems often appear to go virtually unnoticed and/or unattended and, not receiving the necessary management attention, grow to unnecessary magnitudes. As a result, management finds itself in the position of reacting to one crisis after another. Of significance is the fact that the problems are often recurrent problems. Examples

of such problems include case opening backlogs, sentence status change backlogs and unanswered correspondence, each of which is discussed later in this report.

3. Strengthening Agency Management

Inappropriate delegation, a cycle of recurrent problems and the resultant chain of crises are symptoms of weak management. It is recommended that management staff be strengthened through: 1) enhanced training which focuses on both development of management skills and knowledge of subordinates' job tasks, 2) an appropriate alignment of specific job tasks and responsibilities, and 3) the development and communication of succinct performance expectations for each position, unit and manager. These are basic, yet critical issues which must be addressed not only for management staff, but for all Commission staff. Accordingly, these issues are discussed in somewhat more detail in the following sections.

It is also recommended that weekly activity reports (from supervisors to unit managers and from unit managers to the Administrator) be structured to provide, on a consistent and regular basis, critical information (e.g., number of cases to be opened, age of cases to be opened, number of sentence status changes to be processed) needed by management. These reports currently provide only sporadic information regarding critical functions and as such, problems not recognized by supervisory or unit management staff also go undetected by the Administrator.

The above efforts will need to be coupled with effective hiring decisions and the ability to retain good management staff. It may be that some additional salary flexibility will be necessary to enable the Commission to achieve the latter objective. Accordingly, it is recommended that the Office of the Secretary review the appropriateness of current mid-level management classifications and pay scales.

One final comment relative to agency management is that administrative direction has been complicated somewhat by changes in top management. Specifically, during the past six years there have been two permanent and two acting chairpersons. Furthermore, the Administrator, whose responsibilities have in the past included such executive level duties as budget formulation and legislative testimony, has not been provided with a comprehensive performance evaluation during the past six years. This latter situation should be remedied through regular annual performance assessments by the Chairman.

D. Training

Adequate training is crucial to an effectively functioning workforce. Training is of particular importance to an agency such as the Commission where there are a variety of different deadline driven, multi-step tasks to perform and a high rate of turnover.

Commission management has been quick to take advantage of departmental training funds to send staff to special training classes (e.g., stress management, time management, development of supervisory skills) provided by external sources (e.g., the Management Development Center and Clerical Training Institute). Other agency training needs, however, have largely gone unmet. Unmet training needs include orientation for new employees to be followed by on-the-job-training in specific assignments.

The Commission has long recognized the need for an effective orientation program that will introduce new employees to the Commission and its sister agencies, provide them with an overview of agency responsibilities and respective unit operations, and ultimately lead to a better informed and more functional staff. Development of such a program has been hindered for two reasons: 1) management has not placed a high enough priority on this project, and 2) the responsibility for orientation program development is unclearly vested with multiple mid-management staff (the Administrative Specialists in the Administrative Services Unit, the Support Services Unit and in the Research and Planning Unit). It is recommended that management assign clear responsibility for orientation program development to a single staff member; other staff members

can participate if desired. It is also recommended that management make development of this program a priority. Furthermore, the Commission should take full advantage of the technical assistance available from the Office of the Secretary and other departmental agencies. The departmental training coordinator is available and willing to work with the Commission in developing a training program and has the advantage of being knowledgeable about other agency training programs from which adaptations could be made.

On-the-job training is largely a supervisory level responsibility that has been hampered in some instances by the lack of sufficient time to train new employees, in other instances by both management and supervisors not being adequately trained or familiar enough with subordinate responsibilities to be able to effectively train, and in most instances by the lack of adequately defined and documented desk procedures. Activity reports document instances of staff (including supervisors and mid-level managers) repeatedly asking for training on specific job responsibilities; instances where new staff members have been trained by temporary workers; and instances of supervisory staff asking for training on subordinate responsibilities and before receiving training themselves, being instructed to train yet other staff members on those very functions. Procedural documentation deficiencies, as discussed in the next section, are currently being addressed by the Commission. The address of turnover problems should also alleviate some training related problems.

It is recommended that the Commission systematically assess individual staff training needs, particularly for staff in management and supervisory positions. As noted earlier, there are supervisory staff - and management staff - who admittedly are not familiar with their subordinates' responsibilities. As long as this continues, training, supervision, work management and problem-solving will prove difficult. Assessment of individual staff training needs will require a joint effort on the part of agency management. The Commission may wish to use the assistance of department training staff in these efforts. As noted in the last chapter of this report, general training in personnel matters is one such area where training is needed.

Once identified, a plan must be developed to meet existing on-the-job training needs as well as any general management or supervisory development training needs.

E. Operating Procedures

Adequate written procedures do not exist for most Commission tasks and responsibilities. Where procedural documentation does exist, it is often meager and sometimes not compatible with current staff practices. The lack of adequate documentation not only makes training and adjustment more difficult for new employees, but is also a source of concern to experienced employees who report they are at times instructed to perform a task one way and at a later date are admonished (sometimes by the same person) for performing the task in that manner.

The agency has recognized the need for documentation of operating procedures and is in the process of addressing this deficiency. It is recommended that management continue current efforts toward completion of operating procedures documentation. Furthermore, documentation should be prepared in a manner that allows for easy update, and procedures should be regularly reviewed and revised as necessary. Finally, it is recommended that management utilize this process as an opportunity not merely to document what and how tasks are performed, but to scrutinize current operations in terms of identifying areas where standard procedures are lacking and addressing areas of inefficiency or duplication, some of which are noted in this report.

F. Performance Expectations

Performance expectations have not always been established or clearly communicated to staff. As a result, employee performance is hindered, performance inadequacies go unnoticed, and management is in a difficult position of not being able to fairly evaluate employee performance or to adequately assess resource needs.

Quantitative performance standards do exist for some Commission staff such as the Decision Unit, where there are both time and quantity driven standards. Other staff, while perhaps expected to meet various deadlines, do not have quantitative performance standards.

Note for example the sentence status change desk. At least two different standards (50 per day and 30 per day) were related to us by management staff;

neither standard has been validated and neither standard is being met. With a combined backlog of sentence status changes and detainer notices of approximately 4,000, management is unable to determine whether the backlog is performance or resource related, particularly since validated work standards do not exist, the rate of production is not regularly monitored, and even the rate of intake is not known. We note that this particular employee has frequently been cited for not meeting the 50 per day production standard. Yet during this audit, several upper level Commission employees (including Commissioners, the Administrator and Hearing Officers) in efforts to alleviate the backlog, worked on sentence status changes during a holiday vacation and found that their production capabilities were significantly below the ascribed 50 per day that the Grade 4 clerk was routinely expected to meet.

We recognize that some jobs, by nature, do not lend themselves readily to the establishment of quantitative performance expectations. Most Commission jobs, however, do not appear to be such. It is recommended that both qualitative and quantitative performance expectations be established for each position and each operating unit. Qualitative standards should be incorporated within procedural documentation, in terms of what specifically is to be done or achieved. Quantitative work standards in terms of how many and in what time frame should also be included. Such standards will provide management with the capability to fairly evaluate employee performance, to assess training needs, to identify resource needs and problem areas, and to more effectively manage agency work processes. It is recommended that employees and their supervisors be involved in the establishment of the quantitative work standards. Furthermore, to be of value, these standards must be periodically validated under typical work conditions. Finally, it is recommended that management periodically assess performance against these standards and provide employees with feedback that is both timely and meaningful.

G. Position Responsibilities and Assignments

Job assignments at the Commission appear to be in a state of continuous change as assignments must be juggled to cover for vacancies and are frequently shuffled (both vertically and laterally) to provide job enrichment and staff development opportunities, to address unmet performance expectations, and to obtain position reclassifications. We note, for example, that validation and

correspondence have been both vertically and laterally reassigned, hearing preparation and coordination of parole in absentia have been vertically reassigned, and coordination of training program development and legislative matters have been horizontally reassigned.

The ever-changing assignments reflect in a confusing array of position descriptions which overlap, are not always reflective of what the occupant is doing, and which change from one incumbent to the next. Such changes can be disruptive as staff are continuously learning and adjusting to new and different duties. Additionally, workload imbalances often develop. Furthermore, such changes do not provide adequate accountability as projects and responsibilities are assigned first to one person and then another. The result is often neglected projects.

We appreciate the need to capitalize on individual strengths and to offset individual weaknesses; however, continual revisions as noted above evidence not only the significant impact that turnover is having on Commission activities, but also a lack of well thought out job assignments. Assignment of job responsibilities should be logical and commensurate with grade levels. Staff appropriate to the responsibilities should be recruited, hired and trained. Several specific recommendations relative to individual position assignments are provided in the next chapter of this report. It is recommended that top management utilize the development of written operating procedures and performance standards as an opportunity to closely review individual staff assignments and responsibilities, particularly as PARIS provides certain positions (e.g., disposition clerk, sentence status clerk) with more efficient procedures for accomplishing currently cumbersome and time-consuming manual tasks. It is further recommended that, where possible, responsibilities be clearly vested with single individuals or within single units to enhance accountability.

H. Time Accountability

Employee time accountability is somewhat lacking, as time sheets do not always reflect the actual hours or even amount of time worked. For example, Hearing Officers generally sign in and out, 8:30 to 4:30, regardless of actual hours

worked. As discussed in the next chapter, this makes it difficult to assess the impact of additional hearing responsibilities when the burden of current activity levels upon current resource levels is not known.

We also note several instances where staff were counseled for being late, sometimes for up to an hour, and yet their time sheets did not reflect the late arrival. In fact, in some instances employees have received overtime credit for staying late and it is not clear whether they were staying late to make up for their late arrival or whether their late arrival was offset by working through lunch and the late departure was indeed overtime.

Yet an additional example is provided by one mid-level management employee who was allowed to work on a term paper at work for all or some part of approximately two days, during which time this person was not accessible to subordinates. While this employee was reportedly on authorized leave during this period, the leave was not reflected on the employee's time card or leave record.

Time records are required for purposes of time accountability and are a source of useful management information. It is recommended that management take steps to ensure that accurate time records are maintained. It is further recommended that when employees are late this be reflected on their time sheets even if the employee is allowed to make the time up during lunch hour.

I. Overtime

In efforts to meet deadlines and keep backlogs from growing, the Commission has lost control of overtime as some staff members increase their salaries by as much as 60% to 80% through overtime payments. In fact, it appears as though some staff members have blanket approval to work overtime. During 1985, five individual staff members averaged the equivalent of 12 or more work days per pay period, with one employee averaging 14.7 work days per pay period. (Note: Each pay period includes 14 calendar days, 4 of which are scheduled days off.) During the first half of 1986, five staff members averaged the equivalent of 12 or more work days per pay period, with one averaging 15.4 work days per pay period.

Continued overtime at these levels is apt to reach a point of diminishing returns as staff work so many hours that productivity suffers. Furthermore, such overtime is likely to be counter-productive as staff ultimately "burn out."

It is recommended that effective overtime controls be implemented. Any automatic overtime authorizations should cease, with overtime being approved on an as needed basis only. **It is recommended that limitations be placed on the amount of overtime that may be worked by individual employees during a given period.** It is also recommended that staff members who work overtime be required to maintain a log of work accomplished during overtime hours. These logs should be reviewed by management to evaluate the need for and effectiveness of overtime. We note the need for overtime should drop significantly as turnover problems are identified and addressed.

J. Space and Equipment

Commission employees in some instances have neither adequate equipment nor sufficient work space. Space needs appear acute in the Case Preparation and Docketing Unit, where both work space and walking space are cluttered with an obstacle course of boxes. Staff, without adequate table space, appear to be barricaded behind desks piled high with stacks of papers and files. Adequate table space appears to be a problem for the receptionist as well.

In addition to work tables, equipment deficiencies include a copier that is slow and produces poor quality reproductions; inadequate equipment in some of the institutional offices where Casework Associate staff depend upon desks, chairs and typewriters borrowed from DOC; and a broken (but still operative) telephone at the receptionist desk. **It is recommended that these and other equipment needs be fully identified, prioritized and budgetarily addressed.**

It is also recommended that the Office of the Secretary review Commission space needs. It may be that space needs would be in large part alleviated with implementation of recommendations provided in the next chapter of this report.

K. Regulation and Policy

The Commission has a two-volume set of regulations (COMAR) and policy which run the gamut from parole hearing and assessment policies to administrative policies such as the handling of correspondence. Although there have been a couple of recent policy additions, it appears these regulations and policies have not been comprehensively reviewed and revised since about 1980. The result is a policy manual that is somewhat ill organized (e.g., there are two different policy 2-1s), out of date and inaccurate according to agency practices (e.g., policy 2-3 is not followed). Regulations are also incomplete in accordance to legislation (e.g., parole eligibility for inmates sentenced to life imprisonment pursuant to Article 27 § 413 is not addressed) and inaccurate according to agency practices (e.g., administrative reviews now performed by Hearing Officers rather than Commissioners as specified).

Additionally, there are several areas where Commissioners, Hearing Officers and other departmental personnel perceive a need to establish or refine Commission policy. These areas include revocation proceedings, medical paroles, rehearing assessment, and hearing assessments that would include institutional adjustment and risk factors other than criminal history. A recommendation is provided in the next chapter for assignment of responsibility for coordinating review and revision of Commission policies and regulations to a specific position. It is further recommended that review and update of Commission policy and regulation be a high priority of both this individual and the Commission.

IV. STAFF ORGANIZATION AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Commission's support staff of 56 merit system employees are organized into six operating units as shown in Table 9. Operations in five of the units are either performed by or overseen by Grade 12 Administrative Specialist IIIs. The five Administrative Specialists along with the seven Hearing Officers (Grade 15) report directly to the Administrator. The Administrator, a Grade 18, is responsible for managing all staff activity and reports directly to the Chairman. Also shown in Table 9 is an Administrative Officer position which has been vacant for well over a year pending review by the Office of the Secretary.

The basic staff organizational structure appears to be adequate, with a few exceptions as noted in this chapter. The sections which follow provide a brief overview of the primary functions each unit performs and the problems noted. Recommendations are also provided within each section.

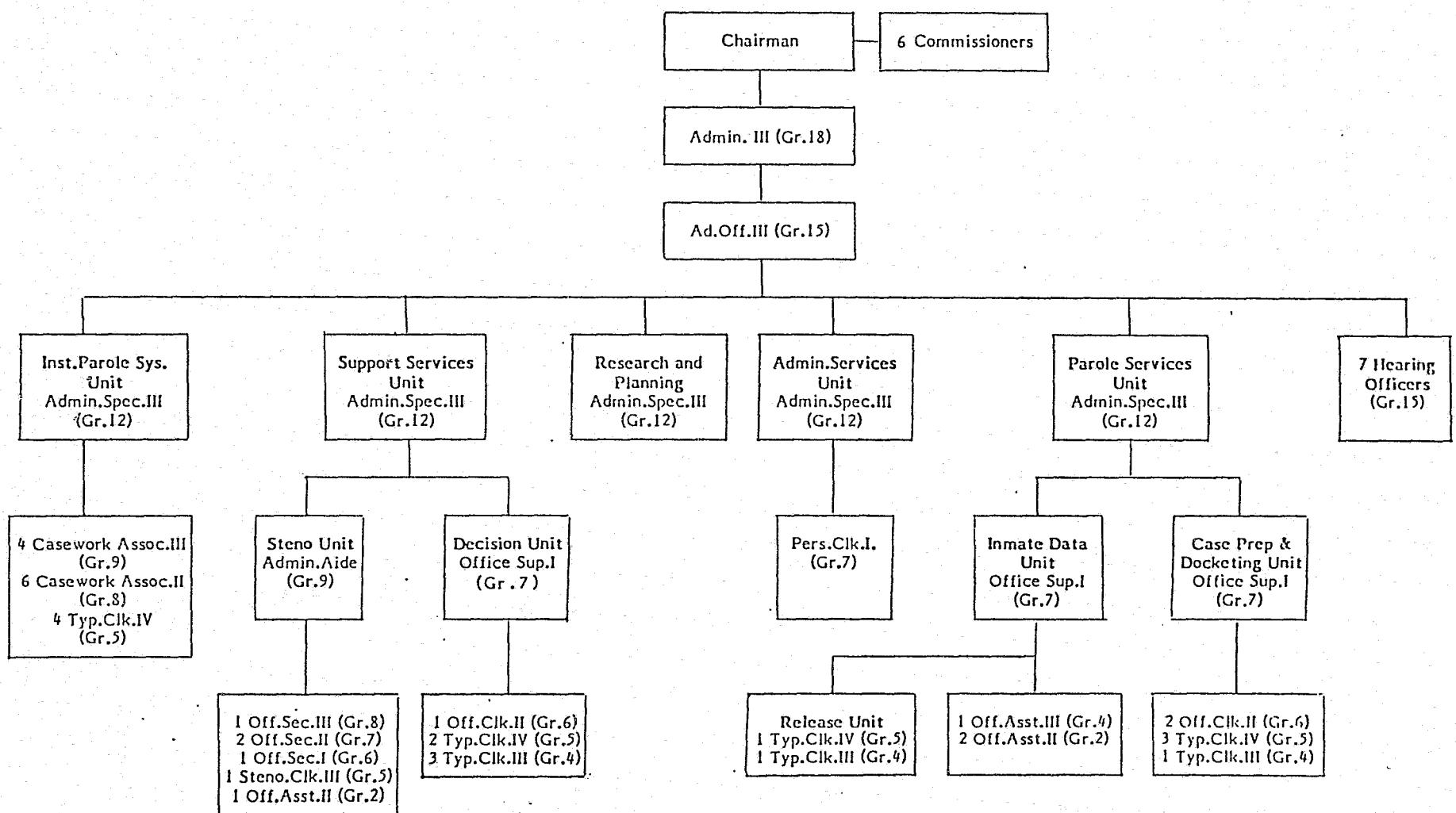
A. Hearing Officers

The Hearing Officer Unit consists of seven, Grade 15, Hearing Officers. Each Hearing Officer reports directly to the Administrator.

The Hearing Officer program was implemented in FY 1977 with Federal grant funds. From its initial staff of three, the hearing staff has grown to its present size. The seventh position was added in 1981 to accommodate statutory changes which mandated parole consideration for all inmates with sentences of over 90 days; it had previously been 180 days. The law has since been changed back to six months.

As noted in Chapter II, Hearing Officers conduct about 94% of all parole hearings. Hearing Officers are also periodically involved in special projects or assignments (e.g., development and implementation of hearing policy). In a typical week, however, Hearing Officers will have one case review day to review cases for the upcoming hearing week, three hearing days, and one office day to resolve hold cases, attend meetings, take care of administrative matters, etc. Hearing Officers have traditionally been allowed to complete their case review at home. Hearing days are usually scheduled to start at 9:30, and staff generally work right through lunch hour.

Table 9
Maryland Parole Commission
Table of Organization



Hearing Officer activity is based upon scheduling demands. However many hearings must be held during a given week are divided across the number of available hearing days. Management has, however, established an upper limit of 15 hearings per day per Hearing Officer. The time demands of the hearing schedule fluctuate according to: 1) the number of hearings, 2) the percentage of hearings that are initial assessments (these are generally more time consuming than re-hears), and 3) the travel requirements as staff must travel to Hagerstown or visit multiple jails on a given hearing day. Our review of hearing schedules revealed that Hearing Officers averaged 10.4 hearings per hearing day in 1985, which equated to 5.1 hearings per work day. During the first quarter of 1986, staff averaged 9.5 hearings per hearing day and 3.7 hearings per work day. This decrease is likely attributable to case opening problems discussed later in this chapter.

The Commission has requested additional Hearing Officer staff to accommodate the opening of Eastern Correctional Institution (which will in large part merely provide for the depopulation of existing DOC facilities, but will also expand rated capacity) and the transfer of short sentenced inmates to local jails. These two events will impact upon Hearing Officers, if for no other reason than the logistical considerations. It is unclear, however, how many - if any - additional hearing staff will be needed. We note there are no predictive work standards (either inmate driven or hearing activity level based) with which to gauge resource requirements. Furthermore, as noted earlier, Hearing Officers routinely sign in and out, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., on case review and hearing days, regardless of actual time worked. Without accurate time records, it is difficult to know whether current activity levels are burdensome to existing staff or whether existing staff has the capacity to absorb increases in hearing activity.

It is recommended that the Commission initiate a time accountability system for Hearing Officers. Under such a system true time accounts would be kept of actual time worked. Compensatory leave, consistent with agency policy for other staff members, should be credited for extra hours worked on lengthy hearing days and used to offset short hearing days. **It is further recommended that the Commission establish a policy regarding travel time to supplement the time accountability system.** The Commission may wish to adopt a policy that would consider travel time in excess of the time required to commute to the office as work time.

It is recommended that the Commission consider having hearing staff perform their case review functions in the office, rather than at home, so that on those days where case review is completed early there will be additional time for processing hold cases or meeting other administrative needs. On any days where case review requires more than the normal work hours, this time may be documented and accrued as compensatory time to offset hearing days as necessary. Once time accountability has been established, the Commission should work toward the establishment of performance standards which would allow the agency to assess productivity and to gauge resource requirements.

Finally, it is recommended that the vacant Administrative Officer III position (shown in Table 9 directly under the Administrator position) be upgraded and reclassified to an administrative/supervisory Hearing Officer. The duties of this position should include providing support to the Commission for policy oversight and coordination. This should prove a more effective use of the position and benefit the Commission in several ways.

The responsibilities of the Administrative Officer position have never been clearly defined. The original incumbent, a Grade 16 Administrator I, functioned in a Deputy Administrator capacity for a little over three months before terminating. The position has been vacant since January, 1985, and has since been downgraded to a Grade 15 Administrative Officer. The position's current job description includes responsibility for training, policy oversight, program evaluation, and supervision of the five Administrative Specialists. We do not see the need for an additional layer of management and further believe that these other responsibilities could and should be performed by existing management and administrative staff, with the exception of policy oversight.

Conversion of this position to an administrative/supervisory Hearing Officer would provide a position to oversee the training and supervision of Hearing Officer staff and to assist in the resolution and address of Hearing Officer problems and concerns. Furthermore, it should provide both a knowledgeable and appropriate staff person to coordinate the review and update of Commission policies and regulations. Such a position also could prove invaluable to management in the exploration and evaluation of alternative service delivery strategies (e.g., regionalization of Commission activities), ongoing systems review and needs

identification. We note the Hearing Officer staff have a lot to contribute to the agency if effectively used. Finally, we note that the reclassification of this position would provide an additional step in the career path for Hearing Officers.

B. Administrative Services Unit

The Administrative Services Unit consists of an Administrative Specialist III and a personnel clerk. This unit is responsible for fiscal services (preparation and monitoring of agency budget and expenditures, ordering supplies), personnel services, training and automation coordination.

1. Automation Coordination

The Administrative Specialist has devoted the majority of his efforts to automation related functions. He has coordinated and assisted with the training of staff on the agency's Burroughs microcomputer, and has automated various agency record systems. This individual is also the agency's coordinator for Data Center supported systems including OBSCIS* and PARIS - the Parole Information System. This individual will play a key role as PARIS becomes operational and staff must be trained in its use and system adjustments must be coordinated to enhance its effectiveness.

Conversations with the Department's Data Center staff suggest that a half-time position should be more than sufficient to meet Commission automation coordination needs. Thus, automation responsibilities, which have to date taken much of the Administrative Specialist's time, should lessen once PARIS becomes operational and staff are trained in its use, leaving sufficient time for this position to devote toward other job assignments such as training coordination.

* OBSCIS - the Offender Based State Correctional Information System utilized primarily by DOC and DPP.

2. Training

To date, the Administrative Specialist's training coordination activities have primarily involved coordinating the training of Commission staff on the Burroughs microcomputer and coordinating training fund requests to secure specialized training (e.g., stress management, time management, supervisory skills) from external sources (e.g., Management Development Center and Clerical Training Institute). One training need that has gone unmet, as discussed earlier, is the development of an agency orientation program for new employees. Once an orientation program has been developed, it should not be a time-consuming function to coordinate and could logically remain assigned to the Administrative Specialist in the Administrative Services Unit.

3. Personnel Services

The majority of personnel support functions are performed by the Personnel Clerk, including: the handling of appointments, clearing of eligibility lists, processing employee interchanges, maintenance of time sheets and leave records, processing of payroll, and preparation of various reports. This clerk also handles the ordering and distribution of office supplies.

The current incumbent assumed this position about a year ago, with no operating procedures and without any structured on-the-job training. The clerk functions with virtually no technical supervision from within the Commission. Assistance as needed is sought from the Personnel Services Unit in the Office of the Secretary. The lack of adequate training and supervision of the personnel clerk operate to compound problems with the processing of various personnel matters which have at times been ill handled and neither timely nor efficiently attended to. The results are often wasted staff time and effort, lingering vacancies and disgruntled employees.

As is discussed earlier, the Commission has a high rate of turnover. There are always vacancies in need of filling, vacancies which often last for months. Commission recruitment efforts have been problem riddled. We note, for example, that the Commission has not always initiated recruitment efforts in a timely manner. While most staff provide at least a two week termination notice, there are some instances when recruitment action was not initiated until the position had been vacant for several weeks.

When recruitment efforts are initiated, they are not always handled in an efficient manner. We note for instance that during this past year entire eligibility lists were cleared when it was not necessary to do so. On one occasion, over 200 interview notification letters were sent out and approximately 70 applicants were interviewed before the management staff and personnel clerk learned about the Rule of 5.* Not only did this waste the time and efforts of the personnel clerk and interview panel staff, but also the time of several interested applicants who were beyond reach. Furthermore, it unnecessarily delayed the filling of the position.

The Commission does at times fill positions from within. This is commendable in that it provides a career path for Commission employees; however, this too has at times been ill handled. First, vacancies are sometimes filled in-house without being posted so that all interested employees may apply. Second, in at least two instances during the past year employees have assumed positions of higher responsibility with the hope and/or promise of reclassification. In the absence of a clearly defined internal reclassification policy and as a result of unclear work standards, lack of training, unclear and conflicting communications from multiple levels of management, the above noted job reassessments produced more harm than good. What started out as a potential mutual benefit to the agency and employee

* According to DOP regulation, when filling a vacancy the hiring authority generally must select from among the five highest ranking individuals on the eligibility list who are willing to accept employment.

led to the loss of an experienced and valued employee and a considerable amount of agency-wide employee dissention. What started out as an attempt to fill one position resulted in a need to fill two.

The lack of agency policy on reclassifications has also allowed inconsistent practices to occur and seeming inequities to exist. We note for example the Support Service Unit, where staff with very similar responsibilities range from a Grade 5 Steno Clerk to a Grade 8 Office Secretary III, and there is no defined path of progression from one level to the next. Inconsistent reclassification practices among Casework Associate staff have led to grievances. This lack of an agency reclassification policy, coupled with poor communication, has, as noted above, led to employee resignations and generated feelings of distrust of management among remaining staff members.

Performance evaluations are another area where practices have not always been timely or consistently handled. Performance evaluations are important to both employees and management. Regular assessments provide employees with necessary performance feedback and provide management with an opportunity to discover problems, identify needs, and assist employees in those areas necessary. Performance evaluations have been conducted sporadically at the Commission, reducing both their benefit to employees and to management. We note for example that in late 1984, Hearing Officers were given three annual performance appraisals (for 1981, 1982 and 1983) all in one sitting. Furthermore, the criteria used to evaluate them was not made clear to the Hearing Officers, several of whom were concerned. There have been no evaluations for Hearing Officers since that time. Another example is the performance appraisal given to one new employee. This particular employee had known performance and attendance problems and in his first evaluation was rated as unsatisfactory in three of the four categories and satisfactory in only one category. Yet, this employee's probationary status was satisfactorily terminated (making him a permanent classified employee) because the evaluation was not delivered until about four days after his period of probation expired.

Finally, we note the Commission has also experienced problems with the proper handling of employee discipline and terminations. We note that charges were filed to remove one employee without the necessary progressive discipline. While the employee had been counseled, the employee had never been directed to employee assistance programs, nor had progressive steps of discipline been imposed. Ultimately the charges were withdrawn, but not until grievance proceedings had been initiated.

The above problems cannot be attributed to the personnel clerk. Most, if not all, of these problems are attributable to the lack of adequate internal policy, poor agency communication, careless practices, and management staff that is not well trained in basic personnel matters. Some of these problems, however, might have been prevented by an adequately trained and effectively supervised personnel staff. It is recommended that the personnel clerk, and the attendant personnel functions performed by this position, be consolidated within the Personnel Services Unit in the Office of the Secretary. This office, located in close proximity to Commission offices, already provides direct personnel support services to several of the Department's other smaller agencies. Consolidation should enhance services to the Commission, as a larger and more experienced staff would be available to directly meet Commission needs. The consolidation should not result in any diminution of responsiveness to Commission needs.

It is also recommended that staff in the Personnel Services Unit of the Office of the Secretary work closely with Commission management to assist in enhancing recruitment practices, developing internal reclassification policies and effective disciplinary procedures, and in identifying and meeting management and supervisory training needs as they relate to general personnel practices. It is recommended that training in general personnel matters be required of all management and supervisory staff.

Finally, it is recommended that management place more emphasis on providing employees with more timely and meaningful performance feedback, both for the employees' benefit and for management's benefit.

C. Institutional Parole Services (IPS)

The Institutional Parole Services (IPS) Unit includes ten Casework Associates and four clerical staff. IPS staff are organized into four field units housed in DOC institutions in Hagerstown, Baltimore and Jessup. A fifth unit will be added with the opening of Eastern Correctional Institution in Somerset. Each field unit is supervised by a Grade 9 Casework Associate III, the four of whom report to the Administrative Specialist for IPS located at the Commission office.

IPS staff are responsible for delivering several services to the inmate population, including providing notification of parole hearing dates (week of hearing), providing inmate file review, being available each hearing morning to provide additional file review as necessary, delivering and certifying copies of parole hearing decision, forwarding home and employment plans to DPP when inmates have been approved for parole, and serving parole release orders.

In general, IPS field staff function independently and require very little supervision. The Administrative Specialist is needed, however, to coordinate the flow of information to the field and to help resolve problems. The Administrative Specialist for this unit has been functioning as an acting Hearing Officer since about November, 1985. In his place, the Administrative Specialist in charge of Planning and Research has been functioning as Unit Administrator. It was noted that several improvements had been implemented by this latter individual including meaningful staff meetings and staff development projects. It is also noted that the four regional offices have begun to take advantage of meetings to share and transfer information. This has led to more consistency in processes and forms.

One problem noted by field staff was the manner in which information is disseminated. The flow of information from the Commission to the field has improved over the last several months; however, staff still have concerns. Field

staff indicate that general information and policy decisions are not distributed to them in a timely manner. Several staff indicated that when the current Chairman of the Parole Commission was hired field workers were not notified for several weeks. In one situation, because of communication problems between the Commission and field staff, office space at a DOC institution was reportedly taken from IPS staff with no advance notification. **It is recommended that efforts be made to enhance the timely flow of information to field units. Issuance of information bulletins may prove useful supplements to the periodic staff meetings.**

During discussions with field staff it was noted that several staff members at the Baltimore and Jessup offices do not have access to the computer terminals at DOC. Others report that even if given accessibility, they are not familiar with the system's uses and capabilities. **It is recommended that system training on both PARIS and OBSCIS be provided to all field office personnel, and that arrangements be made with DOC to allot Commission field employees access to terminals.** Since the automated system contains much of the data needed by field staff, it would be more efficient for staff to access this information directly rather than make telephone calls to the Commission office and disrupt other staff from their duties. With trained Casework staff, inmate inquiries about hearing schedule dates could be handled at the institution and thus reduce the level of daily correspondence sent to the Commission.

Finally, it is recommended that the Commission incorporate attendance at appropriate portions of the Maryland Correctional Training Academy program into training requirements of institutional staff who must come in contact and interact with inmates. We note that some institutional staff have attended this training and others have not. Such training should prove beneficial to the Commission's institutional staff, much as it has to counterpart staff in DOC whose training requirements include attendance at appropriate portions of the Academy.

D. Parole Services Unit (PSU)

The Parole Services Unit (PSU) is actually two units: the Case Preparation and Docketing unit and the Inmate Data unit. As shown in Table 9 (page 35), each unit is directly supervised by a Grade 7 Office Supervisor I; both supervisors report to the Administrative Specialist. The responsibilities of the two units are numerous and most of the tasks involve multi-step processes too involved to discuss in detail in this report. Basic responsibilities are, however, noted below.

The seven person Case Preparation and Docketing (CPD) unit is responsible for opening parole files as information is received from DOC and DPP,* requesting missing documents, calculating parole hearing dates and scheduling hearings, preparing 90-day and 30-day hearing notification lists, hearing preparation (reviewing files to ensure all necessary documents are present and the file is ready for hearing), and updating records with hearing dispositions. This unit is also responsible for coordinating revocation hearings.

The six person Inmate Data Unit is responsible for maintenance of all Commission files when not otherwise in use, for most of the maintenance of the electronic file tracking system, for updating files with various information (e.g., sentence status change and detainer information, expungements as directed by the Inmate Grievance Commission, and miscellaneous other document filing as required), and for locating files for inmate file review, telephone calls, correspondence, and closure. This unit is also responsible for processing parole release orders.

1. General Findings and Recommendations: PSU

The PSU is responsible for several different detailed functions, most of which are performed by single staff members. These tasks tend to be somewhat complex and require a fair amount of technical job knowledge. Well trained and experienced staff are especially beneficial in these positions.

The unit has suffered from an inordinate amount of turnover and lingering vacancies, which have made it virtually impossible to provide adequate training and supervision, and to achieve unit objectives. Turnover, as noted earlier, is an agency-wide problem and must be addressed on that basis.

* The collection process for documents necessary for a parole hearing actually begins at the Reception Center for male DOC inmates and the Maryland Correctional Institution for Women (MCI-W) for female DOC inmates. Division of Parole and Probation field staff collect and provide the necessary documents for eligible local jail inmates in the respective jurisdictions.

Turnover, coverage and training problems have been compounded by the lack of adequate written operating procedures which are so essential to a unit of this nature. We note that while there was a unit manual prepared in 1984, it was descriptive in nature and did not provide adequate procedural documentation. Furthermore, the manual was never distributed to staff. In fact, most staff were not aware of its existence. During this audit, the CPD Unit was expending considerable time and effort to produce desk procedures; an assignment that had been given several months earlier to the unit's Administrative Specialist. These procedures were being prepared at a time when this seven-person unit had one vacancy and two new staff to be trained. As a result, the supervisor's ability to train the new staff was reduced and overall unit productivity was diminished. The agency is to be commended for recognizing the need for written operating procedures and for progressing toward their development. As the turnover problems are addressed and adequate procedural documentation is developed, the seemingly chronic backlogs, missed deadlines and other crises faced by this unit should be resolvable.

It is recommended that all scheduling and docketing functions (including appeals) be consolidated within the PSU. These functions are currently split between staff in the two PSU units and the two Support Services units. Consolidation will place these responsibilities under one Administrative Specialist and will free up staff in other units to assist with their own unit's primary responsibilities. This will also reduce some duplicative activity. We note for instance that the Office Supervisor of the Decision Unit and the Scheduling Clerk in the CPD Unit both spend time preparing annual hearing calendars. The assumption of these extra duties should not prove difficult for PSU, considering the time savings the PARIS information system, coupled with some recommended process changes, will provide to both the scheduling and disposition clerks.

It is also recommended that the Administrative Specialist begin to systematically review all PSU responsibilities and processes for purposes of reducing inefficiencies and addressing areas of problem. Several areas in need of such attention are discussed in following paragraphs.

2. Findings and Recommendations: CPD Unit

Inmates, particularly those with short sentences, are not being scheduled for timely hearings and, in some instances, are not being scheduled for hearings at all. This violates both Commission policy and the Commission's interpretation of their legislative mandate and requires the immediate attention of management. At the time of this audit, there were many inmates who were not being scheduled for timely parole hearings. A review of 139 (out of 285) files awaiting validation revealed that a little over 70% of the inmates had been in DOC for six or more months and were overdue for hearing. Statistics obtained from OBSCIS* suggest that perhaps as many as 40% of inmates with sentences of 6 to 24 months who were released from DOC during FY 1984 and FY 1985, either did not receive a parole hearing or were scheduled for hearings during the same month they were mandatorily released (it is not known whether or not these latter inmates received their hearings). As the 6 to 12 month sentence inmates are shifted to local jail jurisdictions, there will be more importance placed upon their timely identification. For those inmates in the 13 to 24 month sentence category (who will remain DOC's responsibility), 16% either did not receive a parole hearing or were scheduled for hearings during the same month as they were mandatorily released.

There are several factors contributing to this problem. The first factor, and one clearly beyond control of the Commission, is that some inmates are already due or overdue for a parole hearing by the time they are sentenced and/or received at DOC, as a result of pre-sentence jail time. This is particularly true of short sentence inmates.

A second factor, and one that can be addressed, is the current system design which allows inmates to be in DOC for an average of 100 to 110 days before the Commission receives necessary information and begins to process them for scheduling. Furthermore, once a case

* These statistics were not verified against case files.

has been received by the Commission, it takes a minimum of 40 to 70 days (depending on the hearing schedule cycle) to give an inmate a parole hearing. Thus, under the current system it becomes virtually impossible to provide an inmate with a hearing before he has been at DOC for about six months. Added to these time constraints are additional delays in both case opening and validation which means that inmates are being mandatorily released before they are heard, and sometimes before they can even be scheduled.

During the month of April, the backlog of cases at the case opening desks reached 1,600; the equivalent of about three months of DOC intakes. The genesis of this backlog would appear to be staff shortages attributable not to staffing deficiencies, but to high staff turnover. Case opening staff report that they are each capable of opening between 25 and 30 cases during a full work day. Given DOC's annual intakes of less than 6,000 and assuming a 200 day work year* for each of the case opening clerks, each clerk would have had to open less than 15 files per work day to stay current. Staff report that the current backlog began to build about 12 months ago. Since that time, case opening clerks have had to assume additional duties (e.g., hearing preparation, disposition entry, and revocation coordination) to assist in providing coverage during vacancies. We note that the current backlog of 1,600 does not appear to be the first such backlog, as staff report case opening backlogs as high as 1,200 and 1,500 in 1984 and 1981 respectively.

After cases are opened, they are validated by the Administrative Specialist before they are scheduled for hearing. Validation is essentially the proofing of the case opening clerk's work, to ensure that all necessary documents are present (or have been requested) and are organized properly; that the commitment information has been

* 200 days should be a fairly conservative figure based upon a work year of 260 days less 14 holidays, 3 personal leave days, 15 annual leave days, 15 sick leave days, and 13 additional days for training or miscellaneous.

correctly interpreted; and that the maximum expiration date, one-fourth of sentence date, and policy hearing date have been correctly calculated. During this audit, case validation was not being timely completed nor were files being prioritized for validation according to either hearing dates or hearing schedule cut-off dates. The results are yet further scheduling delays for cases already overdue for hearings and a lot of last minute additions to the 30-day hearing notification lists. There were at one point almost 300 files awaiting validation, a statistic attributable perhaps in part to the expedited case opening which resulted when the Commission hired several temporary staff to alleviate the case opening backlog. Several of the files, however, had been awaiting validation for about a month, and thus predated the temporary staff.

The inability to schedule inmates for parole hearings sufficiently in advance to allow for their inclusion on the 90-day hearing notification list results in extra work for the scheduling clerk and provides both DOC and institutional staff with less timely notice of upcoming hearing activity. Inmates may be added to the hearing schedule up until the cut-off date for ordering the 30-day (final) hearing notification list (about 35 days before the start of the hearing week). When inmates' names are added to the hearing list after distribution of the 90-day hearing notification list, special notices (hearing addendums) must be generated and sent to the institutions, which is extra work for the scheduling clerk. Furthermore, because many of the names are added immediately prior to distribution of the 30-day notice, institutional staff do not always receive sufficient notice. A desirable objective would be to have all inmates scheduled timely enough to be included on the 90-day list. This would not only mean less work for the schedule clerk, but also, more timely notice to institutional staff of upcoming hearing activity for planning purposes.

To address the above problems, it is recommended that the Commission's two case opening clerks be relocated from the Commission's office to the Reception Center where, with benefit of a PARIS terminal, they can begin working with inmate case files from

the inmate's date of intake. These clerks could create and organize the parole file, enter data into PARIS, and request those documents (e.g., State's Versions) not received within four weeks of intake. With these early requests to agencies, information should arrive for inclusion in the files by the time the FBI report is received (generally six to eight weeks from commitment). Files then can be forwarded on an as completed basis to the Commission offices.

It is also recommended that the two case opening clerks be assigned responsibility for scheduling inmate hearings as the commitments are received and files are opened. By scheduling cases early in the process, not only would inmates have more timely hearings, but 90-day hearing notification lists would become more meaningful planning tools. Furthermore, when the file is received at the Commission, it would already be opened, completed, scheduled and ready for inmate file review.

Validation could still be completed on files as they are received at the Commission. Validation in this manner would not slow down scheduling, yet should still provide sufficient time for any necessary schedule adjustments. It is our opinion, however, that with properly trained and supervised case opening staff, validation of each case should not be required, particularly as policy 2-1 becomes dominant and inmates are scheduled for hearing at their one-fourth of sentence date. It should only be necessary to validate cases for new employees undergoing training, and on a random or exception basis for experienced case opening staff. Furthermore, validation should be completed at the supervisory level rather than by mid-management. This provides the supervisor with feedback on training needs and frees up higher level staff to perform other more necessary management functions. It is therefore recommended that validation responsibilities be transferred from the Administrative Specialist to the CPD unit supervisor and be performed on an as needed basis.

Relocation of the two case opening clerks to the Reception Center would leave unattended the opening of cases from MCI-W.

These cases are not significant in number (approximately 30 to 35 per month) and could be handled by either the scheduling or disposition clerk. The scheduling clerk will have additional time to devote to other duties (e.g., hearing preparation) with implementation of the above changes. The disposition clerk will also have additional time available as PARIS alleviates the need to locate, update and refile multiple control cards. The duties of both of these positions will need to be reviewed in terms of reallocating unit work assignments following implementation of the above recommendations and PARIS. Implementation of these changes would also necessitate a review of the classification of each CPD staff member.

It is also recommended that if the above changes are implemented, one full-time contractual worker be retained by the CPD Unit for a period of six months to assist in the transition to new case opening procedures. During the conversion process, dual systems will be operating and additional staff flexibility will be necessary.

Case opening staff are having to request Offense Reports on a large percentage of the files received from DOC. These reports are used to provide basic offense data in the absence of State's Versions and Pre-Sentence Investigations. Our sample suggested that approximately 60% of the files required such requests. These requests mean extra work for the case opening clerks who must not only initiate a request for these documents, but must also locate and match the files with the documents as received. Because these documents must often be matched with the file during the hearing preparation process (after inmate file review), there is also extra work for Casework Associate staff who must provide additional file review opportunities to inmates the day of hearing. **It is recommended that requisitioning of Offense Reports be incorporated into the early stages of document acquisition.** Specifically, inmates likely to need Offense Reports (e.g., those with District Court commitments or Circuit Court commitments of less than 18 months) could be identified on the weekly DOC intake reports sent to the Division of Parole and Probation. Offense Reports could be obtained and included in the parole suspension file while it is

still at DOC. This should not result in any additional work for DPP which is already obtaining these documents for the Commission, only later in the process.

Records indicate that not infrequently 90-day and 30-day hearing notification lists are distributed late and more copies of these lists than necessary are being printed by the Data Center. Late distribution appears to be attributable in large part to scheduling staff having to assist with other duties and in some part to an inability to retrieve lists from the Data Center in a timely manner. It has been the practice of the Commission to send an administrative staff person or an Office Assistant for these and other lists. Staff, often with priorities of their own, have not always retrieved these lists for the scheduling clerk in a timely manner, further adding to the delay in distribution. **It is recommended that the scheduling clerk be allowed to pick up the hearing notification lists on her way to or from work, thus relieving her of dependence on other staff members being available to obtain these lists.**

Six copies of the 90-day and 30-day hearing list are printed each month by the Data Center. The scheduling clerk finds it easier to make the necessary changes to one copy and then xerox additional copies of the revised list for distribution. Unless and until it becomes easier to work with multiple copies of the hearing notification lists, the extra copies of each list should be discontinued by the Data Center. The required distribution of these lists should also be reviewed. While the institutional classification and caseworker staff will need to receive copies of these lists and the scheduling clerk will need to retain a copy, it is not clear why the Administrative Specialists for PSU and IPS (who could easily access the scheduling clerk's list if needed) are provided with copies.

Other problem areas within CPD that are in need of management's attention include the scheduling of timely parole hearings for

noncadre* inmates housed at the Reception Center, the revocation process, and the parole in absentia process. Currently there is no process for scheduling timely hearings for noncadre inmates housed at the Reception Center. Inmates still housed at the Reception Center when their file reaches the scheduling clerk are not scheduled for hearing on OBSCIS as are inmates at maintaining institutions, but rather are put aside. Their location is periodically checked, and when they are moved to a maintaining institution their hearings are scheduled. Our review of five such inmates still housed at the Reception Center revealed that four of them were overdue for parole hearings. We note that the Reception Center's cadre inmates are provided with parole hearings through a special scheduling process. It would seem possible for the Commission and DOC to work out some arrangement whereby noncadre inmates still housed at the Reception Center when they are due for hearing, could be provided with timely parole hearings.

The revocation process has also been a problem as indicated by the fact that: 1) many inmates receive revocation hearings in maintaining institutions (had they been timely scheduled, hearings would be held while the inmate is still at the Reception Center), 2) Hearing Officers find out at parole hearings (on new offenses) that the inmate was out on parole when the new offense was committed, and has not yet received a revocation hearing, and 3) inmates sometimes have to write to the Commission and request a revocation hearing date. It is not clear whether these problems are attributable to inadequate procedures, to the fact that at least five different staff members have occupied the parole violation desk during the past year, to poor communications between the Commission and the Division of Parole and Probation, or to all three of the above. This problem is one known to management and one which should be comprehensively reviewed and addressed.

* Inmates housed at the Reception Center on a permanent basis and who are employed by the institution are known as cadre inmates. All other inmates housed at the Reception Center (who are generally awaiting transfer to a maintaining institution) are known as noncadre inmates.

Finally, we note that there have also been problems with the timely processing of parole in absentia cases. Part of these problems are likely to be attributable to inadequately defined procedures. It may be that in addition to adequate procedures, such cases should be reviewed for completeness by the administrative Hearing Officer prior to being scheduled for hearing.

3. Findings and Recommendations: IDU

The file room is an area sorely in need of management's attention. The file room has apparently been a problem for several years; a problem which is beyond the capability of the unit supervisor and in need of upper-management's attention. **It is recommended that management carefully review and organize each file room operation to include a review of the need for all incoming documents.**

We note for example, Junction Bridge certificates. Management should review the need for Junction Bridge certificates on all inmates other than those who are approved for parole subject to program completion. (We note the release desk clerks are already receiving and processing certificates on these particular inmates.) These reports are piling up by the thousands, are cluttering file room space and are occasionally receiving staff attention that might be more productively used. If there is a need for this information on inmates other than those approved for parole, perhaps it can be met by inclusion of such information within pre-parole summary reports.

Another item in need of review is the processing of inmates who return to DOC from Patuxent. The current process requires the file room supervisor to generate a letter to the DOC classification counselor requesting a copy of the inmate's Patuxent discharge report. When the report is received, it is forwarded to CPD for validation and scheduling. If the inmate return notifications were provided instead to the scheduling clerk, inmates could be immediately scheduled for the appropriate hearing month. Their names could be specially coded on the hearing notification list so that DOC

classification counselors would know to provide Patuxent discharge reports along with the pre-parole summary. This would obviate the need for current paper work and the attendant scheduling delays.

Yet another function in need of review is the sentence status change and detainer notification process which has long been a problem for the Commission. There was a backlog of approximately 4,000 of these documents at the time of this audit. Some of the documents were over a year old. In addition, there was an uncounted drawer full of these documents dating back to at least 1982. These documents are processed by a Grade 3 Office Assistant and are received in varying numbers each day from DOC. It is not known how many of these documents are received each week. Our two week sample revealed 126 were received one week and 488 were received another week. A review of past activity reports where incoming documents were counted and reported suggest weekly receipts of 287, 73, 240, and 100.

These documents alert the Commission to changes in an inmate's sentence and to the placement or lifting of any detainers. The documents are first processed through DOC where the information is reviewed and placed on the OBSCIS legal screen. Copies are then sent to the Commission where the sentence status change clerk must also review the documents and update Commission information sources. To do this, the clerk must locate the file and two different control cards. These three items are in three different locations and hopefully are where they should be. At times, however, files are out for inmate file review or hearings, or may be in the hold drawer, in typing, or on virtually anyone's desk. Scheduling control cards may be either at the scheduling clerk's desk, the disposition clerk's desk, or in the file. Once all necessary documents are found, all three documents are updated with the same information and then refiled or, if necessary, routed to Hearing Officers, Commissioners, or the scheduling clerk. This very cumbersome and time-consuming task will be greatly simplified as PARIS obviates the need for multiple control card backup systems. With PARIS, it should be possible for a clerk to update

Commission files electronically, print a copy of the revised legal screen and attach it to the document to be filed and routed as necessary. This should significantly improve productivity and timely make available information needed by hearing staff.

If the information entered by DOC into OBSCIS could be automatically transferred to PARIS and weekly exception reports detailing those files in need of review (e.g., those cases where the maximum expiration date is increased or decreased and thus the hearing date is likely to or may change) could be provided through the Data Center, considerable duplication between DOC and Commission staff could be eliminated. Commission staff would need only to file these documents, routing those on the exception list. It is recommended that the Data Center review the feasibility of such an information transfer.

It is also recommended that an additional clerical position at a somewhat higher classification than the current Office Assistant, equivalent perhaps to case opening staff, be hired to handle the sentence status change process. The current Office Assistant could assist in the sentence status change process until the current backlog is taken care of and under the new system (i.e., with PARIS) could file the sentence status change and detainer documents as they are processed by the new clerk. The Office Assistant would also be available to assist in meeting other unit filing needs.

E. Support Services Unit (SSU)

The Support Services Unit (SSU) consists of the Steno Unit and the Decision Unit as shown in Table 9 on page 32. The Steno Unit is supervised by a Grade 9 Administrative Aide and the Decision Unit is supervised by a Grade 7 Office Supervisor I. Both of these positions report to the Administrative Specialist for SSU.

1. Steno Unit

The Steno Unit includes a Grade 2 Office Assistant who functions as receptionist and mail clerk, a Grade 7 Office Secretary II who processes hearing appeals, and four clerical positions ranging from Grade 5 to Grade 8 in addition to the Administrative Aide, all of whom function as clerical support to Commissioners, Hearing Officers and management staff.

Each clerk is assigned specific Commissioners, Hearing Officers and administrative staff to type for. Primary responsibilities of the Steno staff include processing of hold cases,* the processing of special reports from DPP for review by Commissioners, the typing of responses to daily correspondence, and various other typing needs of agency staff (e.g., reports, memos).

It is recommended that the Office of the Secretary review the classification and grade level of the receptionist. The degree of technical knowledge required to distribute the volume and variety of different documents received daily at the Commission suggest a higher grade level might be merited.

It is also recommended that the Commission consolidate the appeal case scheduling responsibilities within the PSU and the responsibility for typing of appeal decisions within the Decision Unit. This would consolidate like responsibilities within appropriate units and would free up the Office Secretary II currently assigned these duties, allowing her to assist in the distribution of other Steno Unit responsibilities including the processing of hold cases and typing of responses to correspondence.

* Hold cases are cases in which decisions have been deferred pending receipt of additional information. Clerks must create a control card, request (and re-request as necessary) necessary information and see that the inmate receives and has opportunity to review a copy of the information. Clerks also type the decisions on these cases when dictated by hearing staff.

2. Decision Unit

In addition to an Office Supervisor I, this unit includes six Typist Clerk IIIs and IVs. Decision Unit staff are responsible for the typing of all hearing decisions (exclusive of approvals which do not require a typed report, appeals which are typed by the clerk in the Steno Unit, and final decisions on hold cases which are typed by the Steno Unit), the typing of MAP renegotiations and non-approvals, the typing of revocation decisions, and the requesting of psychological evaluations from DOC staff. This unit is also responsible for processing all decision documents for signatures as appropriate, for entering the hearing dispositions on Master Dockets and on the pink copy of the census card located in the file, and for noting the decision certification date on the Master Docket after decisions have been delivered to and signed by the inmate.

As evidenced by unit activity reports, the decision log, and Master Dockets, the Decision Unit is chronically behind in its typing schedule and decisions are frequently not delivered to inmates within the statutorily established time frames. As noted earlier, the Commission is required to provide inmates with hearing decisions within 21 days following a hearing conducted by a Hearing Officer, and within 30 days following a Commissioner hearing. While fluctuations in hearing activity levels may contribute to occasional backlogs and necessitate periodic overtime, it is our view that the primary reason this unit is often behind schedule is because of an unacceptable high level of staff turnover. We note that the Decision Unit has a work standard of ten decisions per staff per day. At FY 1985 activity levels, staff in this unit (excluding the supervisor) would have had to type less than 7.5 decisions per day to stay current.

If turnover were reduced and the Decision Unit were able to retain at least four experienced clerks (out of an authorized staff of six), the Decision Unit should be able, at the rate of ten decisions per work day, to process all current hearing decision responsibilities (i.e., parole hearing decisions, MAP and revocation decisions) as well as all

appeal and preliminary hearing typing within a timely fashion. Overtime should only be necessary when occasional hearing gluts create work backlogs.

3. Administrative Specialist

The Administrative Specialist for SSU is responsible for supervision of the Steno and Decision Units, and various other administrative assignments including correspondence control, preparation of the weekly hearing schedule, and the processing of medical paroles, pardons, commutations and affidavits as required by litigation. It was recommended earlier that all scheduling and docketing duties be consolidated within the PSU. It is also recommended that the processing of administrative activities such as affidavits, medical paroles, pardons and commutations be assigned to the Administrative Specialist for IPS. This would free the SSU Administrative Specialist to assume full responsibility for all correspondence and possibly all phone logs.

We note the SSU Administrative Specialist currently processes all sensitive letters (i.e., those from attorneys, judges, legislators) with the remaining correspondence being rotated on a daily basis among other administrative staff. This rotation takes away from each administrative staff person's time and ability to perform their other assigned functions (e.g., training, statistics) and therefore obfuscates somewhat their accountability for those assignments. In addition, this rotation has not provided the necessary control over correspondence in terms of the timeliness and quality of response. We note that there have been longstanding and significant problems with each. Specifically, there have been problems with the quality of response as many different persons rush through correspondence duties to get to their other assignments. There have been problems with the timeliness of responses as correspondence has had a tendency to accumulate unprocessed in the file room. This latter problem has long been a problem known to management.

In 1973, management established a policy calling for a ten-day response time for all written communications. Management also implemented a correspondence control system which requires all incoming correspondence to be listed on a daily correspondence control log. Before correspondence is directed to administrative staff for handling, it is first matched with the inmate parole file and/or a copy of the census control card. Because both the procedures and the staff assigned to process correspondence for delivery to administrative staff have gone through several changes, and because responsibility for drafting responses to correspondence has been assigned and reassigned both vertically and laterally, and has been a shared responsibility (currently shared between three administrative staff in three different units) with no one ultimately reconciling responses to the control log, letters are sometimes allowed to sit for inordinate periods of time before responses are generated. We note, for example, that a letter sent to the Governor in May of 1985 was forwarded to the Commission for response. The response was typed in April of 1986. An April, 1986, review revealed 464 unanswered letters, 99 of which were four months or more old, and one of which one dated back to 1981. It is important to note that management, through weekly activity reports and periodic inquiries from the Office of the Secretary, has long known that incoming correspondence has a tendency to accumulate and linger in the file room. We note for example that activity reports from April of 1985 detail almost 200 letters still outstanding from 1984, some dating back to early August. And while some reassignments and process changes have been effected, problems still persist because there has been insufficient management follow-through to ensure that all correspondence is answered. It is recommended that responsibility for responding to all correspondence be assigned to the Administrative Specialist for SSU. It is further recommended that this individual regularly reconcile correspondence responses to the correspondence control log to ensure each letter is responded to.

Anywhere from 20 to 40 letters are received each day. The SSU Administrative Specialist is already processing about 30% of these (sensitive correspondence). Many of the letters are from inmates who

want to know when their hearings will be. These are inquiries which could be handled by institutional staff if inmates were timely scheduled for hearing and the dates were electronically available. Many of the letters are letters of support from family and friends and need only to be timely acknowledged. If correspondence were timely responded to, this would eliminate follow-up letters from individuals inquiring as to why prior letters to the Commission had received no response.

By consolidating responsibility for all correspondence within the Administrative Specialist for SSU, the Commission would have better control over the timeliness and quality of response. As letters are timely attended to and other agency problems are addressed (e.g., timely scheduling of parole and revocation hearings), there should be a reduction in incoming correspondence, which may allow for the consolidation of phone log responsibilities (also currently rotated among administrative staff) within this position as well. Consolidation of these duties should also significantly enhance performance of all other administrative staff duties as staff may devote their time and efforts to their primary duties.

Appendix A

List of Recommendations

Page

Turnover

1. The Chairman should establish and implement an exit interview process that is meaningful and allows employees to be candid. Through this process the basic reasons behind turnover should be identified and information useful for hiring, training and management practices obtained. 20
2. Once causitive factors are identified, management must begin to address retention problems. 20

Morale

3. The sensitive issue of addressing staff morale problems should be an utmost priority of the Chairman. Toward that end, the Chairman should take positive steps to identify and address the issues of concern to staff. Concerns expressed during this audit suggest that management staff at all levels must begin to acknowledge and appreciate staff accomplishments and positively reinforce good work efforts; become generally more sensitive to the needs, feelings and perceptions of employees; and deal more diplomatically and constructively with the employee performance deficiencies. 21

Management Staff

4. Management staff should be strengthened through: 1) effective hiring selections, 2) enhanced training which focuses on both development of management skills and knowledge of subordinates' job tasks, 3) an appropriate alignment of specific job tasks and responsibilities, and 4) the development and communication of succinct performance expectations for each position, unit and manager. 24
5. Weekly activity reports (from supervisors to unit managers and from unit managers to the Administrator) should be structured to provide, on a consistent and regular basis, critical information (e.g., number of cases to be opened, age of cases to be opened, number of sentence status changes to be processed) needed by management. 24
6. The Office of the Secretary should review the appropriateness of current limitations on mid-level management classifications and pay scales. It may be that some additional flexibility will be necessary to enable the Commission to retain good management staff. 24

Training

7. Management should assign clear responsibility for orientation program development to a single staff member; other staff members can participate if desired. Management should make development of this program a priority. Furthermore, the Commission should take full advantage of the technical assistance available from the Office of the Secretary and other departmental agencies. 25,26

Page

8. The Commission should systematically assess individual staff training needs, particularly for staff in management and supervisory positions. There are supervisory staff - and management staff - who are not familiar with their subordinates' responsibilities which makes training, supervision, work management and problem-solving difficult. Once identified, a plan must be developed to meet existing on-the-job training needs as well as any general management or supervisory related training needs.

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Procedural Documentation

9. Management should continue current efforts toward completion of operating procedures documentation. Documentation should be prepared in a manner that allows for easy update and procedures should be regularly reviewed and revised as necessary.
10. Management should utilize the development of written operating procedures as an opportunity not merely to document what and how tasks are performed, but to scrutinize current operations in terms of identifying areas where standard procedures are lacking and addressing areas of inefficiency or duplication, some of which are noted in this report.

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Performance Expectations

11. Both qualitative and quantitative performance expectations should be established for each position and operating unit. Employees and their supervisors should be involved in the establishment of quantitative work standards. To be of value, these standards must be periodically validated under typical work conditions.
12. Management must periodically assess employee performance against performance standards and provide feedback that is both timely and meaningful, both for the employees' benefit and management's benefit.

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Position Assignments

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13. Management should utilize the development of written operating procedures and performance standards as an opportunity to closely review individual staff assignments and responsibilities, particularly as PARIS provides certain positions (e.g., disposition clerk, sentence status clerk) with more efficient procedures for accomplishing currently cumbersome and time-consuming manual tasks. Where possible, responsibilities should be clearly vested with single individuals or within single units to enhance accountability.

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Time Accountability

14. Management should take steps to ensure that accurate time records are maintained; when employees are late this should be reflected on their time sheets even if the employee is allowed to make the time up during lunch hour.

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Overtime

15. More effective overtime controls should be implemented. Any automatic overtime authorizations should cease, with overtime being approved on an as needed basis only. Limitations should be placed on the amount of overtime that may be worked by individual employees during a given period and staff members who work overtime should be required to maintain a log of work accomplished during overtime hours. These logs should be reviewed by management.

31

Space and Equipment

16. Equipment needs should be identified, prioritized and budgetarily addressed. Observed needs include work tables for certain staff, a better copier, and basic office equipment for Casework Associate staff in the institutions.
17. The Office of the Secretary should review Commission space needs, particularly for staff in the CPD unit. Current space needs may be alleviated in large part with implementation of other recommendations in this report.

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Administrative Officer III

18. The vacant Administrative Officer III position should be upgraded and reclassified to an administrative/supervisory Hearing Officer. The duties of this position should include providing support to the Commission for policy oversight and coordination, training and supervision of the Hearing Officer staff, and resolution of Hearing Officer problems.
19. Review and update of Commission policy and regulation should be a high priority of both this individual and the Commission.

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Hearing Officers

20. Management should initiate a time accountability system for Hearing Officers. Under such a system true time accounts should be kept of actual time worked. Compensatory leave should be credited for extra hours worked on lengthy hearing days and used to offset short hearing days.
21. The Commission should establish a policy regarding travel time to supplement the time accountability system. The Commission may wish to adopt a policy that would consider travel time in excess of the time required to commute to the office as work time.
22. The Commission should consider having hearing staff perform their case review functions in the office, rather than at home, so that on those days where case review is completed early there will be additional time for processing hold cases or meeting other administrative needs.
23. Once time accountability has been established, the Commission should work toward the establishment of performance standards which would allow the agency to assess productivity and to gauge resource requirements.

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37

	<u>Page</u>
<u>Personnel Services</u>	
24. The personnel clerk, and the attendant personnel functions performed by this position, should be consolidated within the Personnel Services Unit in the Office of the Secretary.	42
25. Staff in the Personnel Services Unit of the Office of the Secretary should work closely with Commission management to assist in enhancing recruitment practices, developing internal reclassification policies and effective disciplinary procedures, and in identifying and meeting management and supervisory training needs as they relate to general personnel practices.	42
26. Training in basic personnel matters should be required of all management and supervisory staff.	42
<u>Institutional Parole Services</u>	
27. Efforts should be made to enhance the timely flow of information to field units. Issuance of information bulletins may prove useful supplements to the periodic staff meetings.	44
28. System training on both PARIS and OBSCIS should be provided to all field office personnel and arrangements should be made with DOC to allot Commission field employees access to terminals.	44
29. The Commission should incorporate attendance at appropriate portions of the Maryland Correctional Training Academy program into training requirements of institutional staff who must come in contact and interact with inmates.	44
<u>Parole Services Unit</u>	
30. An additional clerical worker, at a somewhat higher classification than the current Office Assistant, should be hired to handle the sentence status change process.	56
31. The two case opening clerks should be relocated to the Reception Center where they can begin working with inmate files from the date of intake. These two clerks should be assigned responsibility for scheduling inmate hearings as the commitments are received and files are opened. If these changes are implemented, a full-time contractual worker will be required for a period of six months to assist in the transition to new case opening procedures.	49,50
32. The requisitioning of Offense Reports should be incorporated into the early stages of data acquisition.	51
33. Responsibility for file validation should be transferred to the CPD unit supervisor to be performed on an as needed basis.	50
34. The Administrative Specialist should systematically review all PSU functions for purposes of reducing inefficiencies and addressing areas of problems.	46

Page

- 35. The scheduling clerk should be allowed to pick up hearing notification lists from the Data Center on her way to or from work. 52
- 36. Unless and until it becomes easier to work with multiple copies of the hearing notification list, extra copies should be discontinued by the Data Center. The distribution of these lists should also be reviewed. 52
- 37. Management should carefully review and organize file room operations to include a review of the need for each incoming document. 52
- 38. Other problems within PSU that require management's attention include: 1) the scheduling of timely parole hearings for noncadre inmates at the Reception Center, 2) the revocation process, and 3) parole in absentia. 54
- 39. The Data Center should review the feasibility of transferring commitment and sentencing data from DOC's OBSCIS system to the Commission's PARIS system. 52,53
- 40. All scheduling and docketing functions (including appeals) should be consolidated within PSU. 56

Support Services Unit

- 41. The Office of the Secretary should review the classification and grade level of the receptionist. 57
- 42. Responsibility for typing appeal decisions should be consolidated within the Decision Unit. 57
- 43. The processing of administrative activities such as affidavits, medical paroles, pardons and commutations should be assigned to the Administrative Specialist for IPS. 57
- 44. Responsibility for responding to all correspondence should be assigned to the Administrative Specialist for SSU. This individual should regularly reconcile correspondence responses to the correspondence control log to ensure each letter is responded to. 59

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