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A Performance Audit of the Utah State Correctional Facility: An Examination of Staffing, Culture, Safety, and Security

Nov. 14 , 2023

Introduction

Utah Code 64-13-6 outlines the duties of the Utah Department of Corrections (UDC) where UDC, among other responsibilities, shall:

- “...protect the public through institutional care and confinement and supervision in the community of offenders where appropriate...”
- “provide...program opportunities for offenders designed to reduce offenders' criminogenic and recidivism risk...”



Photo of Utah State Correctional Facility from UDC Website



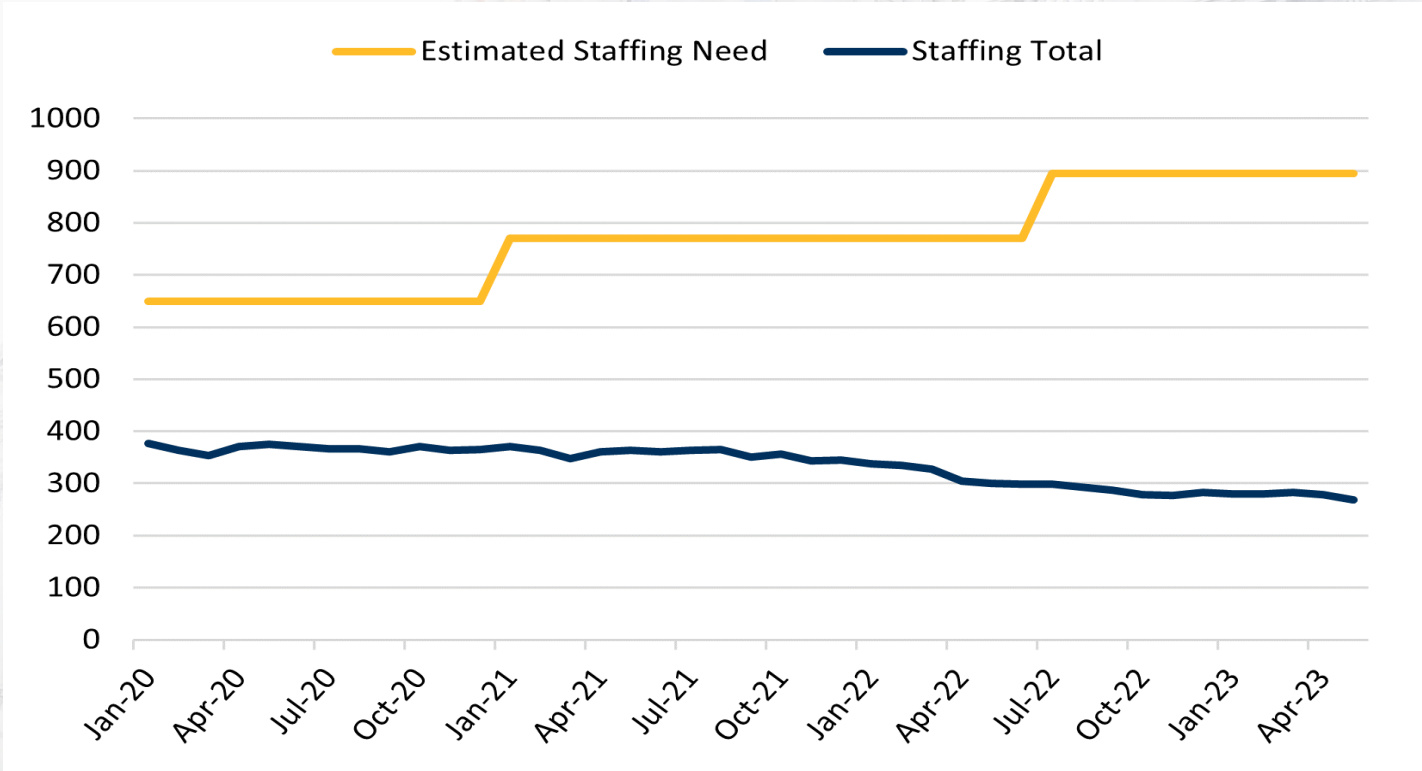


Chapter I

Acute Staffing Shortage at USCF Currently Undermines the Safety and Security of the Facility



- **Despite 2014 internal audit findings of recruitment and retention challenges, no major changes were made**
- **The Current Recruitment and Retention Approach Has Not Yielded Sufficient Staff**



Current Staffing Numbers Fall Far Short of full Staffing Needs for Safe and Secure Operations at USCF



An Increasing Prison Population is Beginning to Aggravate an Already Tenuous Staffing Crisis

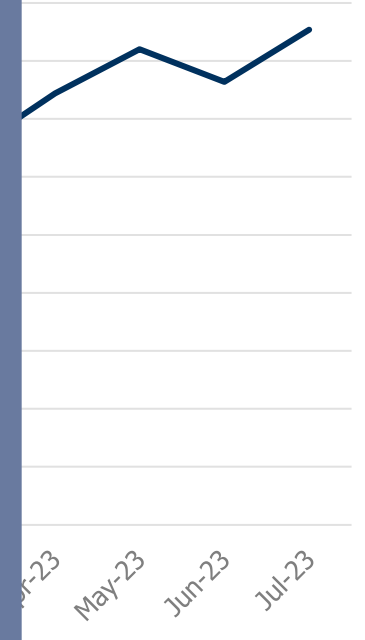
Maximum-Security Assault:

Funded Staffing

704



In the maximum-security building (Antelope), a single CO entered the highest-level security section, alone. He requested that all sub-day room doors in the section be open at the same time as he did a routine cell check. As he stepped into a sub-day room, an inmate who had not been properly returned to his cell was hiding in the shower of his sub-day room and assaulted the CO from behind. The inmate handcuffed the CO. No other officers were present to help, and there was no response for two minutes, well after the assault had progressed to life-threatening levels despite being visible on security cameras.



Opportunities Exist to Increase and Maintain Staffing Levels Needed for Safe and Secure Prison Operations

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Adequate Staffing



Retention



Demand for Staff



Recruitment





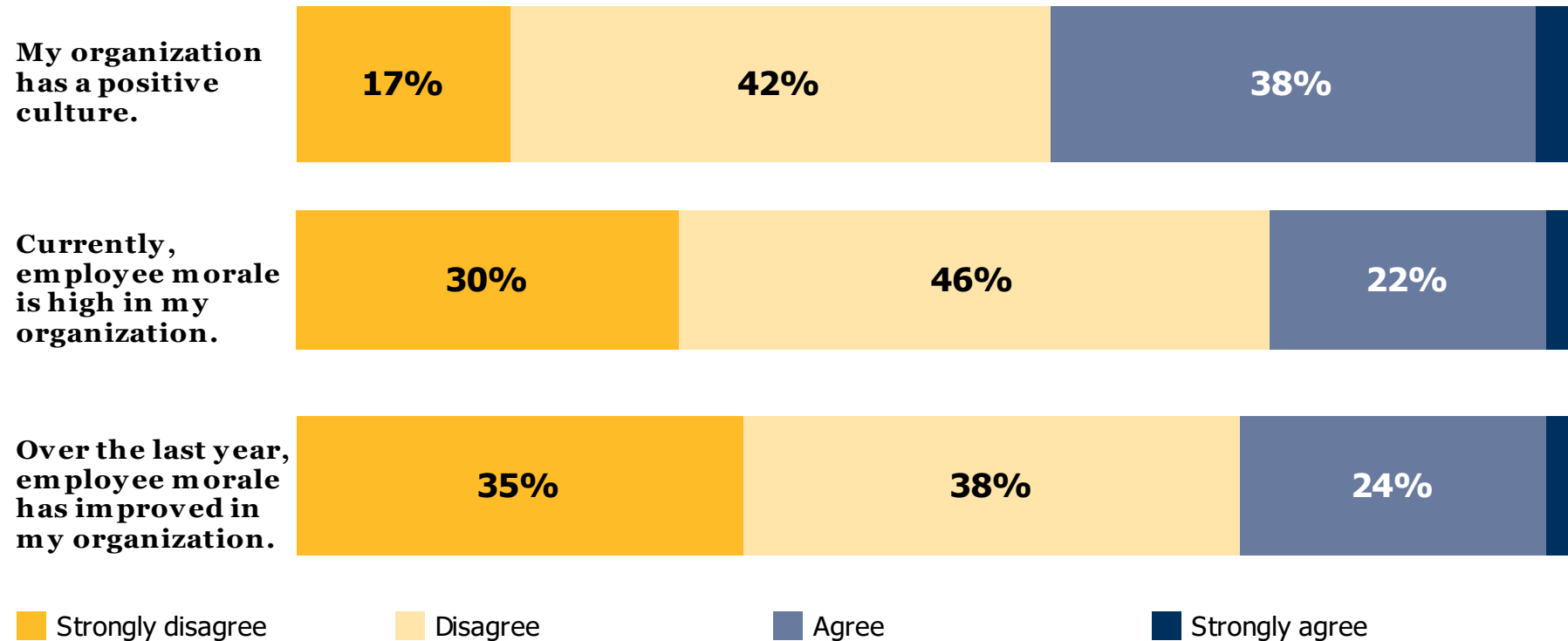
Chapter II

UDC Leadership Needs to Focus on and Improve Organizational Culture

Negative UDC culture has been developed over many years



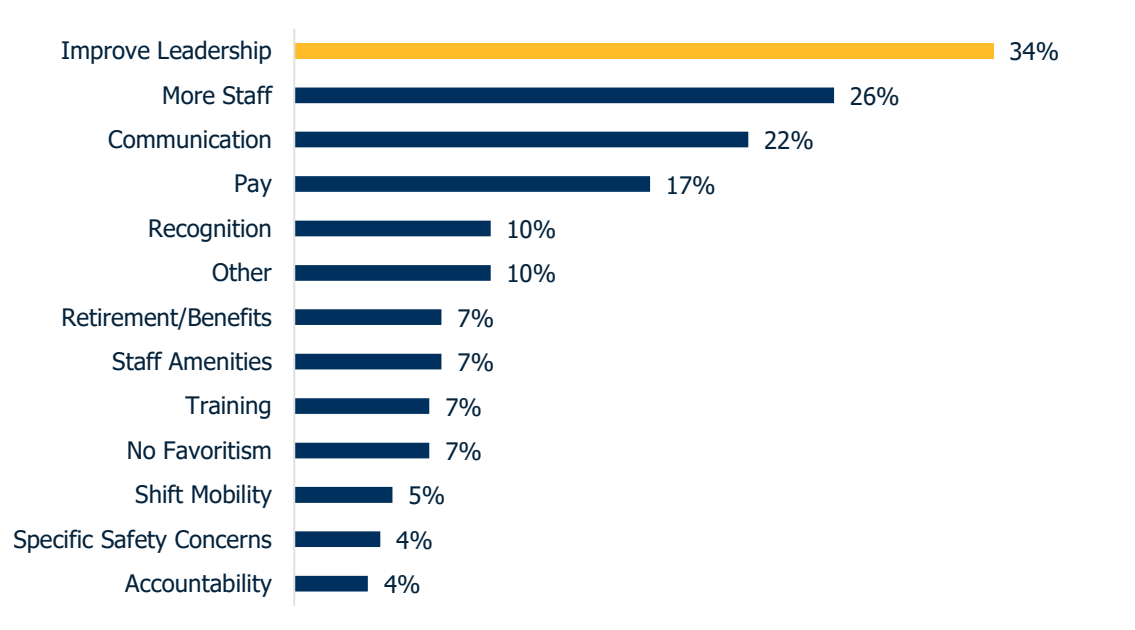
A negative culture exists at UDC



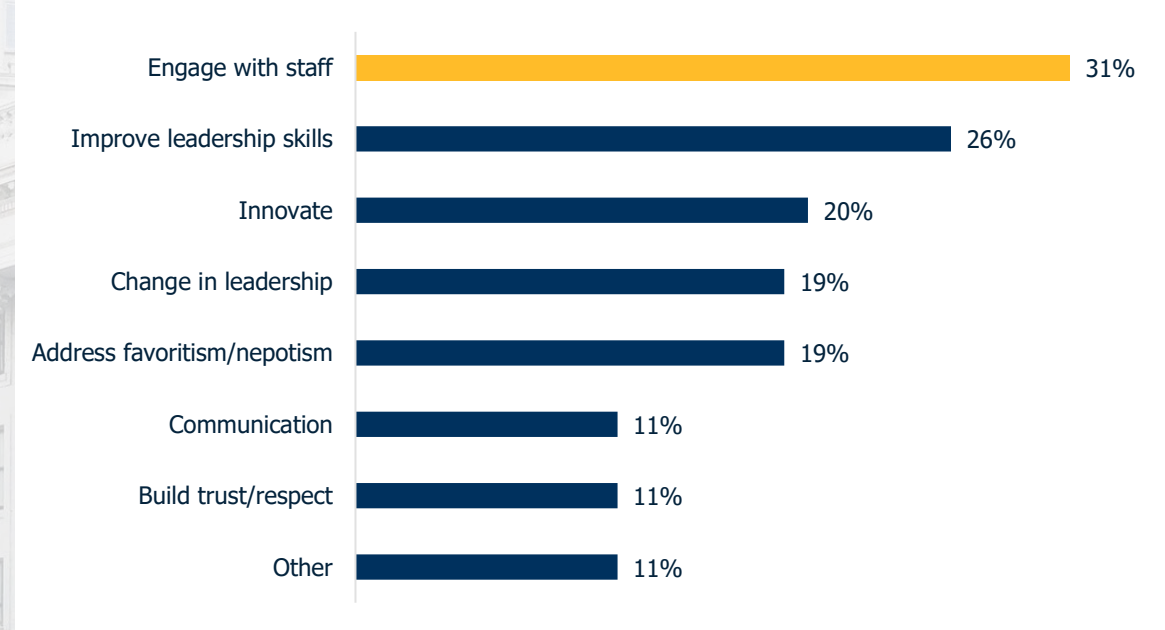
Many staff do not feel supported and lack trust in leadership



What can be done to improve job satisfaction and morale



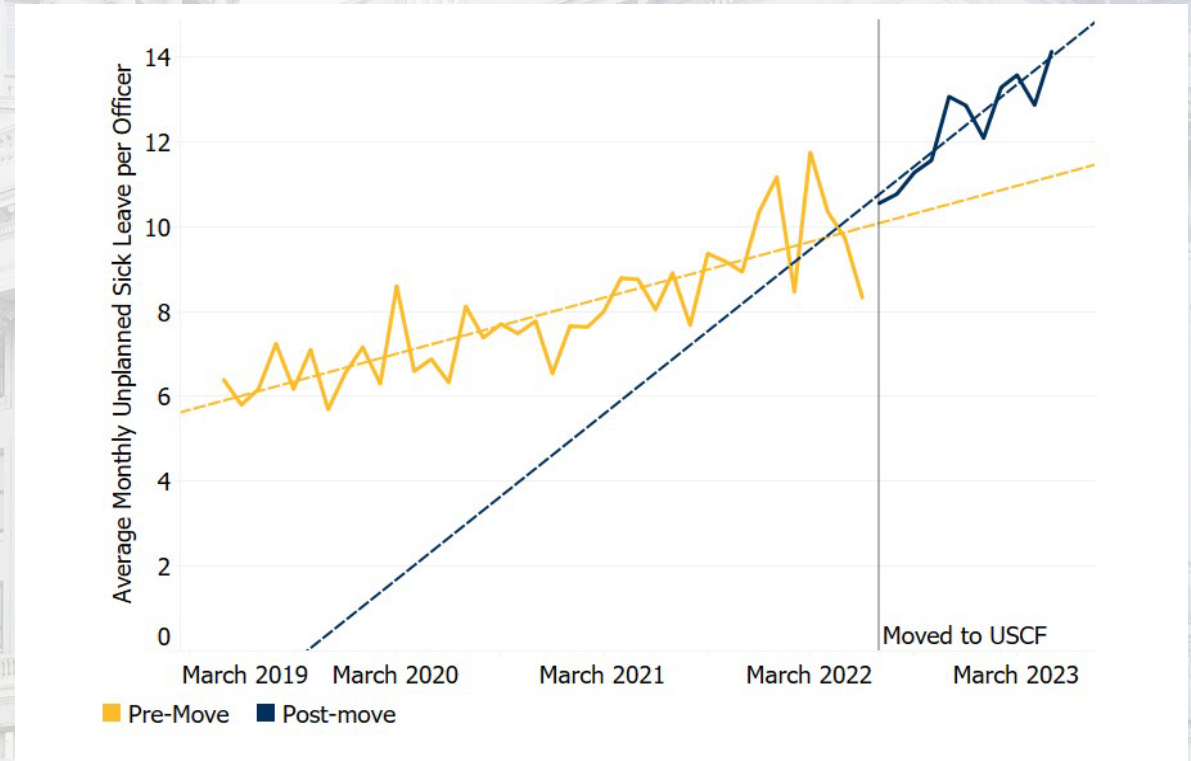
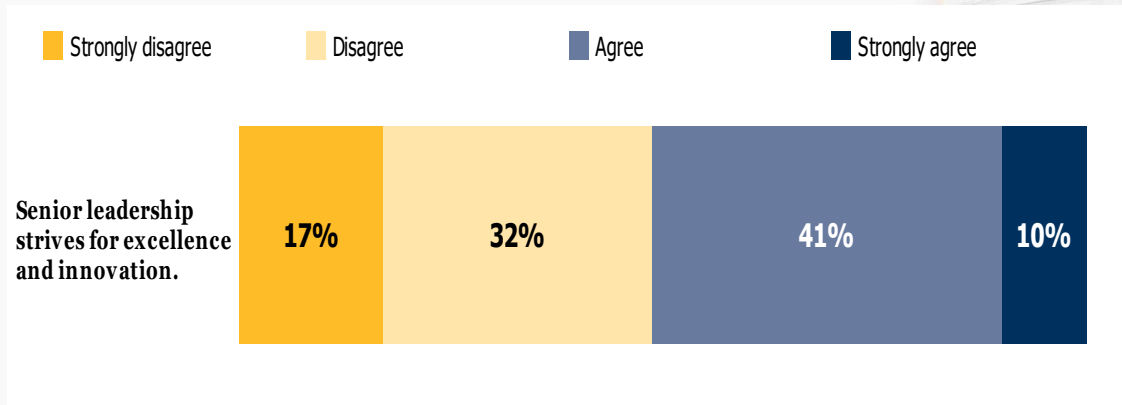
Ways to improve leadership



Status quo mindset leads to entrenched negative culture at UDC



UDC's Complacency in Addressing Sick Leave Usage Exhibits Status Quo Approach from UDC Management





UDC's Current Strategic Plan Lacks Focus on Safety and Security and Needs Revision and Improvement

The Strategic Plan of Washington State Corrections' lists "People's Safety" as a core value.

Washington State's Value:

"Corrections believes in creating an environment that values physical, mental, and emotional security and well-being. We honor those who advance safety for all."





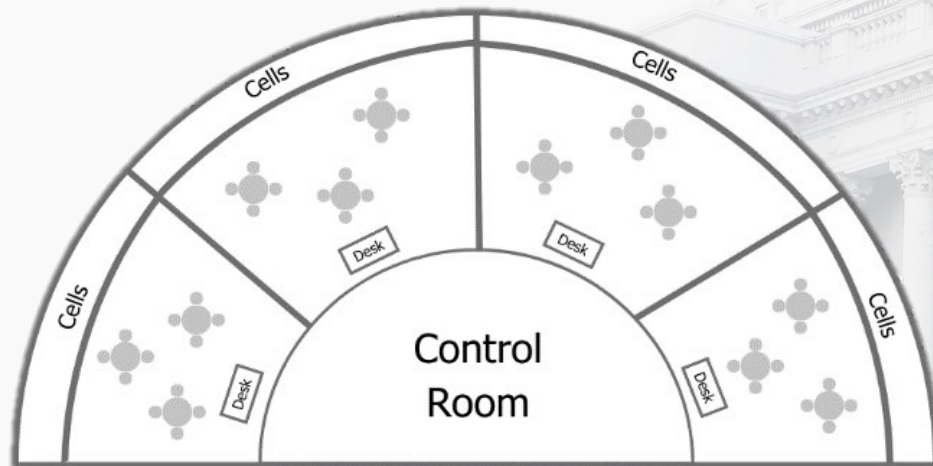
Chapter III

Shortsighted Decision Making Amplifies Design Change of USCF

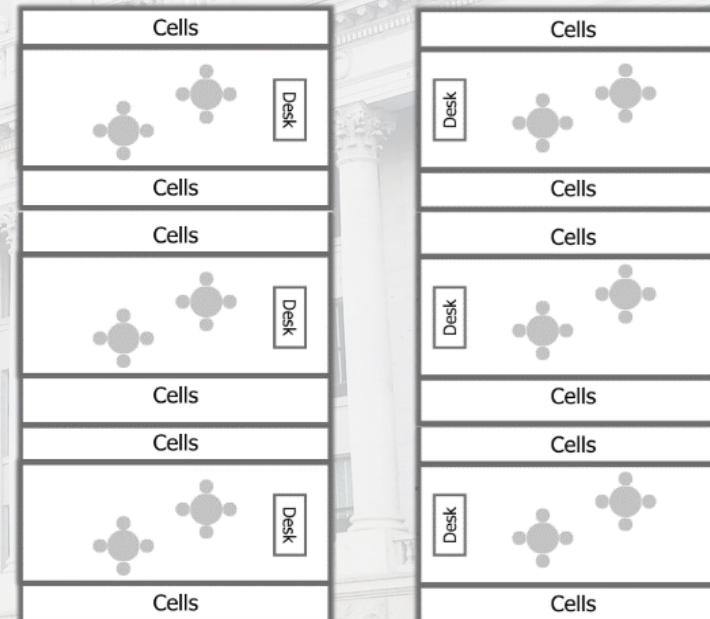
Designs for Direction Supervision Vary



Hub and Spoke Design



USCF's Rectangular Design



Rectangular Design Places Greater Weight on the Full Implementation of Direct Supervision

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Staffing Shortages Do Not Allow for Consistent Officer Presence, Increasing the Likelihood of Incidents at USCF

- Many housing unit officers watch over two sections at once.
- Housing unit officers are frequently called away from their sections, leaving inmates unsupervised for extended periods of time.
- Greater workloads for officers result in fewer interactions with inmates and less opportunities to build trust.
- Officers assigned to housing sections lacks consistency which does not allow for full continuity across shifts.



Questions?



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