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PHASE II EVALUATION DESIGN

PHASE I ASSESSMENT OF  
COEDUCATIONAL CORRECTIONS

CONTRACT #J-LEAA-009-77

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF LAW ENFORCEMENT AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE  
LAW ENFORCEMENT ASSISTANCE ADMINISTRATION  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

September 23, 1977

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Prepared under contract number J-LEAA-009-77, awarded to the Small Business Administration, and Koba Associates, Inc., by the National Institute of Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice, Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, U.S. Department of Justice. Points of view or opinions stated in this document are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official positions or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

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For  
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Law Enforcement Assistance Administration  
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September 23, 1977

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## I. INTRODUCTION

### A. The Concept of a Phase II Design

The National Evaluation Program Phase I guidelines indicate that, after existing knowledge has been arrayed on the synthesized measurement model and the level of confidence attributable to this knowledge has been assessed, the investigator should, where necessary and appropriate, develop means for further testing of hypotheses in the topic area. Because there will almost inevitably be issues which require further clarification or substantiation in a given topic area, certain other types of questions must generally be brought to bear on the decision to perform, or propose to perform, a Phase II Evaluation. It is not merely a matter of determining, in the language of the NEP guidelines, "through what approach, with what measures, and at what cost needed improvement in the present knowledge base can be obtained." In addition to issues of method and cost, the Phase II guidelines and related documentation stress considering the importance and feasibility of a Phase II effort, that is, "how valuable it would be to obtain various levels of certainty," and "how...the evaluation information recommended [could] be used."

A review of both Phase II designs from completed NEPs and LEAA's track-record in making funds available for Phase II studies shows that, even in topic areas where further evaluation is an evident need, a major Phase II investigation may be unwarranted. Indeed, LEAA's record of funding suggests certain criteria for topic areas suitable to a Phase II: the existence in a topic area of a sound data base, and a substantial evaluation literature; clear indication of the intended outcomes in a well-defined program area; the actual or potential impact of a particular intervention on a large number of persons; the flow of substantial LEAA funding to direct support of programs of a given type; and,

suitability to analysis in a client-flow framework. These empirical criteria suggest that the likelihood and appropriateness of implementing an LEAA-funded Phase II Evaluation on co-corrections are low, because the topic area does not fit the ordinary guidelines. However, the dearth of formal evaluation in the topic area may be one reason for serious consideration of implementing further evaluation of co-corrections at either the Federal or State levels through another funding mechanism.

#### B. Research Directions in Co-corrections

That the amount of information available to support or contradict the attainment of intended co-correctional outcomes and impacts is low, was not unexpected. The manner in which many coed institutions have developed has not encouraged definition of evaluation questions, much less the evaluation of outcomes or the monitoring of performance. Where programmatic intent has been in evidence, recent interest in assessing certain key questions about co-corrections has been high. However, a Phase II Evaluation on co-corrections is not proposed for several reasons:

- o LEAA's empirical criteria for funding Phase II studies do not lend themselves to such an effort; for example, while women are disproportionately impacted by co-corrections, a relatively small percentage of the total offender population is housed in coed institutions. Moreover, current trends suggest that, even on the state level, future movement into co-corrections will probably be balanced by shifts back to single-sex status, unless equal rights legislation dictates otherwise.
- o The implementation of another full-scale research design is appropriately deferred until the results of the Bureau of Prisons co-correctional research project -- the first rigorous investigation of co-corrections -- have been analyzed, and further evaluation questions refined. This project offers the prospect of yielding a rich source of data, which promises to both partially fill several gaps in knowledge, and provide a baseline for further research in the area.
- o Research on co-corrections is inhibited by a host of evaluation problems which have been considered in earlier reports. Two such

problems have been illustrated dramatically by the Bureau of Prisons study: changing program priorities and operations; and, non-comparability of data. First, the decision to shift two of the four Federal coed institutions out of co-corrections is reflected in changing program priorities in those institutions which, in turn, impede full implementation of the Bureau of Prisons research design, and suggest that the perceived need for further evaluation of co-corrections may generally be lower in the Federal system if co-corrections is, as it may appear to be, a "waning concept," or if co-corrections is, as many programs are, negatively affected by high population pressures. Second, although data systems in the participating four coed and five non-coed institutions were made uniform for the purposes of the BOP study, there are strong indications that uniform data collection procedures will not be maintained beyond the completion of the study, thus impeding future evaluation efforts. These two problems illustrated by efforts to implement the Bureau of Prisons study -- changes in program priorities, and the difficulty in developing and maintaining comparable data systems even within a given jurisdiction -- discourage the development of a full-scale research proposal.

While it seems inappropriate to propose implementation of a Phase II Design, it seems appropriate to recommend that:

- o Single institution evaluations be uniformly and regularly conducted, in conformance with standards outlined in the Single Institution Evaluation Design, or later refinements of these standards; and,
- o Certain research issues which might be developed into full research designs be articulated.

These evaluation recommendations are made because of the general absence of efforts on the institutional level to monitor co-correctional activities and outcomes, and because of the potential of co-corrections not only to influence the position of women in the correctional system, but also to impact on the milieu of the traditional single-sex institution.

#### C. Purpose and Organization

This report functionally serves as an appendix to the Knowledge Assessment, which arrays existing information on the synthesized measurement model developed in the

Frameworks Paper. It is presumed that the reader of this report is familiar with, or has access to, at least the Summary Report, which consolidates the first four reports from the Phase I Assessment of co-corrections.

Research issues which are discussed in this report as potential areas for further evaluation involve: improvements in the data base and data collection procedures; the costs of co-corrections; the effects of co-corrections on the institutional program; the impacts of co-corrections on post-release behavior; and, development of a "model institution." Each of these issues is discussed in terms of the importance and methods of obtaining more conclusive evaluative data on co-corrections, as well as in terms of cost and feasibility, to the extent that these can be estimated. Finally, several ways of re-defining co-corrections within a broader systemic and evaluative context are presented for potential future study.

## II. DEVELOPMENT OF A DATA BASE

The importance of uniformly and regularly utilizing the evaluation standards for single programs outlined in the Single Institution Evaluation Design is closely related to development of a data base regarding co-corrections, especially at the state level. Lack of knowledge about co-corrections is caused by the inconsistency in record-keeping and lack of comparability of data, among and within jurisdictions, and even within single institutions. The de-emphasis on research in corrections, the often low programmatic intent for the establishment of co-corrections, and the occasional existence of separate administrative divisions for provision of some services (e.g., education, counselling) contribute to these impediments to data collection. A project to identify and standardize data at all existing coed institutions might be developed to partially remedy this problem. Such a project might be viewed as an effort to extend the utility of, and make refinements upon, the Single Institution Evaluation Design.

A team of researchers, spending several days, weeks or months at each facility, would interview staff and determine all offices in a given institution which keep records; examine those records to determine their relationship to the synthesized measurement model, or the single institution evaluation standards adapted from it; and identify factors, both political and actuarial, which may lead to inaccurate record-keeping. In addition, the team would compare data both within institutions over time, and among different jurisdictions. The project might also develop procedures to facilitate the standardization of dissimilar data, and distinguish areas, such as disciplinary reports and job classifications, in which definitions may vary so much as to impinge on the comparability of seemingly compatible data. The team would strive to integrate the data as fully as possible with that generated by the Federal effort in-progress, if it appears that Federal



institutions will maintain the uniform data collection procedures occasioned by implementation of the BOP design.

The feasibility of this project depends strongly on the degree of interest present at individual institutions in monitoring their own activities and outcomes. Hopefully, the Single Institution Evaluation Design will stimulate this interest in self-evaluation. The availability of national and state technical assistance in corrections might permit an inexpensive, albeit short-term effort to assist institutions in applying the standards for individual institution evaluation. Otherwise, a two person-year effort over a period of six months might require approximately \$65,000 in direct costs for full implementation at all coed state institutions.

### III. COSTS OF CO-CORRECTIONS

Despite the perceived importance within the decision to "go coed" of anticipated financial benefits and reduced per capita costs to be achieved through realization of economies of scale, little actual evidence has been collected in this area. One reason for this lack of information -- the additional administrative load which might result from separate accounting for each sex -- is either relatively inconsequential, or irrelevant. Evaluation has been impeded by problems related both to identifying "hidden costs" and operationalizing or translating societal and "human costs" into dollars and cents. Co-corrections is potentially susceptible to "hidden costs" stemming from subtle and difficult-to-measure items, such as shifts in staff responsibilities (potentially toward increased surveillance), changes in program participation rates (up or down) and thus per capita program costs, benefits from inmate labor, etc. Furthermore, additional costs from co-corrections, such as those incurred through possible high staff turnover rates (due to decreased morale associated with ambiguity about enforcement of contact proscriptions, or increased staff tension derived from sexism associated with "forced integration"), curtailed program participation (due to restrictions on movement, or on program participation of either couples together, or on one or the other sex), are more difficult to delineate. Conversely, co-corrections may involve "institutional payoffs" related to reduced violence and tension. How to translate the human costs and benefits related to potential programmatic benefits of co-corrections are even more difficult to conceptualize: while reduced recidivism rates and other improvements in post-release behavior may have direct implications for costs and benefits to society -- including tax revenues, reduced costs to welfare and other social agencies -- there are costs and benefits, such as the human savings associated with protection of the sexual options of prisoners, which are

almost impossible to convert into a set of formulae analagous in complexity to those for interest rates. An intensive study of data concerning costs and benefits of co-corrections at several institutions over time would alleviate this lack of knowledge; however, such a project might be extremely difficult to implement.

Experts in cost-analysis could be employed to examine changes in per capita expenditures in several facets of prison operations. The project would examine costs in each department or division of the institution. Job analyses would measure changes in job responsibilities, such as potential increased focus on security and parallel decreased service delivery, which may result from co-corrections. The study would carefully note cases in which increased costs might be associated with intended outcomes, such as when increases in a program's budget reflect a higher participation rate resulting from co-corrections. Changes in labor costs, supplies and facility modification would be carefully delineated, and this data compared across institutions, and within institutions over time, to determine which costs and benefits are incurred, and under what conditions.

This study would be difficult to implement in a form of ex post facto analysis, not only because many of the costs and benefits are difficult to operationalize, but also because, even with jurisdictions, we are confronted with a maze of frequently modified cost-accounting systems. For example, personnel serving on the "correctional complement" of some Federal institutions are actually budgeted as "counselors;" however, this is true of only some institutions, and is generally associated with institutions operating under unit management. Regular changes in management approach have often been accompanied by shifts in accounting methods. Therefore, the feasibility of this project hinges largely on the success of efforts to standardize correctional data systems. For the near future, efforts to measure the trade-offs associated with co-corrections should be restricted to particular identifiable issues, such as the impact of shifting staff

responsibilities upon staff morale. In the absence of a notion of the level of effort required for such a study, costs cannot be indicated.

#### IV. ON-UNIT BEHAVIOR CHANGES

Although a "softening" effect on the violence of prison life is a widely-perceived outcome of and intended goal of many coed institutions, little hard evidence has been collected which would document such an effect. Moreover, the changes in self-identity and sex-roles often associated with co-corrections have received little documentation. The multiplicity of intervening variables prevents the facile determination of actual, on-unit behavior changes from comparisons of disciplinary rates and other management-oriented data.

A potential alternative design would measure behavioral changes on-unit for suitable periods before and after the introduction of co-corrections at an institution. Such a project would necessitate identification of an institution which is "going coed" well before actual implementation of the program. The design calls for an intensive analysis of the social dynamics of at least one unit of the facility, including levels of interaction (both inmate/inmate and staff/inmate), identification of social systems within the unit, measurement of the extent of "family" behavior, perceived levels of homosexuality, etc. Data might be obtained through a combination of methods, including surveys, interviews and structured observation. The research by H. Russel Bernard at Fort Worth FCI, and recent efforts by the Bureau of Prisons to develop instrumentation to measure homosexuality, might be used in such an investigation. Study of the unit would continue through and beyond the introduction of the opposite sex to the institution.

It is desirable that other variables such as program availability, staff-inmate ratio, etc. remain reasonably constant; however, the effects of policy-change on on-unit behavior might alternatively be examined. In either context, the project would investigate effects of co-corrections on on-unit behavior, as exemplified through changes

in social structure; family behavior; presence and status of homosexuals on the unit; the nature of on-unit relationships; nature and level of violence; and levels of interaction among unit members and between unit members and other inmates and staff.

In estimating the feasibility of such a design, one is faced with dual considerations regarding, on the one hand, identifying an institution which is to go coed and, on the other hand, minimizing the effects of non-systematic changes in program priorities. Therefore, several institutions approaching the transition period either into, or out of, co-corrections might be studied either in parallel, or in sequence, within a multiple time-series design. Were a model institution developed, in which program priorities and operations were held relatively stable, such a setting would be an appropriate one for study of on-unit behavior changes. The implementation of this study in a single institution -- for three months before and nine months after conversion -- would require services of a full-time project director, three full-time graduate students, and other costs, totalling approximately \$70,000 in direct costs.

## V. POST-RELEASE ADJUSTMENT FOLLOW-UP

Few studies have examined the behavior of inmates released from co-correctional facilities, although anticipated impacts on post-release adjustment have often been associated with co-corrections. The present state of research not only generally lacks comparisons of recidivism rates between coed and single-sex facilities; it is devoid of information about other aspects of post-release adjustment. Recidivism measures do not permit a determination of the quality of life of the releasee, nor, more importantly, do they indicate either which co-correctional outcomes have an effect on post-release adjustment, or how post-release adjustment affects recidivism.

A post-release follow-up might be designed which develops cohorts of releasees from several coed and single-sex institutions. While the on-going Bureau of Prisons study considers post-release behavior, this is operationalized only in terms of recidivism rates, and not in terms of direct measures of adjustment presumed to be related to, on the one hand, co-correctional institutional outcomes and, on the other hand, reduced criminality. The great diversity in characteristics and geographical location among coed institutions should lend itself to the identification of comparable single-sex institutions; however, states vary widely in their definitions of, and capabilities to produce valid data regarding recidivism. Alternatively, the project would therefore be implemented in tandem with the Bureau of Prisons study, and be incorporated into the BOP analysis. Selected releasees would be interviewed either at several intervals after release or, more realistically, at a single point in time at least six months after release. Interviews would include an examination of social and sexual adjustment of releasees, drug usage, job satisfaction and tenure, marital stability, etc. Anonymity would be guaranteed both to increase the candidness of responses, and protect inmate identities. Results would be

tabulated and significant differences in post-release adjustment between co-correctional and single-sex releasees identified. A post-release follow-up of this sort could yield a clearer perception of the effect of co-correctional confinement on post-release adjustment, and of post-release adjustment on recidivism. However, a closer examination of the exact co-correctional institutional outcomes which contribute to improved post-release adjustment would be deferred to a later study. Validation of self-report data on recidivism might be achieved through such criminal justice agency sources -- if this study is performed among the states -- as provide some of the recidivism data for the BOP study.

The project outlined above would be especially feasible if performed in conjunction with the BOP co-correctional evaluation. It would require approximately one professional person-year of effort over a period of six months, for instrument design; training of interviewers; coordination of releasee tracking and completion of interviews; coding; and, processing of data. Nearly half of the estimated \$65,000 in direct costs needed for this study would be allocated to payments for interviewers and interviewees, and associated travel and communications costs.



## VI. DEMONSTRATION PROJECT

One result of the frequent changes in coed programs has been the inability of evaluators to rigorously analyze the outcomes of co-corrections, because of fluctuations in potentially crucial variables and intrusion of other factors into the institutional process. In addition, the wide variety of programmatic and non-programmatic justifications for co-corrections, often existent within the same institution, has further complicated the isolation of outcomes resulting from co-corrections. Some would say that co-corrections is an intervention which has "yet to be tried." The development of a "model institution" with stable programs and goals for a period of time sufficient for adequate data on institutional processes and outcomes to be collected would create an environment for a more systematic analysis of co-corrections.

Development of a model institution would entail determination of the most important or useful programs, policies, outcomes, etc. to be studied. The model would control as many significant variables as possible, including staff selection and training, inmate selection and characteristics, policies on contact, interaction levels, community linkages, nature and extent of programs, etc. An operational framework for the institution could be derived from any of the existing models of co-corrections; a given model, such as the reintegration model, operationalized in its present form; or, a "differential model" which extends the limits of currently acceptable "normal" behavior might be developed.

The model project would include methods to monitor implementation and maintenance of each variable at the determined level. It would have an extensive data collection and evaluation design built into it and provision would be made for extensive follow-up of releasees from the model institution. Ideally, selection of the institution for

such a model would also be based on its comparability to other, non-coed institutions for control purposes. While all facets of institutional life could not be compatible, the control institution would necessarily duplicate as closely as possible all aspects of the particular model — say, the reintegration model — upon which the model institution is based, with the exception of the presence and interaction of both sexes. Such a model would provide previously unavailable data on the effects of co-corrections, and limit the present confounding of variables caused by both the simultaneous presence of several models, and shifting program priorities.

One method for insuring full implementation and continuity might be to tie continued funding of the project to the maintenance of the desired consistency and uniformity. The work of Donald Campbell suggests, however, that a more effective (and less costly) approach — or one which at least complements the tactic of tying the purse-strings — would involve clarification of both the function of the administrator, and the purposes of the evaluation. This approach requires conveying to the facility's administrator and key staff that the administrator's job is to maintain consistency and stability in the program, and not to achieve the program's outcomes; at the same time, the administrator needs to be assured that it is the program, and not his administrative performance, that is being evaluated. If this approach is effectively implemented, the administrator will have no vested interest in the success or failure of the program.

The development of a model institution is feasible only where a jurisdictional commitment is made to insulate an institution from the impacts of system level needs for a suitable period of time. Even if costs are not accrued in relation to program development, salaries for four professional person years and other direct costs for program evaluation, excluding the post-release follow-up, would amount to between \$120,000 and \$150,000.

## VII. CO-CORRECTIONS IN A LARGER CONTEXT

Co-corrections may also be viewed within broader systemic and evaluative contexts, some of which more closely approximate the empirical criteria for NEP Phase I Evaluation. Co-correctional institutions might be included as part of a larger investigation in any of the following areas:

- o The differential effects of coeducational versus single-sex confinement across several types of institutional settings, including prisons, mental hospitals, schools, prison camps, orphanages, convalescent homes, the armed forces, and quarantined populations;
- o The costs and benefits associated with different emergency measures undertaken in response to system-level overcrowding;
- o The ins-and-outs of the decision-making process in corrections;
- o Political and other factors impinging on the accuracy of record-keeping.

Joint funding and cooperative efforts among several institutions or agencies would probably be necessary to perform evaluation in the above areas.



**END**