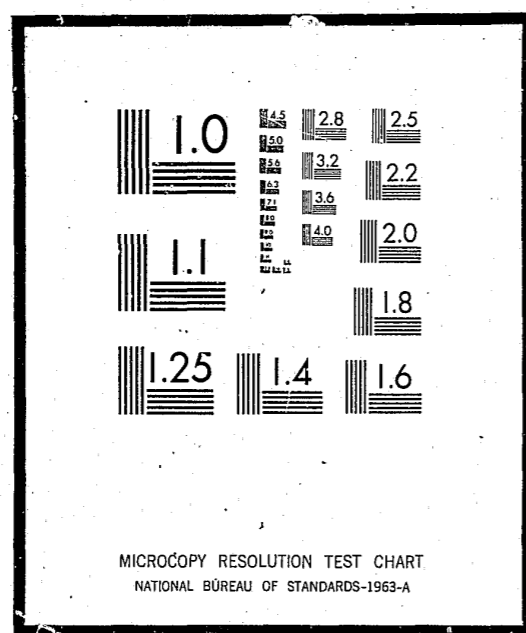


NCJRS

This microfiche was produced from documents received for inclusion in the NCJRS data base. Since NCJRS cannot exercise control over the physical condition of the documents submitted, the individual frame quality will vary. The resolution chart on this frame may be used to evaluate the document quality.



Microfilming procedures used to create this fiche comply with the standards set forth in 41CFR 101-11.504

Points of view or opinions stated in this document are those of the author(s) and do not represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
LAW ENFORCEMENT ASSISTANCE ADMINISTRATION
NATIONAL CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFERENCE SERVICE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20531

Date filmed

10/23/75

19

Correction
Made

X

Evaluation Report

of

Student-Tutor Education Project

Within the

Massachusetts Department of Correction

Francis J. Kelly, Ed.D.

Professor of Education

Boston College Graduate School
of Arts and Sciences

January 17, 1971

16621
EVAL LOAN

Summary of Recommendations

It is recommended that STEP be funded to permit the continuance of its programs within Massachusetts Correctional Institutions, subject to the following conditions:

1. That STEP specifically define its goals in a manner that will permit evaluation of its movement toward these goals.
2. That the Department of Correction establish a committee consisting of administrative, educational, and mental health staff that will participate in screening and selection of STEP tutors.
3. That STEP institute, with the cooperation of the Department of Correction staff, a training program for in-coming tutors which will expose them to the psycho-dynamics of the prison inmates, and the legal correctional process.
4. That STEP, Corrections and Parole establish lines of communication in the areas of in-prison and after-care planning to insure that all involved with the inmate are aware of on-going programs.
5. That the Department of Correction staff in their classification committee review inmates at time of entry into the institution and recommend men to STEP who have administrative and clinical approval. This group will comprise the pool from which STEP will screen and accept volunteers.
6. That as vacancies occur, STEP will screen applicants from this pool, with STEP initiating the contact. This may offset the informal self-selection; however, we doubt if this can every be fully controlled.
7. That STEP be continued as a full time program with additional staff, or a re-deployment of existing staff to provide coverage every work day.

Recommendations

8. That the "no drop" policy be discarded and the program conform to current academic practice to insure the students' work in-put. That STEP instill more balance in its curriculum consistent with a better understanding of the subject served.
9. That STEP and the Department of Corrections establish regular channels of communication. In establishing these, care should be given to not diminishing the effectiveness of STEP as a semi-autonomous program.
10. That wherever possible inmate participation in review, evaluation, and planning for STEP be permitted.
11. That the area of confidentiality of material be covered in detail with STEP personnel so they do not perceive it as an "all or nothing" matter.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to present an evaluation of the Student-Tutor Education Project (STEP) presently operating within the Massachusetts Department of Correction at the Correctional Institutions at Walpole and Norfolk.

Program evaluations employ various methods determined to a large degree by the type of program being examined. Among these are pre and post participation measures on some pre-determined variable, e.g., academic achievement; or longitudinal data, e.g., follow up or recidivism studies; these have the advantage of providing objective information. However, the STEP program, at this time, does not lend itself to this objective measurement. This evaluation followed an alternative method by interviewing significant persons involved with STEP and arriving at considered subjective judgments based upon the evaluator's experience with educational and correctional practice and goals.

The evaluation proceeded by interviewing administrative and professional staff of the Department of Correction and STEP together with inmate participants in STEP and other significant persons whose professional activities bring them into direct or peripheral contact with STEP.

BACKGROUND OF STEP

The STEP program was introduced into the Walpole Correctional Institution in June 1968. This introduction followed several months of meetings between private individuals and Department of Correction authorities. STEP, privately funded, began modestly with two tutors offering courses in the humanities to 13 inmates at Walpole. The first year of operation was characterized by a lack of structure and vaguely defined goals. It appears that while well intended, there was little awareness of the dynamics of the population served or the prison sub-culture. Curriculum was determined to large measure by the personal interest of the tutors and not based upon any pre-conceived or well developed plan. The tutors were selected on rather vague subjective criteria by the Director of STEP ostensibly to present a new middle-class role model for the inmates; inmates who by reason of their life experience probably viewed these models quite differently. The STEP staff felt the Correction Department staff could offer them little and insisted on operating autonomously within the host institution. The Correction staff felt STEP personnel were intellectually snobbish, enamored with their rescue fantasies and regarded the experienced institutional staff as second-rate professionals who needed, in the words of one STEP staff, "to have humanity brought to the institution for at least 5 hours a day."

The inmates selected were screened on the basis of their IQs and response set to the tutors. Correction staff felt the program should be directed at the disadvantaged whose scholastic experience was so poor that remedial-tutorial programs were necessary to assist them to achieve their potential. The STEP staff was perceived as seeking out the

bright, articulate intellectualizing inmates whose response gratified their needs and confirmed their stereotypic image of correctional staff.

The end of the first year witnessed the program undergoing difficulties. Inmate students were not producing, they were not doing their assigned readings or responding to tutors' efforts to stimulate them. The lack of structure, the absence of reward or evidence of achievement contributed to this. During the summer of 1968, a structured course was offered by a faculty member of Northeastern University. Complete with syllabus, required readings, quizzes and examination, the program apparently turned around. The men were given a structure and reward as evidence of their achievement. This is not surprising with this population many of whom need structure in their lives and this was carried over to academic pursuits with rewards in the form of grades which were visible evidence of success. It appears that initially STEP was programmed on an academic assumption which proved untenable with prison inmates. It assumed a level of character development that was not present in the population served, namely, that the students are self-actualizers and respond to intrinsic rewards. What may be effective pedagogy with middle-class value oriented college students is not effective with primarily lower class value oriented prison inmates.

There appears to be some validity to the feelings of both partners in this endeavor. One speculation is that both formed distorted perceptions of the other and in the absence of meaningful communication

drew further apart. We may conclude that whatever the motivation, STEP recognized the challenge and need for in-prison educational improvement. Also, the Department of Correction's openness to new innovative programs permitted STEP's introduction into the prison system. This openness nearly was carried to a fault, however, since apparently not wanting to lose the program, correction officials abrogated some responsibility in overseeing and integrating it into the over-all institutional structure. It would appear that communication was minimal and STEP was permitted to operate with a high degree of autonomy.

The second year (1969-1970) of STEP's involvement with the Department of Correction witnessed a significant change. Northeastern University's University College accredited the STEP tutors to their faculty and granted college credit to the inmates for successfully passing the courses offered. STEP was funded through a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities and was extended to the Norfolk Correctional Institution. The number of tutors increased to four full time, three at Walpole and one at Norfolk. The courses offered were those courses which could be used to fulfill basic requirements common to all degree programs in the various schools (Liberal Arts, Business Administration, Education) and consistent with the quarter-term schedule at Northeastern University College. Among these courses are Introduction to Literature, Introduction to Earth Science and United States History. The courses are offered for longer periods than the usual college program, as a result,

enrichment material is added and an impressive group of guest lecturers participate. (See Appendix A).

During the second year tutors were recruited from universities in the area. Following a screening interview by the director and a review of his recommendations he was interviewed by the part-time clinical psychologist on the STEP staff. If approved, he was appointed to the STEP staff. It does not appear that the Correction Department staff were involved in the selection and/or appointment.

The second year also saw some change in the selection of inmates for the program. During the first year men volunteered and were selected, as mentioned above, on the subjective judgment of the tutors. This was questionable procedure due to the informal self-selection that can take place within a prison sub-culture as well as due to the unfamiliarity of the two tutors with the population served. During the second year selection was based upon referrals from prison staff or students. Candidates were administered psychological tests of intelligence and personality and were interviewed by the tutors and the STEP clinical psychologist.

The program changed significantly since its inception in 1968. The first year was unstructured, poorly defined and offered service to a group of inmates who developed what prison staff refer to as an "elitish" attitude. The 1969-1970 program adopted more structure, more realistic goals, better staff and inmate selection procedures and expanded to two correctional institutions.

We will now turn to the present STEP program (1970-1971).

Current STEP Program 1970-1971

This section of the report will proceed by examining 1) the goals of STEP, 2) tutor selection, 3) inmate selection, 4) course content of program, and finally, the relationship between STEP and the Department of Correction staff and program.

GOALS OF STEP

In an early prospectus (1967) the goal of STEP was stated as, "The aim of this project is to search out and identify those inmates.... who show notable if latent intellectual, artistic, technical or leadership abilities and to launch them, regardless of their present scholastic achievement, on an educational program which will prepare them for further study at a college, university, technical or professional school upon release."

More recently (1970) a somewhat modified goal was stated, "Its (STEP) ultimate aim is to change socially aberrant to socially acceptable behavior. But more immediately it seeks to identify inmates of intellectual potential regardless of previous scholastic achievement. To these prison-students it offers a program in the humanities, including credit courses, with the purpose of preparing them to continue their education upon release or to assume occupational roles satisfying to themselves and of positive value to the community."

The earlier statement implies that the goal of STEP was to prepare inmates for college-entry. This appears to be a narrow statement of the purpose of education since most authorities perceive

education in terms of its value and effect upon the individual. It also suggests a rather naive approach to correctional education and the population served. This statement also severely limited the population served since it would appear to have excluded the disadvantaged, minority groups whose educational needs are at a most basic elementary level. The later statement seems to indicate some profit from two years experience. While still stressing "preparing them to continue their education", it no longer emphasizes college entry and mentions "changing socially aberrant to socially acceptable behavior". This recognition seems much more realistic, since it is expected that if a man is assisted to approximate his intellectual potential this will produce behavior change.

Nevertheless, the goals of the program remain stated in most general terms. While these general goals may serve as ultimate goals to be fondly desired, immediate realistic and measureable goals, graduated in their movement toward the ultimate goal, should be delineated. This permits evaluation and assessment and the proliferation of the program to similar settings.

Movement toward the achievement of these goals may be facilitated by comparing the performance of the inmates on standardized courses to that of students in the University College's classes elsewhere (not necessarily the main campus students). Also by objectively measuring change on personality and social behavior dimensions as well as ratings by prison staff, tutors and the inmates themselves. The present proposal refers to some of these measures but they should be spelled out more specifically, for example, what instruments will be employed and what standardized rating scales will be developed for this purpose.

SELECTION OF TUTORS:

Programs are people. They are only as good as the people conducting them. For this reason, selection of staff is a crucial factor to the success of any program. At the present time there are six full time STEP tutors. We were most impressed by the dedication, competence and motivation of the current tutors. While the subjective criteria employed in their initial selection is difficult to articulate since it apparently is a combination of intuition, hunch, and experience it seems to be effective. The final screening is performed by a well trained clinical psychologist who, by virtue of a year's pre-doctoral internship at the Walpole Correctional Institution's mental health center, is experienced and knowledgeable in the area of correctional practice. In screening the candidates, the psychologist employs a traditional mental health approach and special care is given to eliminating staff candidates who seem to be rebelling against the system to satisfy their own personal needs. However, it remains that the Department of Correction has little involvement in the selection procedure.

The STEP program is unique in that, in addition to formal teaching responsibilities, the tutors perform a variety of other functions. Under the general rubric of counselling, they provide individual remedial tutoring, counsel on personal problems, arrange for guest lecturers, arrange after care on parole programs, write letters of recommendation, interview deans or prospective employers, find housing and maintain contact with students on a post-release basis. It is in these non-teaching functions that real or potential

difficulties are present. The tutors, as mentioned, are highly dedicated young graduate students but, at time of entry, have little or no experience or familiarity with convicted felons or the legal-correctional process with its legal constraints. They receive no training in this area and as a result have on occasion exceeded the bounds of their authority. This has generated conflict with correction and parole authorities. While this has lessened significantly in the past year, it still exists and its potential for difficulty is great. There are established programs for after-care planning and enactment which while fallible are the legal avenues. STEP should work within these avenues exclusively, maintaining close communication with correction and parole officials before, during and after any action on their part.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Department of Correction establish a committee consisting of Administrative, Educational and Mental health staff that will participate in screening and selection of STEP tutors.

STEP institutes, with the cooperation of the Department of Correction staff, a training program for in-coming tutors which will expose them to the psycho-dynamics of the prison inmates, and the legal-correctional process.

STEP, Corrections and Parole establish lines of communication in the areas of in-prison and after-care planning to insure that all involved with the inmate are aware of on-going programs.

SELECTION OF INMATES

Inmates are recommended for participation in STEP by the classification review board at the institution, by STEP students or are self-referrals. In the past year STEP has established a screening process which includes an intelligence test, a personality inventory and a screening interview. The interview conducted by the STEP psychologist is to exclude from participation any inmate with "gross pathology". The present selection is determined to a significant degree by the STEP staff on the basis of intelligence, and with the proposed addition of writing samples and a reading test, stresses language and reading skills that are characteristically poor in those comprising a prison population. This has led to the Correction staff's feeling that STEP prefers the bright, articulate inmate and through their process select a highly biased sample of prisoners. Caution is advised here since this group composed of verbal, intelligent inmates may in fact have many of the more sociopathic, "con" men who frequently possess these skills. This may contribute to the observation by the Correctional staff, that many of the students manipulate the young, relatively naive tutors to accomplish the inmates' goals.

While criteria for selection, as stated formally, include correction staff referrals, in reality many appear to be self-selected by the inmate participants through the informal prison subcultural system. The institution staff may recommend but STEP insists on voluntary participation and all recommended do not volunteer; perhaps are encouraged not to volunteer. As a result there is a hidden screening process that occurs with STEP selecting only from those

who come to their attention, usually through the action of a friend-participant in STEP. This occurrence is extremely difficult to control for since the average inmate's priority is assigned to avoiding trouble with fellow-inmates and institutional staff.

We suspect that there are many who would like to volunteer but are reluctant to do so through concern over the effect it would have upon their relationship with their fellow inmates.

There is some incongruence between Correction staff and STEP as to the type of inmate best served by the STEP program. Correctional officials feel it should serve the inmates who possess the intellectual potential to achieve better than they have due to deprived backgrounds and lack of opportunity. STEP, due to its college level curriculum, feels the inmates should have certain skills at time of entry into the program. Correction sees it as essentially a remedial tutorial program; STEP, to a large degree, perceives it still as college preparatory and educationally oriented. This contributes to the hostile feelings of some institutional staff toward the inmates and the program produced by the staff's reaction to convicted felons receiving a college education and college credit when they do not have the same opportunity.

A group of inmate-participants in STEP at the Correctional Institution at Norfolk was interviewed to determine their feelings about the program. We were most impressed by their openness and articulateness. They were very positive about STEP and what the program had done and was continuing to do for them generally. They described the impact of the program as extending far beyond intel-

lectual in-puts, feeling it was enriching their lives generally. They mentioned their feelings of being harassed by the institution staff at times and feel the institution staff does not understand STEP. The inmates regard STEP as hard work due to the class work and study required while the institution staff see it as a treatment program and a "good deal" for them. The inmates are very concerned about the possibility of the administration cutting back on the time the students can devote to STEP. They feel the reason offered, namely that these men should be involved in the prison industry program, is not valid since the prison industry shops do not have enough work now for the men assigned and they would do nothing but sit around all day if placed there. The inmates believe this is another harassment by institutional staff resulting from the staff's real feelings about inmates receiving college level education and avoiding the routine prison programs.

The inmates expressed concern over the purpose and goals of the STEP program voicing their anxiety over being able to function in a college environment upon release, much less complete a four year college program. One might conclude from this that STEP communicates this goal to the inmates also but fails to deal with their feelings about it. It is felt that the inmates have some awareness of appearing bright and intellectual when compared to other prisoners but fear the challenge and perhaps loss of self-esteem, when compared to average college students on campus. It was our impression that the inmates were bright and articulate and that a rather high degree of understanding of this type of prisoner together with sophistication in working with them is necessary to avoid being manipulated by them.

The question of length of the sentence of an inmate as a criteria for selection was explored. In the present group, projected release dates vary from a few months to several years. The inmates feel a minimum of one year in the program is necessary for any benefit to accrue. There were disparate opinions concerning length of program amongst STEP and Correctional staff. Initially, STEP perceived the program as directed at inmates with a short time until parole, the purpose being college entry. Correction Staff initially preferred it to be directed at lifers or long-term prisoners. Since the selection of students was left to STEP, short-termers were selected. As mentioned above, however, presently there are several members with from 3 - 7 years remaining on their sentences.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Department of Correction staff in their classification committee review inmates at time of entry into the institution and recommend men to STEP who have administrative and clinical approval. This group will comprise the pool from which STEP will screen and accept volunteers.

As vacancies occur, STEP will screen applicants from this pool, with STEP initiating the contact. This may offset the informal self-selection; however, we doubt if this can ever be fully controlled.

CURRICULUM OF STEP

At the present time the curriculum of the STEP program corresponds to the basic requirements of the Northeastern University's University College degree programs in its various schools. Courses offered are Introduction to Literature, Introduction to Earth Science and United States History. These are standard courses, structured by the syllabi of the University and taught in conformance to its policy. The STEP tutors are accredited to the Northeastern University faculty, the grades assigned the inmates are recorded, and undergraduate college credits given. However, there appears to be little formal contact between Northeastern and the STEP tutors by way of site visits, supervision or review. This relative autonomy has produced feelings in the Correctional staff that the grades assigned the inmates are not valid ones if the group were to be compared with student performance at a community campus. How much of this attitude is determined by the underlying feelings of the institutional staff toward the program is difficult to ascertain due to the lack of comparable data from community campuses.

The hours of the program are mornings from 8:30 - 12, Monday-Friday, and two afternoons a week. The mornings are devoted to class work, the two afternoons to discussion groups, visiting lecturers, individual counseling and tutorial work, and special interests such as drama classes or playwriting. Since the morning class time is excessive of the usual class hour allotted in community college programs, this permits the tutors to enrich their teaching by introducing more material than is usual to the course, such as visual aids, guest speakers, etc. It is the afternoon program that presents an area of conflict. The Correctional staff point out that there are three half days when the tutors are not present and the men, because they are assigned full time to STEP, have nothing to do. Institutional staff feel

the program should be half-time with the men assigned to prison work programs in the afternoon. The inmates state they need this time to study and prepare assignments and, as mentioned earlier, if assigned to a work program would "just lay around anyway." The institution staff feel the men do not use the three afternoons to study, but rather sit around and talk. It is important to STEP if it wishes to remain a "full time" program, that efforts be made to fill these afternoons on a regular basis. Perhaps special interest programs or directed study under the tutelage of the STEP staff, who may have to arrange their schedules to insure the presence of two tutors every afternoon. The inmates may also be given work assignments in the classroom area, maintenance, repair or redesign. Correctional staff feel the program as presently constituted creates an artificial existence for the men and develops a cliquish attitude in the students.

The source of this disagreement is the perception of the program; correctional staff see it as treatment, STEP as work. However, correctional staff point to the "no drop" policy of STEP as evidence that the men do not have to work to stay in the program. Since its inception, STEP has employed a policy of not dropping a student for failure to do his work. It is our feeling that this policy lends support to the correctional staff's argument. If STEP wishes to be full time, then it must discard its no drop policy and insist that the students perform. The no drop policy is artificial, it is not consistent with academic practice, and in the eyes of the inmates becomes a charade with little meaning other than the avoidance of boring, meaningless prison work programs. It is important here to distinguish the student who is working hard but

failing, due to an impoverished background, from the inmate who is failing because he is expending little effort and using STEP to manipulate his environment. The former should not be dropped, but given additional assistance; the latter should be dropped immediately since to keep him only rewards and thus reinforces his manipulative behavior, and in the long run, is a disservice to him. If grades become meaningful and flunking a reality, then the men will work harder and demonstrate to institution staff that study is indeed hard work.

Another option, one suggested by the inmates, is the addition of a fourth course. This course would be offered in the afternoon each day. This, too, would require a redeployment of STEP staff, but seems a viable alternative. It is our feeling that STEP should remain a full time program, but it should be just that. The assumption that this subject population is capable of independent, unsupervised (by STEP) study is again ascribing a middle class value system to these men. They require structure and supervision, or they will "sit around and talk."

The assigned readings (see Appendix B) conform to those required in most college level liberal arts programs. The tutors, all graduate students in Boston area universities, impressed us as being moderately conservative in their attitudes. There were no "flaming liberals" among them, as determined by our interview. Further, the correctional staff, at all levels, insisted that "no one preached revolution." This was an area of concern since the subjects for this program, for the most part, are anti-social or asocial by virtue of their mere presence in a prison. For this reason, caution must be employed in presenting "liberal" material, since it could be used by them as a rationalization for their feelings. With this group, balance in the curriculum is necessary with some conservative positions

presented for discussion to encourage them to consider all sides of every issue.

Recommendations:

That STEP be continued as a full time program with additional staff, or a redeployment of existing staff to provide coverage every work day.

That the "no drop" policy be discarded and the program conform to current academic practice to insure the students' work in-out. That STEP instill more balance in its curriculum consistent with a better understanding of the subject served.

Sources of Friction

The principle source of friction between STEP and the Department of Correction appears to be STEP's insistence on operating autonomously within the Correctional institutions. STEP feels this is a sine qua non for the effectiveness of their program. This insistence was stated at the outset in the belief that the inmates would not respond to any program they identified with the existing institutional structure and administration. The correctional officials see this as a major concern, since it is their feeling that the full resources of the institution are not used, nor have correctional staff been consulted frequently enough to verify or explain what the inmates tell the tutors. This absence of meaningful communication has led, and can continue to lead, to situations wherein the inmates manipulate the tutors' attitudes toward institutional staff. The correction staff feel this insistence on autonomy implies STEP's lack of confidence in the competence of the institutional staff and their resistance to be remotely identified with it, preferring to identify

themselves with the inmates. STEP believes this policy to be necessary to the development of a basic trust in the tutors by the inmates. It is difficult to imagine this policy being successful in a prison, since it assumes a high degree of mutual trust and confidence by both parties. If these are lacking, then problems inevitably will arise. Trust is earned; it can not be assumed. We do not feel it possible, and that it is unrealistic to expect, that a program can operate successfully within a host institution without some direct feedback and/or input from the host facility.

STEP, by its very nature, is different and set apart from the rest of the institution, and so will always retain a degree of autonomy. However, its autonomy contributes to its difficulties. If efforts were made to integrate it into the total institutional program, that is, serve as one important facet, its effectiveness might be enhanced. The inmate participants cannot be divorced from the institutional culture or social system. They are submerged in it. But to do this at this time would seriously harm STEP. Presently, its autonomy permits greater latitude in selecting tutors, fixing hours and salaries, flexibility in curriculum, selection of inmates and structuring of the relationship with inmates. Existing state personnel and budgetary constraints would interfere with these procedures. But to be autonomous does not mean to operate in a vacuum.

Another source of friction has been STEP's perception of their relationship with the inmates as being a highly confidential one. This is necessary to an effective counseling relationship under any circumstances. However, it implies that the counselor, or tutor in this instance, realizes that there are times when he must share confidential information. The

usual guideline followed is when not sharing the information would be harmful either to the inmate or to others, then it must be shared. While there is no suggestion that information of this type has been withheld, when dealing with this population the possibility is always present. The correctional staff are concerned about this possibility, and while no one expects or desires confidentiality to be breached in the routine interactions, they question whether the tutors would share information when they should. Again the need for closer coordination and communication is apparent. A basic concern here is the relative naivete of the tutors and their strong desire to help the inmates may lead them to identify too closely with the inmates.

However, STEP feels that close and regular communication between them and the correctional staff would be perceived by the inmates as evidence that the tutors were informing on them. We feel that there must be a regular interface for STEP and institutional staff wherein areas of mutual interest and concern may be presented and discussed. Attendance at classification meetings, staff conferences, pre-parole meetings may assist this end. In addition, regular meetings to discuss STEP's program and its relationship to the over-all institutional program should be instituted. Serious thought should be given to having a representative of the inmates participate in these meetings, in a non-voting capacity, if necessary, to provide their unique and valuable in-put. If our goal with these men is really rehabilitation and treatment and not punitive retaliation, then their contribution is necessary. This idea may be unsettling to many, but consider how appalled a university president would have been in 1960, if told that in ten years students would be voting members of his budget committee. The inmates' presence would also serve the purpose of allowing

them to monitor the communication between STEP and the institutional staff recognizing their basic distrust and suspiciousness of those who wish to help them to help themselves.

Recommendations:

That STEP and the Department of Corrections establish regular channels of communication. In establishing these, care should be given to not diminishing the effectiveness of STEP as a semi-autonomous program.

That wherever possible inmate participation in review, evaluation and planning for STEP be permitted.

That the area of confidentiality of material be covered in detail with STEP personnel so they do not perceive it as an "all or nothing" matter.

An area of concern to us was the involvement of STEP tutors in after-care planning and follow-up with the inmates after release. Interviews with parole officials indicated that STEP placed "no undue pressure" upon parole staff concerning the inmates, but they shared our concern that the potential was great for STEP having problems in the after-care area due to their lack of knowledge about the legal constraints imposed upon a parolee. The need for some training in this area is underscored.

In closing, no one interviewed felt that the STEP program should be discontinued. The correctional staff have a high regard for the STEP tutors, describing them as a fine group of bright young men. Concern was raised over the lack of communication between STEP and correctional staff. In addition, there were distorted perceptions of each other voiced by both partners. For the main part, these were stereotypic and seemed to be motivated more by feelings than by fact.

One high ranking official interviewed commented, "Who can quarrel with STEP; to improve rehabilitation is to be on the side of the angels." However, while STEP as a theoretical abstraction may be difficult to quarrel with, STEP, in practice, produced disagreement between those most involved - Department of Correction and STEP staff. The former has a legal mandate to house in secure custody and rehabilitate felons committed to them by the courts of the Commonwealth. The latter offer a service to assist the fulfillment of this mandate, but has no formal responsibility for it. STEP is an invited guest into a host institution. At times this relationship has been overlooked by both parties.

END