



# **CALIFORNIA CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTION**

**WARDEN FERNANDO GONZALEZ  
ONE-YEAR AUDIT**

**OFFICE OF THE  
INSPECTOR GENERAL**

**STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

**MAY 2011**



June 1, 2011

Matthew L. Cate, Secretary  
California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation  
1515 S Street, Room 502 South  
Sacramento, California 95814


Dear Mr. Cate:

Enclosed is the Office of the Inspector General's audit report concerning the performance of Warden Fernando Gonzalez at California Correctional Institution (CCI). The purpose of the audit was to satisfy our statutory requirement to audit each warden one year after appointment.

The report concludes that Fernando Gonzalez successfully performed his job as warden until his retirement in December 2010. CCI employees we interviewed cited physical improvements to the institution's safety and security and staff accountability as hallmarks of his tenure.

If you have any questions concerning this report, please contact Bill Shepherd, Deputy Inspector General, In-Charge, Bureau of Audits, at (916) 830-3600.

Sincerely,

*for*   
BRUCE A. MONFROSS  
Inspector General (A)

cc: Michael Stainer, Warden (A), CCI  
Scott Kernan, Chief Deputy Secretary, Adult Operations, CDCR  
George Giurbino, Director (A), Adult Institutions, CDCR  
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## Results in Brief

### Warden Fernando Gonzalez

Office of the Inspector General (OIG) found that Warden Fernando Gonzalez has performed satisfactorily as warden at California Correctional Institution (CCI). Warden Gonzalez is a professional and knowledgeable leader who holds his staff members accountable and works to improve safety and security. We also found that under Warden Gonzalez's direction, the prison's operational areas of safety and security, inmate programming, and business operations are functioning at a satisfactory level.

We began our audit of Warden Gonzalez's performance by surveying a broad range of CCI employees, key stakeholders, and California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) executives. We analyzed all of the collected survey data and categorized it into four areas: safety and security, inmate programming (programs available to inmates), business operations, and employee-management relations. Our analysis showed that a high percentage of the prison's managers and CDCR's executives expressed very positive opinions about Warden Gonzalez's overall performance, as did most health care and non-custody staff members. In contrast, most of the custody staff members expressed unfavorable opinions about the warden's overall performance.

We followed our initial survey by visiting CCI in October 2010 to interview prison management team members and employees who manage key prison functions, as well as randomly selected employees from throughout the prison and inmate representatives. After conducting over 60 interviews, we found that interviewees commended the warden for his high level of professionalism, knowledge of departmental policies and procedures, proactive management style, and commitment to the prison's safety and security. However, many interviewees and survey respondents voiced concerns about the warden's perceived lack of approachability, and about employee disciplinary sanctions as reasons for CCI's low employee morale. Regardless, the warden's averaged overall rating was "very good."

#### CALIFORNIA CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTION FACTS AT A GLANCE

**Location:** Tehachapi, CA

**Opened:** 1933

**Mission:** Levels I, II, and IV (Low to Maximum Security), Reception Center, and Segregated Housing Units

**Inmate Population:** 5,937

**Designed Capacity:** 2,783 inmates

**Employees:** 2,118

**Budget:** \$202 million, FY 2010/11



California Correctional Institution  
Warden Fernando Gonzalez  
Photo: CDCR

Subsequent to our fieldwork at CCI, we learned that Warden Gonzalez retired at the end of December 2010. While many of the issues raised in this report pertain specifically to Warden Gonzalez's performance and leadership style, this evaluation will nonetheless benefit CDCR and the future CCI warden, since some of the issues examined in this report will also apply to the prison's next warden.

## One-Year Evaluation of Warden Fernando Gonzalez

California Penal Code section 6126(a)(2) requires the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) to audit each warden of an institution one year after his or her appointment. To satisfy this requirement, we evaluated Warden Fernando Gonzalez's performance at California Correctional Institution (CCI) since his appointment in September 2009.

### Background of Warden Gonzalez

Warden Gonzalez, who has over 29 years of correctional experience, began his CDCR career as a correctional officer in 1981 at California Men's Colony. He promoted to sergeant in 1986 and to lieutenant in 1990. In 1996, he was promoted to correctional captain. In 2005, he obtained a position as a correctional administrator for CCI. He became chief deputy warden at CCI in 2006, and was selected as acting warden in 2007. In September 2009, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger appointed him warden of CCI.

### Institution Overview

Located in Tehachapi, California, CCI opened in January 1933 to house female inmates. In 1952, CCI was closed due to an earthquake and then re-opened in 1954 as a prison for male inmates. CCI is one of 33 adult prisons operated by CDCR, and covers 1,650 acres. CCI's mission is to incarcerate and control felons, while providing the opportunity for meaningful



California Correctional Institution. Photo: CDCR

work, training, and other programs. Although designed to hold 2,783 male inmates, CCI housed 5,937 inmates, or 213 percent of its design capacity, as of August 31, 2010.

The institution is designated as a maximum security prison, and is separated into five independent facilities: Units I, II, III/Reception Center, IV-A, and IV-B. The units house a range of general population and sensitive-needs<sup>1</sup> inmates classified from level I (minimum security) to level IV (maximum security). Units I and II house level I to level II (medium security) sensitive-needs inmates. Unit III contains a reception center where the prison receives new inmates who must undergo classification assessments to determine their initial security level and either be endorsed to stay at CCI or sent to another prison. Units II, IV-A, and IV-B contain administrative segregation units, which are maximum security facilities specially designed to house disruptive or victimized

<sup>1</sup> Because of their crimes, notoriety, or gang affiliations, inmates placed on sensitive needs yards cannot mix with general population inmates.

inmates. Units IV-A and IV-B also contain security housing units designed to house inmates whose conduct endangers the safety of others or the security of the institution. Unit IV-B has an Outpatient Housing Unit, which houses inmates needing medical monitoring or isolation from the prison’s general population.

***Rehabilitation Programs***

CCI offers its inmates eight programs in vocational training and education. Vocational training includes courses in computer and network cabling, office services, word processing, air conditioning and refrigeration, automotive repair, welding, and building maintenance. Academic programs include adult basic education and General Educational Development (GED). In addition, the Prison Industry Authority (PIA) offers inmates work in manufacturing clothing or fabrics. CCI inmates have self-help programs available, such as Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, Purpose Driven Life, St. Vincent de Paul Society, Alternatives to Violence, and Incarcerated Veterans Group. The prison also offers Native American, Muslim, Jewish, Protestant, and Catholic religious programs.

***Budget and Staffing***

For fiscal year 2010-2011, CCI’s budget for institution and education operations was approximately \$174 million, plus \$27 million for medical, mental health, and dental operations. The table below compares CCI’s budgeted and filled positions as of June 30, 2010. The prison has 2,118 budgeted positions, of which 1,388 (or 66 percent) are custody positions. Overall, the prison filled 90 percent of its total budgeted positions.

*Table 1: Staffing Levels at California Correctional Institution*

<b>Position</b>	<b>Filled Positions</b>	<b>Budgeted Positions</b>	<b>Percent Filled</b>
Custody	1,293	1,388	93%
Education	33	74	45%
Medical	204	229	89%
Support	240	268	90%
Trades	134	143	94%
Management	12	16	75%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,916</b>	<b>2,118</b>	<b>90%</b>

*Source: California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, CompStat ending June 30, 2010. California Correctional Institution. Unaudited data.*

**Objectives, Scope, and Methodology**

To fulfill our objective of assessing the warden’s performance, we employed a three-part approach. First, we used surveys to elicit opinions and comments from employees, CDCR management team members, and other stakeholders. Next, we analyzed operational data maintained by CDCR by comparing it with the averages for like prisons<sup>2</sup> and for all prisons statewide. In addition, we reviewed relevant reports prepared by the CDCR or by other external agencies. Finally, we visited the prison, interviewed various

<sup>2</sup> Institutions with a similar mission (high security) include California State Prison - Corcoran, High Desert State Prison, Kern Valley State Prison, Pelican Bay State Prison, California State Prison - Sacramento, and Salinas Valley State Prison.

employees and representatives from the Men’s Advisory Council<sup>3</sup>, and followed up on noteworthy concerns identified from the surveys, operational data, or reports.

To understand how the employees and other stakeholders view the warden’s performance, we sent surveys to three distinct groups: CDCR and CCI managers, CCI employees, and key stakeholders outside of the CDCR. For the employee survey, we sent questionnaires to 240 randomly-selected prison employees and requested an anonymous response. The survey provides information about employees’ perceptions of the warden’s overall performance as well as information about specific operational areas at the prison: Safety and Security, Inmate Programming, Business Operations, and Employee-Management Relations.

To simplify the analysis of the survey results, we requested respondents to broadly classify their job positions. From this information, we grouped survey respondents into three employment categories: Custody, Health Care, and Other (which includes employees in education, plant operations, administration, and clerical positions). Then, to identify strong trends or patterns, we classified responses to our questions as either positive or negative. For example, if the respondent ‘agreed’ or ‘strongly agreed’ with a question, we classified it as positive, and if the respondent ‘disagreed’ or ‘strongly disagreed,’ we classified it as negative. We excluded passive responses such as “neutral” or “unknown.”

Our inspectors analyzed the responses to the surveys as well as operational data from CompStat (comparative statistics) maintained by CDCR. We also reviewed relevant reports related to the prison’s operations prepared by CDCR or by external agencies. In analyzing these sources, we looked for strong trends or patterns, either negative or positive, or other issues that would help us identify topics for further review and evaluation during our on-site visit to CCI.

During our visit to CCI, we gained insight into the warden’s work environment. We used information gathered from our analysis of statistical information and from employee surveys to identify potential issues for review. Then we interviewed certain key employees and other employees selected at random. Our interviews involved employees in various operational areas throughout the prison, including:

- Business services
- Educational programs
- Employee/labor relations
- Health care
- Housing units
- Human resources
- Information technology
- Inmate appeals
- Inmate assignments
- Inmate case records
- In-service training
- Investigative services
- Litigation
- Personnel assignment
- Plant operations
- Receiving and release
- Use-of-force review
- Warehouse management

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<sup>3</sup> The Men’s Advisory Council is an inmate committee formed to advise and communicate with the warden and other prison employees on matters of common interest and concern to the general inmate population.



We performed a site visit during the week of October 25, 2010, and interviewed 63 individuals throughout the prison to describe and rate the warden's performance. These individuals included custody employees, executive management, health care professionals, administrative employees, and maintenance employees. We also interviewed three Men's Advisory Councils.

Warden Gonzalez retired from state service in December 2010.

## Review Results

We found that responding stakeholders, including CDCR management, prison managers, and employees rate the warden, on average, as “satisfactory” to “very good” overall. In the four categories of safety and security, inmate programming, business operations, and employee-management relations, the majority of respondents provided positive answers. However, there was a significant number of negative responses in the inmate programming, business operations, and employee-management categories. The main problem facing the warden is low employee morale, which is a result of issues both within and beyond the warden’s control. Survey and interview results revealed that some CCI employees believe the warden is not approachable and is too strong a disciplinarian, which has contributed to the decrease in morale.

However, when we asked staff members and stakeholders whether the prison was operating better, worse, or the same since Warden Gonzalez arrived, 53 percent reported that CCI is operating better while only 16 percent responded that operations were worse.

### Category 1: Safety and Security

The California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation’s primary mission is to enhance public safety through safe and secure incarceration of offenders.

The importance of safety and security is epitomized in CDCR’s requirement that custodial security and the safety of staff, inmates, and the public must take precedence over all other considerations in the operation of CDCR programs and activities. As shown in Table 2 above, 81 percent of the employees’ responses about the prison’s safety and security were positive. We also heard favorable opinions from the employees we interviewed during our field visit.

*Table 2: Safety and Security – Employee Survey Results*

Respondents	Positive	Negative
Custody	77%	23%
Health Care	97%	3%
Admin, Plant Operations, and Other	83%	17%
<b>Weighted Average</b>	<b>81%</b>	<b>19%</b>

*Source: OIG survey of CCI employees. See Appendix for details.*

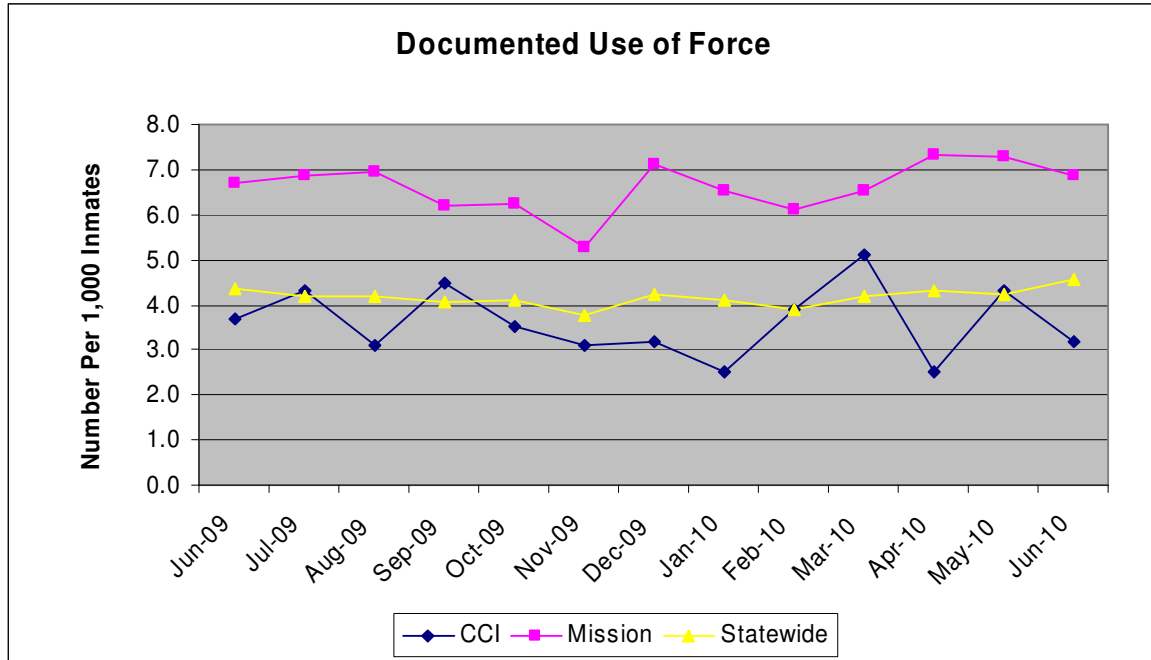
After considering the interviews in conjunction with comments from the warden, results from our employee survey, and CDCR data on use of force incidents, we noted three areas for discussion: Use of Force, April 2008 Incident, and Survey and Interview Results.

#### *Use of Force*

The number of incidents in which force is necessary to subdue an attacker, overcome resistance, effect custody, or gain compliance with a lawful order is a measure of inmate behavior and of the prison’s ability to safely incarcerate inmates. To assess CCI’s use of force, we reviewed CDCR’s use of force data during the 13-month period from June 1, 2009, through June 30, 2010. As shown in Chart 1 below, CCI’s rates of documented use of force incidents are comparable to the statewide average and well below institutions with a similar mission. The use of force coordinator at CCI told us that custody officers are verbalizing their expectations and the consequences for non-compliance to inmates,

rather than immediately spraying oleoresin capsicum (commonly known as pepper spray) to obtain compliance. According to CCI's acting public information officer, the lower use of force level may be a result of their programs, the consistent enforcement of guidelines, employees' ability to interact and communicate with inmates, and CCI's attempts to de-escalate situations rather than using force.

**Chart 1**



Source: California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, CompStat ending June 30, 2010. California Correctional Institution. Unaudited data.

***April 2008 Incident***

In a maximum security facility at CCI on April 3, 2008, four CCI custody employees were attacked by two inmates carrying weapons. The inmates rushed from the prison law library into the Unit IV-A program office and attacked two correctional sergeants and two correctional officers. The inmates were eventually subdued. The officers received multiple lacerations and puncture wounds while fighting off the attack, and were transported to the area hospital for medical attention. As a result of this fierce assault, the department implemented a statewide lockdown until a security assessment was completed.

We asked Warden Gonzalez what security precautions were implemented in response to this violent attack. The warden said that within a couple of months he brought in all



**Figure 1 – Modified Library Layout.**  
Photo: OIG October 2010

stakeholders, including officers, to determine what security enhancements could be made. Since the weapons used by the inmates were stored in the library, the layout of the library was modified to increase camera visibility (Figure 1), and an officer was assigned to the



**Figure 2 – Metal Grate in Program Office.**  
**Photo: OIG October 2010**

area to direct and restrict inmate access. A metal grate door was installed just inside the program office door (Figure 2), and alarm systems were placed on the program office wall. In addition, a chain link fence was installed outside the program office to further restrict access. Warden Gonzalez stated that because CDCR streamlined everything needed to make these changes, CCI was able to quickly obtain emergency funds and other necessary resources, such as engineers, to implement the security modifications. The warden stated that in the future he hopes to eliminate a structure in front of the program office which blocks the view to the inmate yard, and install additional cameras and monitors.

See Appendix B for an illustration of the security modifications to the library and program office.

### ***Survey and Interview Results***

The survey questions related to safety and security generated an 81 percent positive response – a higher proportion of positive responses than in any other operational area. However, when employees were asked if safety and security had improved due to the warden, only 48 percent responded positively. In particular, only 36 percent of custody employees indicated safety and security had improved since the warden’s appointment.

To explore this further, we conducted 63 interviews with management and employees, asking them to identify their greatest concerns related to safety and security. The majority of respondents responded positively about the prison’s safety and security, and some mentioned that Warden Gonzalez has enforced the verification of identification cards at all appropriate checkpoints. However, a few expressed concern that non-custody employees have a lax approach to safety, and one respondent stated that custody employees need to be more committed to protecting non-custody team members.

After our interviews regarding the warden’s contribution to safety and security, we concluded that although the majority of employees surveyed did not cite specific improvements since the warden’s appointment, they feel the safety and security of the prison remains effective.

## Category 2: Inmate Programming

Research shows that inmate programs can reduce the likelihood that offenders will commit new crimes and return to prison. In fact, a 2006 Washington State Institute for Public Policy study of adult

*Table 3: Inmate Programming – Employee Survey Results*

Respondents	Positive	Negative
Custody	45%	55%
Health Care	100%	0%
Admin, Plant Operations, and Other	59%	41%
<b>Weighted Average</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>48%</b>

*Source: OIG survey of CCI employees. See Appendix for details.*

basic and vocational education programs found that such programs reduce inmate recidivism by an average of 5.1 percent and 12.6 percent, respectively.<sup>4</sup> The department recognizes these benefits and provides academic and vocational training and a number of self-help and self-improvement services to inmates, including substance abuse programs. An added benefit is that programming provides inmates with a more structured day and less idle time. Generally, inmates with a structured day tend to be easier to manage. As a result, the prison's safety and security can be affected by the amount of available inmate programming.

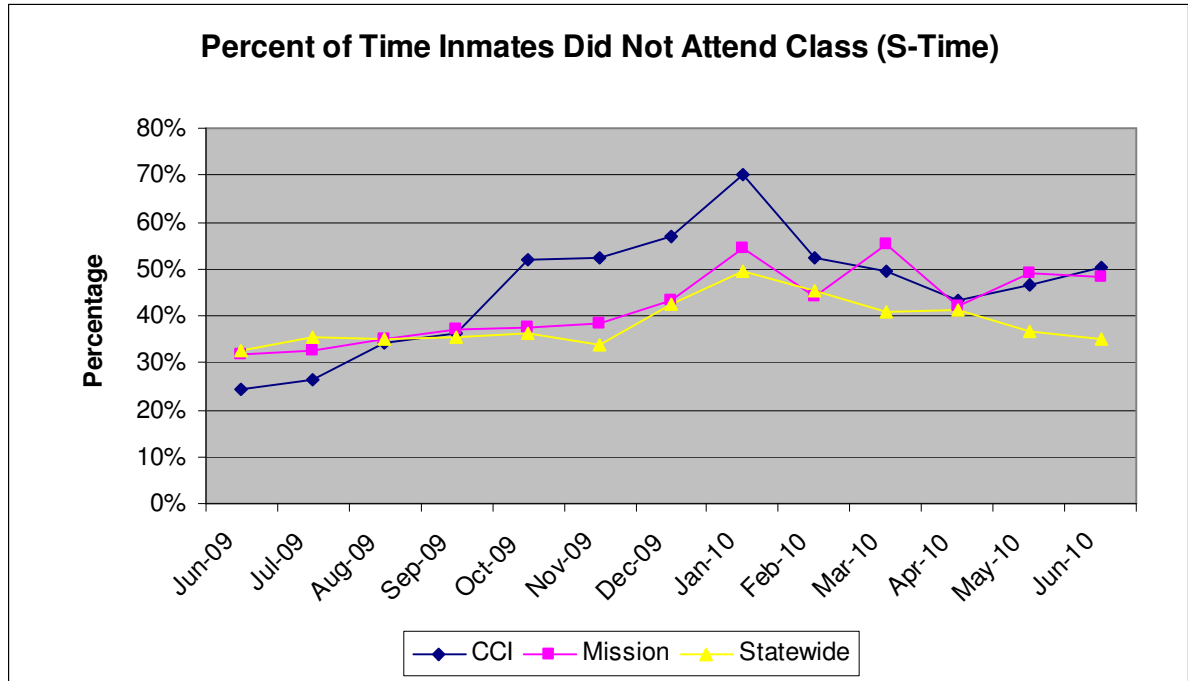
Overall, as shown in Table 3 above, only 52 percent of the employees' responses to questions regarding inmate programming were favorable. Further, the employee survey specifically asked employees whether inmate programming has improved since the warden's appointment. Only 26 percent responded positively. Analysis of the information gathered from CDCR statistics, employee survey results, and employee interviews revealed two areas for more detailed comment: Classroom Attendance and Programming Opportunities.

### *Classroom Attendance*

CDCR establishes the amount of time that assigned inmates must attend academic and vocational training classes each day. Since administrators must track inmate class absences, each prison can be evaluated on how effectively it complies with school-day attendance requirements. CDCR refers to absences caused by circumstances beyond the inmate's control as "S-time." Such absences may result from security-related needs such as lockdowns, modified programming, investigations, and inmate medical appointments. Education-related absences, such as teachers calling in sick, also contribute to S-time. Prisons with high or increasing patterns of S-time indicate that prison management may be using their academic and vocational programs ineffectively.

<sup>4</sup> Washington State Institute for Public Policy, "Evidence-Based Adult Corrections Programs: What Works and What Does Not," January 2006.

**Chart 3**



Source: California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, CompStat ending June 30, 2010. California Correctional Institution. Unaudited data.

Our analysis of CDCR data in Chart 3 found the average S-time at CCI from October 2009 to February 2010 was higher than both the statewide and mission-specific averages. When interviewed, the Supervisor of Correctional Education acknowledged that the challenges in the education program are a result of CDCR and state budget issues, and not caused by the warden. CCI’s acting public information officer told us that the high S-time during this time period was caused by the following:

- Furloughs and Layoffs – Due to state budget cuts, CCI education employees received layoff notices. Further, education employees who received layoff notices needed to use their accrued furlough time prior to separation from the state. Classes were not held if instructors were not available to teach (i.e. on furlough leave or laid off), resulting in high S-time.
- Change in the education models – An education employee noted that the new academic modules ordered by CDCR are essentially serving the same number of inmates with fewer teachers. Before the academic module changed, the inmate to teacher ratio was 54 to 1, and now it is up to 120 to 1. As a result of the higher inmate to teacher ratios, a teacher’s absence or class cancellation results in greater S-time hours.

### *Programming Opportunities*

Results of our survey showed a 52 percent positive response on the topic of inmate programming, and two employees interviewed during our visit said Warden Gonzalez supports inmate programming to the best of his ability. Examples of inmate programming include academic and vocational classes, as well as jobs in the institution to which inmates may be assigned. For statistical reporting purposes, the department discusses these academic, vocational, and job opportunities collectively as “work assignments.” Between December 2009 and January 2010, the percentage of filled work assignments at CCI fell from 90 to 67, a decrease of 23 percent. According to CCI’s public information officer, changes in academic programs at the prison eliminated 436 student openings, thereby contributing to this decrease in total work assignments.

Since March 2010, however, CCI has experienced better success at filling its inmate work assignments. According to CDCR data for June 2010, CCI filled 94 percent of its 2,085 available work assignments, a figure that compares favorably to the 81 percent statewide average for prisons with similar missions.

The PIA administrator told us that prior to Warden Gonzalez’s arrival, inmates had difficulty getting to PIA work assignments due to lockdowns. The PIA administrator said Warden Gonzalez has improved programming by allowing inmates to attend PIA work assignments, even during lockdowns. In fact, between August 2009 and June 2010, CCI maintained a consistently high percentage (95 to 100 percent) of filled PIA assignments. As of June 2010, 99 percent of CCI’s PIA assignments were filled (255 of 257 assignments), a percentage higher than any other prison with a similar mission.

CCI continues to offer inmates other programs, such as self-help groups Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous. Like academic and vocational education, these programs provide structure and direction for inmates.

### **Category 3: Business Operations**

A prison's business operations include budget planning and control; personnel administration; accounting and procurement services; employee training and development; and facility maintenance and operations. It is important for the warden to be knowledgeable in these areas to effectively perform his or her duties.

*Table 4: Business Operations – Employee Survey Results*

<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Negative</b>
Custody	46%	54%
Health Care	69%	31%
Admin, Plant Operations, and Other	58%	42%
<b>Weighted Average</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>47%</b>

*Source: OIG survey of CCI employees. See Appendix for details.*

As Table 4 shows, 53 percent of the prison employees’ responses were positive about the prison’s business operations and 47 percent were negative. Our analysis of the information gathered from CDCR's data, employee survey responses, and employee interviews uncovered three areas for more detailed comment: Road Maintenance, Administrative Segregation Unit, and Overtime Usage.

## ***Road Maintenance***

We received multiple survey responses and interview comments that the roads and parking lots at CCI are in extremely poor condition, and sometimes cause damage to employees' vehicles (see Figures 3, 4, and 5). One employee colorfully described the roads as, "The white knuckle drive on institutional grounds is a vehicular head-on dodge ball event." Another staff member informed us that the poor condition of parking lots caused some employees to trip and fall, resulting in scrapes and bruises. Although multiple employees complained about the road conditions, many conceded the warden could not control this problem since CDCR controls funding for major repairs.



**Figure 3 – CCI Road Conditions: Front Entrance.  
Photo: OIG October 2010**



**Figures 4 and 5 – CCI Road Conditions: Main Access Road.  
Photo: OIG October 2010**

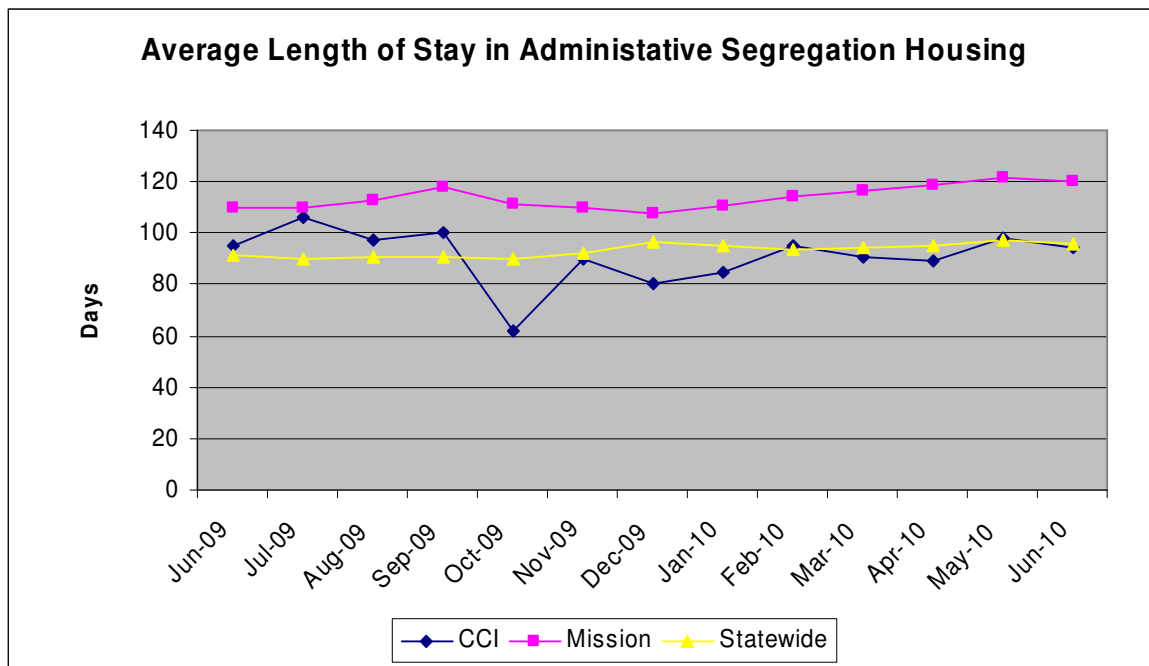
When we asked Warden Gonzalez about the road conditions, he stated that he submitted multiple requests to headquarters for funding to fix the roads, but has not received approval. CCI is currently making its third request for special funding. According to the warden, the repairs will cost approximately \$4 million. Warden Gonzalez used patches as a temporary road fix, but explained that the patches may ultimately cause more damage because in cold weather ice expands underneath the patches and "pops" each patch slightly out and above the asphalt. When snow falls, the snow plow catches the protruding patch and scrapes it off the road, removing the patch and potentially damaging the road around it.



## Administrative Segregation Unit

Inmates who are disruptive to other inmates or victimized by other inmates are temporarily segregated from the inmate population by being placed in housing areas known as Administrative Segregation Units (ASU) while employees investigate the level of threat to the prison or inmate. ASU housing areas are more expensive to operate than general population housing units because they have increased security requirements. Effectively managing the time it takes the prison to investigate the threat level can significantly reduce the average length of stay and, in turn, reduce the cost of housing inmates in ASU. As a result, the average length of stay in ASU is both an indicator of how well a prison manages its resources and of how well it protects inmates' due process rights. Our review of CDCR's data in Chart 2 revealed that the average ASU length of stay at CCI was comparable to statewide averages and lower than the averages of other prisons with similar missions.

Chart 2



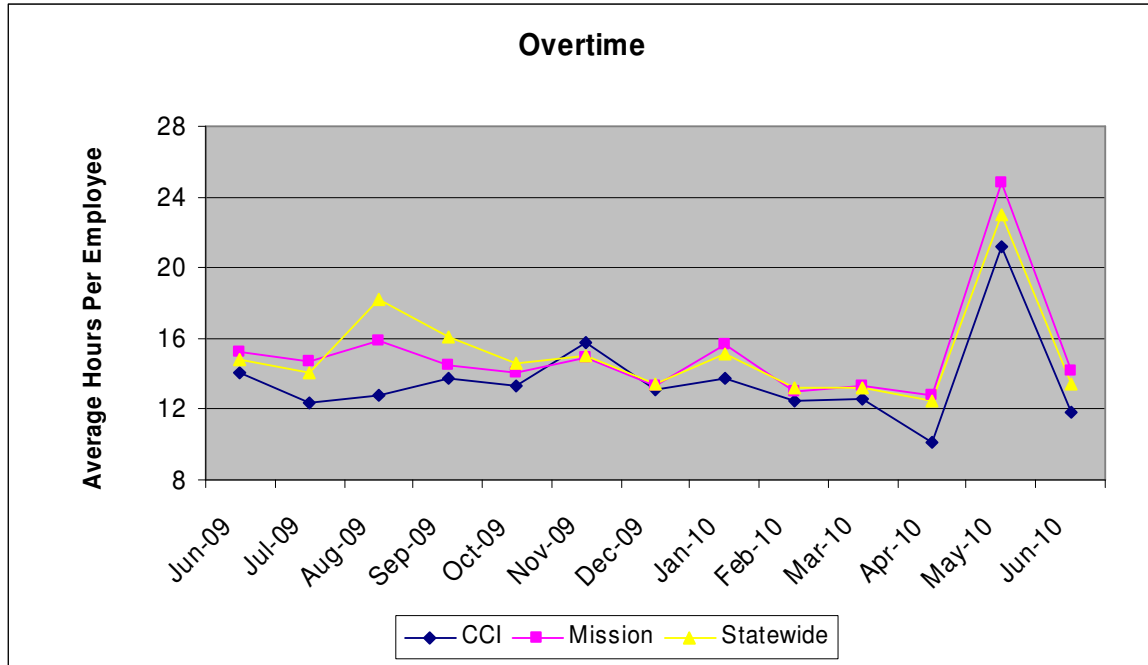
Source: California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, CompStat ending June 30, 2010. California Correctional Institution. Unaudited data.

## Overtime Usage

The control of overtime is one indicator of a warden's ability to manage a prison's overall operations because it requires the warden to ensure that good budgeting, planning, and personnel administration practices are in place. To assess CCI's overtime usage, we compared its overtime to both the statewide average for all prisons, as well as to the average for similar prisons. As displayed in Chart 4, overtime usage at CCI was consistently lower than the average overtime for prisons statewide and for similar prisons. However, we also noted a significant increase in overtime for the month of May 2010. When we asked CCI's acting public information officer about the high overtime

hours in May, the officer explained May is a double pay-period reporting month. Bargaining unit 6 employees are paid every four weeks. As a result, two pay periods fall in the same calendar month each year and thus inflate employees' average hours of overtime for that month.

**Chart 4**



Source: California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, CompStat ending June 30, 2010. California Correctional Institution. Unaudited data.

### Category 4: Employee-Management Relations

According to the U.S. Department of Justice, successful leaders “invite communication, listen well, and prove themselves

**Table 5: Employee-Management Relations – Employee Survey Results**

Respondents	Positive	Negative
Custody	40%	60%
Health Care	90%	10%
Admin, Plant Operations, and Other	78%	22%
<b>Weighted Average</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>45%</b>

Source: OIG survey of CCI employees. See Appendix for details.

trustworthy by exhibiting rational, caring, and predictable behavior in their interpersonal relationships.”<sup>5</sup> The warden’s ability to communicate plays an important role in employee relations and is vital in implementing CDCR’s vision and mission at each prison. Not only must the warden interact with employees at all levels and communicate instructions and directions clearly and effectively, but the warden must also communicate effectively with CDCR headquarters and the surrounding community.

When we analyzed employees’ survey responses to various questions related to employee-management relations, we found a significant disparity between the average

<sup>5</sup> *Correctional Leadership Competencies for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Corrections (December 2006).

ratings given by custody officers and those given by the two other respondent groups. As shown in Table 5 above, only 40 percent of the responses we received from custody staff members were favorable, while 90 and 78 percent of the responses from non-custody groups were favorable. Because the custody staff members represent the largest population of survey respondents, the total average survey response on employee-management relations was only 55 percent positive.

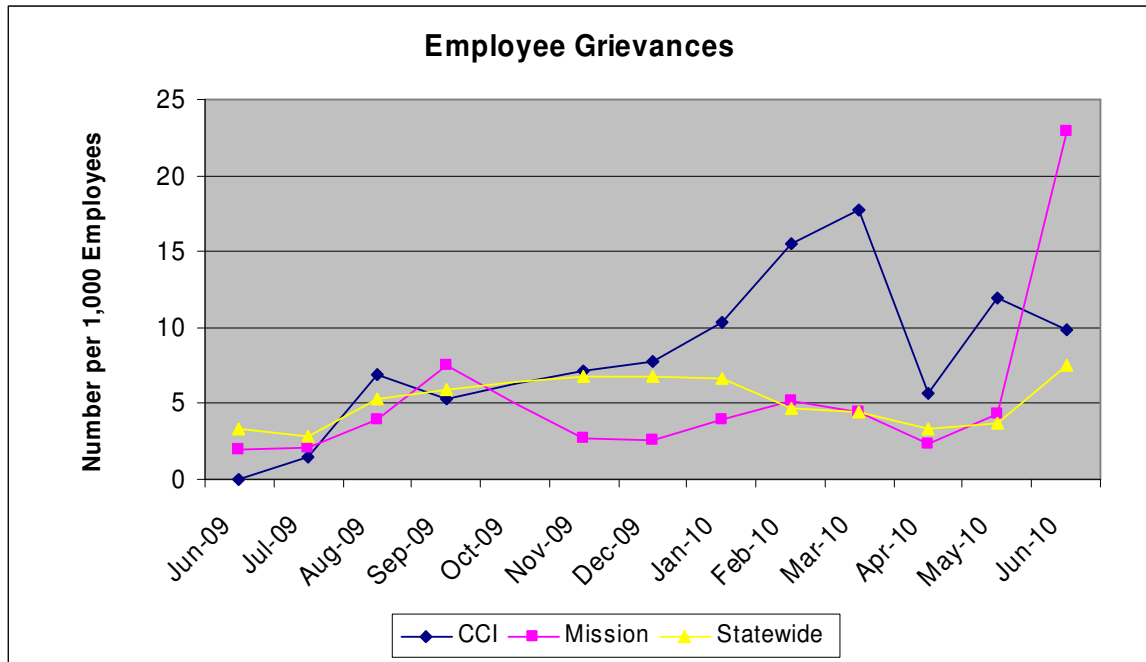
While the opinions of employees and other stakeholders provide one measure of the warden's effect on employee-management relations, another measure can be found in the number of grievances filed by the prison's employees. Our analysis of employees' responses to our surveys and statistics on employee grievances, as well as our interviews with the warden's management team and other employees, identified three topics for further consideration: Employee Grievances, Employee Morale, and Survey and Interview Comments.

### *Employee Grievances*

All employees have the right to redress their grievances through an established CDCR procedure. For example, employees may use the grievance process to file complaints regarding general workplace conditions and disputes. In October 2009, a paid state holiday was revoked by the California legislature, and many employees filed grievances in response. The number of grievances in that month escalated to 70 per 1,000 employees at CCI. As a result, we excluded October 2009 to more clearly identify trends in CCI employee grievances.

When we reviewed the grievance statistics in Chart 5, we noticed that grievance levels during the period from August 2009 to May 2010 (except for September 2009) were higher for CCI than for both the statewide and mission-specific prisons. Further, we noted the number of grievances increased every month from September 2009 to March 2010. CCI's public information officer attributed the increase to executive orders issued by the Governor adversely affecting state employees' compensation. However, employee grievances at CCI were significantly higher than comparable institutions which also were affected by the Governor's orders.

**Chart 5**



Source: California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, CompStat ending June 30, 2010. California Correctional Institution. October 2009 data excluded (see above for explanation). Unaudited data.

### ***Employee Morale***

We received many responses and comments from the surveys and interviews expressing that CCI has low employee morale. One factor contributing to low morale is the effect on employee finances caused by the state’s employee furlough program, which cut salaries by approximately 14 percent. In addition, CDCR cut its own spending by three percent by identifying “non-critical” posts to remain vacant and redirecting job assignments for correctional officers, sergeants, and lieutenants. We were told by management and rank-and-file employees that the warden is addressing the budget constraints as best he can; however, state budget objectives are generally outside of the warden’s control. With this perspective, we identified two factors affecting morale over which the warden has some level of control.

One factor contributing to employee morale is the warden’s approachability. As previously mentioned, we found a significant disparity between ratings given by custody officers and those given by non-custody respondents. Specifically, only 11 percent of custody respondents gave a positive response when asked if employee-management relations had improved since the warden’s appointment, while the majority of responses from non-custody groups were favorable. When asked if the warden welcomes feedback, including criticism from employees, only 32 percent of the custody respondents gave a positive response. During interviews, 35 of 63 CCI employees (55 percent) mentioned that the warden could be more personable or approachable. In particular, several employees told us that during annual employee training, the warden makes employees feel uncomfortable and embarrassed by asking them to identify a specific citation from the department operations manual for a given rule. Although some employees

acknowledged the value of this class exercise, other respondents said it made the warden appear arrogant and unapproachable. To increase his approachability, employees suggested the warden could engage in more “small talk,” use positive reinforcement, and be more empathetic with employees.

The warden’s implementation of disciplinary action was another factor mentioned regarding employee morale. In the survey, only 23 percent of custody respondents gave a positive response when asked whether the employee investigation and disciplinary process is fair, effective, and timely. During interviews, 11 of 63 employees (17 percent) responded negatively to the warden’s implementation of employee discipline. Many said the warden did not consider mitigating factors when determining penalties for misconduct, or that he always assessed the maximum disciplinary penalty. However, 6 respondents (10 percent) admitted that although most employees were not happy about the warden’s employee discipline practices, the disciplinary actions were justified, and some suggested that the increase in employee accountability has improved CCI’s safety and security. In addition, the Special Assistant Inspector General from the Office of the Inspector General, who monitors of CCI’s disciplinary actions, told us that the warden’s disciplinary actions were within departmental guidelines.

When we spoke to the warden about some employees’ perceptions, he was not surprised. He said that he is committed to changing the perception that he is not approachable, and understands that he needs to extend himself and interact with employees on a more personal basis. The warden believes he is changing employees’ perception of his approachability little by little, and said, “I try to tell them – *You* make me look good.” The warden added, “I have a lot of jewels everywhere.” We also asked the warden why some employees would perceive him as a harsh disciplinarian. The warden responded that the CDCR employee discipline matrix, which standardizes disciplinary sanctions, was implemented at the same time he began his CCI employment. As a result, his use of the employee discipline matrix, as mandated by CDCR, led employees to believe he was a strict disciplinarian. The warden told us that when determining a disciplinary sanction, he starts in the middle of the disciplinary matrix range and then adds or subtracts, depending upon aggravating or mitigating factors. He added that he deliberates over these cases and considers his actions taken on past discipline cases to be fair. The warden concluded by telling us, “If I lose sleep over anything, it’s those sanctions. I know I am impacting their family.”

### ***Survey and Interview Comments***

During our interviews, we asked employees to identify accomplishments the warden has made since his appointment. Although many custody employees we interviewed did not cite any specific accomplishments, several employees recognized the warden for his level of professionalism, knowledge of departmental policies and procedures, and focus on safety and security of the institution. Representatives from two of three Men’s Advisory Councils we interviewed also recognized Warden Gonzalez’s level of professionalism and proactive management style.

In addition, four CDCR officials and nineteen CCI managers who responded to our survey rated Warden Gonzalez favorably for his management abilities. Our survey asked the officials and managers to consider the warden’s performance in six

*Table 6: Rating of Warden’s Management Skills and Qualities*

Category	Rating
Personal Characteristics/Traits	Very Good
Relationships with Others	Very Good
Leadership	Very Good
Communication	Very Good
Decision Making	Very Good
Organization/Planning	Very Good

*Source: OIG survey of CDCR and CCI management.*

management skills and qualities and to rate the performance as either unacceptable, improvement needed, satisfactory, very good, or outstanding. As shown in Table 6, the survey results indicate that Warden Gonzalez is performing at a very good level in all of the surveyed management categories.

Written comments from the surveys support the warden’s overall performance rating. CCI management team members commented that the warden demonstrates a high standard of professional conduct, is very knowledgeable of operating procedures, has improved security awareness, and is equitable to all employees.

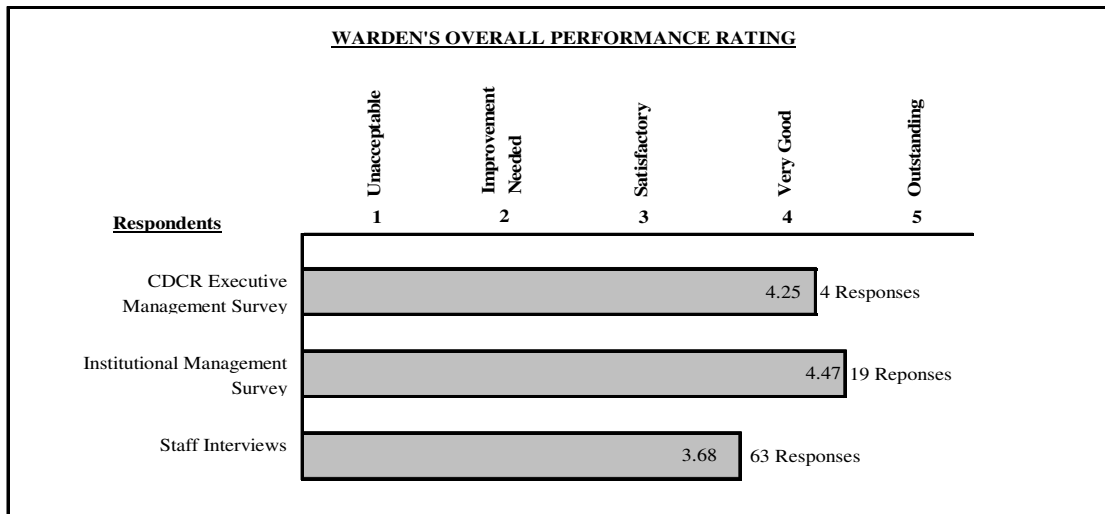
Employees we interviewed complimented the warden by indicating that he is very professional, treats all employees equally, holds employees accountable, gets along well with his management team, is knowledgeable, and is very active in his role as warden.

## Overall Summary

In our employee survey we asked, “Considering all institutional challenges, how would you rate the warden’s performance?” Overall, only 48 percent of all employees responding gave a positive rating of either “very good” or “outstanding.” However, when we separated the survey results into the three groups of employees surveyed (custody, health care, and other), we found notable variances in opinion. While only 31 percent of custody respondents gave Warden Gonzalez a positive rating, 100 percent of health care respondents and 68 percent of other respondents rated Warden Gonzalez with a positive response. Similarly, when we analyzed the employees’ responses to the general questions at the end of each of the four operational area survey categories, we found that opinions varied between custody employees and non-custody employees. Specifically, when we asked employees if safety and security, inmate programming, business operations, or employee-management relations had improved since the warden’s appointment, the custody staff members responding to our survey gave the warden lower ratings than either of the non-custody groups.

In addition to our survey of the four key areas identified above, our assessment of the warden’s performance also included an overall performance rating. We based the rating on survey responses from CDCR officials, CCI managers, and from interviews we conducted with CCI employees during our site visit. As shown in Chart 6, those individuals rated Warden Gonzalez’s overall performance as very good.

**Chart 6**



Source: *OIG survey of CDCR management, CCI management, and CCI employee interviews.*

While only four people from CDCR’s executive management team responded to our survey regarding the warden’s performance, they gave high scores indicating that they believe the warden is doing a very good job overall. Similarly, the 19 prison managers rated the warden’s overall performance very good. Of the 63 interviews we conducted with CCI employees, the scores ranged from unacceptable to outstanding, but averaged a very good overall performance rating. Fifty-three of 63 employees interviewed, or 84 percent, believe that Warden Gonzalez is performing at a satisfactory level or above.

In conclusion, we found that Safety and Security, Inmate Programming, and Business Operations to be operating at a satisfactory level in those areas within the warden's control. Nevertheless, improvements can be made. For example, in the area of Safety and Security, the warden may want to promote a higher level of safety consciousness on the part of non-custody employees while encouraging custody employees to be more aware and protective of non-custody team members. In the areas of Business Operations and Inmate Programming, the warden should continue efforts to obtain funding to repair CCI's roads and to preserve current inmate programming opportunities.



# Appendix A

## Employee Survey Results

To prepare for our site visit to CCI, we randomly selected 240 of the prison's employees and sent them a survey. The survey provides information about employees' perceptions of the warden's overall performance as well as information about specific operational areas at the prison: Safety and Security, Inmate Programming, Business Operations, and Employee-Management Relations. Eighty-nine CCI employees responded to our survey—a 37 percent response rate. To simplify the analysis of the survey results, we grouped survey respondents by category and identified response trends. We did not, however, ask for the employee's name as we wanted their responses to be anonymous.

Specifically, we grouped the respondents into three employment categories: Custody, Health Care, and Other (which includes employees in education, plant operations, administration, and clerical positions). Then, to identify strong trends or patterns, we classified the responses to questions as either positive or negative. For example, if the respondent "agreed" or "strongly agreed" with the question, we classified it as positive. If the respondent "disagreed" or "strongly disagreed" with the question, we classified it as negative. Passive responses were not included. If employees responded that they were "neutral" or responded "unknown," we excluded their response.

Results are reported in the table on the following page.

**Appendix: Compilation of Institutional Employee Survey Responses - CCI**

Operational Area/Question	Respondents' Employment Category						Total Responses			
	Custody		Health Care		Other					
	Pos	Neg	Pos	Neg	Pos	Neg	Pos	(%)	Neg	(%)
<b>Safety and Security</b>										
1. The institution is meeting its safety and security mission.	39	9	11	1	20	0	70	88%	10	12%
2. Employees effectively respond to emergencies.	50	1	13	0	24	0	87	99%	1	1%
3. You are issued or have access to all safety equipment you need.	50	1	12	1	23	2	85	96%	4	4%
4. You receive all required safety training.	47	4	13	0	25	0	85	96%	4	4%
5. The CDC-115 inmate disciplinary process modifies inmate misbehavior.	25	26	7	0	9	9	41	54%	35	46%
6. The CDC-602 inmate appeal process provides inmates an effective method for airing their grievances.	41	10	13	0	14	7	68	80%	17	20%
7. Safety and Security has improved since the warden's appointment.	17	30	6	0	11	7	34	48%	37	52%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>269</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>470</b>		<b>108</b>	
<i>Percent of Respondents by Category</i>	<i>77%</i>	<i>23%</i>	<i>97%</i>	<i>3%</i>	<i>83%</i>	<i>17%</i>	<i>81%</i>		<i>19%</i>	
<b>Inmate Programming</b>										
8. The institution is meeting its inmate programming mission.	27	15	6	0	10	3	43	70%	18	30%
9. The inmate assignment process places the right inmate into the right rehabilitative program.	23	19	4	0	9	5	36	60%	24	40%
10. Inmate programming is adequate for the number of inmates at the institution who would benefit from the education or work experience.	19	26	4	0	6	6	29	48%	32	52%
11. Inmate programming has improved since the warden's appointment.	7	33	3	0	4	6	14	26%	39	74%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>122</b>		<b>113</b>	
<i>Percent of Respondents by Category</i>	<i>45%</i>	<i>55%</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>0%</i>	<i>59%</i>	<i>41%</i>	<i>52%</i>		<i>48%</i>	
<b>Business Operations</b>										
12. Plant operations employees are able to meet maintenance and repair needs in your assigned area.	21	26	9	4	11	13	41	49%	43	51%
13. Your assigned area has enough employees to get all of the required work done.	21	28	6	7	11	14	38	44%	49	56%
14. Your work area operates without waste of resources.	32	17	10	2	21	4	63	73%	23	27%
15. Business operations have improved since the warden's appointment.	8	26	4	0	11	8	23	40%	34	60%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>165</b>		<b>149</b>	
<i>Percent of Respondents by Category</i>	<i>46%</i>	<i>54%</i>	<i>69%</i>	<i>31%</i>	<i>58%</i>	<i>42%</i>	<i>53%</i>		<i>47%</i>	
<b>Employee-Management Relations</b>										
16. The warden is knowledgeable about the day to day operations in your work area.	23	23	3	1	11	6	37	55%	30	45%
17. The warden welcomes feedback, including criticism from employees.	15	32	6	0	14	3	35	50%	35	50%
18. The warden does not abuse his or her power or authority.	21	25	7	0	17	1	45	63%	26	37%
19. The warden works effectively with the local bargaining unit representatives.	14	27	3	0	5	3	22	42%	30	58%
20. The warden is ethical, professional, and motivated.	28	19	7	0	20	1	55	73%	20	27%
21. The warden is in control of the institution.	34	16	8	0	19	2	61	77%	18	23%
22. The management team keeps employees informed about relevant issues.	15	31	7	2	17	6	39	50%	39	50%
23. The employee investigation/disciplinary process is fair, effective, and timely.	9	31	6	1	12	4	27	43%	36	57%
24. The employee grievance process is responsive to employee complaints, is fair in its application, and does not result in retaliation.	17	22	6	2	11	5	34	54%	29	46%
25. Employee-management relations have improved since the warden's appointment.	5	40	4	0	9	7	18	28%	47	72%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>181</b>	<b>266</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>373</b>		<b>310</b>	
<i>Percent of Respondents by Category</i>	<i>40%</i>	<i>60%</i>	<i>90%</i>	<i>10%</i>	<i>78%</i>	<i>22%</i>	<i>55%</i>		<i>45%</i>	
<b>Overall Warden Rating</b>										
26. Considering all institutional challenges, how would you rate the warden's performance?	15	33	8	0	13	6	36	48%	39	52%
<i>Percent of Respondents by Category</i>	<i>31%</i>	<i>69%</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>0%</i>	<i>68%</i>	<i>32%</i>	<i>48%</i>		<i>52%</i>	

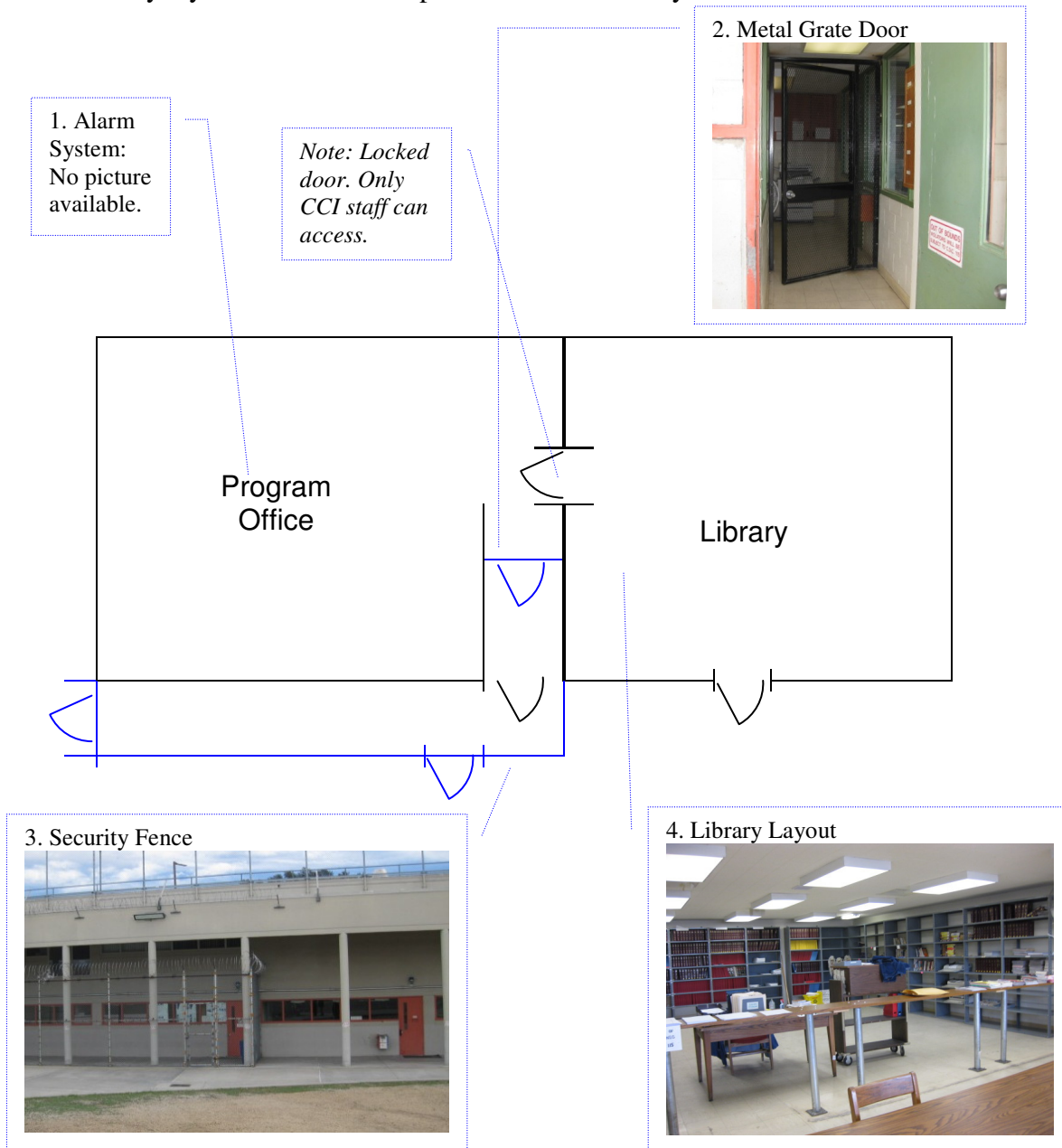
Source: OIG, Institutional Employee Survey Results for CCI

# Appendix B

## Security Modifications to Program Office and Library

In April 2008, four CCI employees were attacked by two inmates with weapons. As a result of this assault, Warden Gonzalez implemented the following security measures:

1. Alarm systems on program office wall
2. Metal grate door between program office front entrance and office
3. Security fence between the program office and library front entrances
4. Library layout modified to improve camera visibility



# **California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation's Response**

## OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

P.O. Box 942883  
Sacramento, CA 94283-0001



May 17, 2011

Mr. Bruce Monfross  
Inspector General (A)  
Office of the Inspector General  
P.O. Box 348780  
Sacramento, CA 95834-8780

Dear Mr. Monfross:

We are pleased to submit this response to your draft report entitled *California Correctional Institution (CCI), Warden Fernando Gonzalez, One-Year Audit*.

We appreciate your acknowledgement of Warden Gonzalez's participation and support in inmate programming and the consistently low overtime usage at CCI. The California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) concurs with the Office of the Inspector General's (OIG) findings that the safety and security, inmate programming, and business operations at CCI are functioning at an overall satisfactory level. This is due in part to Warden Gonzalez's leadership, professionalism, and many years of dedicated to service to CDCR.

We would like to thank the OIG for the opportunity to provide comment on this report. If you have any questions or concerns, please call my office at (916) 323-6001.

Sincerely,

SCOTT KERNAN  
Undersecretary, Operations