

**DELAWARE STATE
RACIAL JUSTICE IMPROVEMENT PROJECT:
IMPLICIT BIAS IN THE PROBATION
VIOLATION PROCESS
FINAL EVALUATION FINDINGS**



PREPARED FOR:

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Introduction and Background

In 2010, the State of Delaware began to plan and implement a series of reforms within its probation and parole system to reduce the disproportionate number of people of color being violated. To this end, the Delaware Department of Correction (DOC) began a course of reforms to address the racial disparity in probation violations.

Most notably, the DOC implemented a mechanism to manage and track probation violations within the *Delaware Automated Correction System* (DACS), the Department's offender information management system, and the type of sanctions that are imposed on probationers as a result of violations. Other reform efforts created to further this cause included:

- ❖ Implementation of implicit bias and bias-free decision making training for DOC officers and managers;
- ❖ Collaboration with the Court Services and Offender Services Agency (CSOSA) regarding modification to the case management system, modeled in part on CSOSA's system;
- ❖ Implementation of a graduated sanctions protocol; and
- ❖ Training on the graduated sanctions protocol.

Some of the key objectives of this project included:

- ❖ Leveraging existing DACS functions and processes to include better tracking of demographic indicators associated with violations, sanctions and outcomes;
- ❖ Providing probation officers with convenient tools and information to make objective and informed decisions;
- ❖ Providing a systematic guideline for imposing sanctions to offenders when completing a violation report; and
- ❖ Creating the ability to generate statistical reporting on key indicators including gender, race, violation(s), level of violation, sanctions imposed and severity.

To accomplish this, the Department modified the DACS. These changes permitted users to utilize existing additional functions within DACS to track and report information about probationers.

The following adjustments were developed in DACS to support the above objectives:

- ❖ Modification of the existing violation report to include graduated sanctions. The graduated sanctions system will recommend to the probation officer a list of possible sanctions based on pre-defined criteria, including current level of supervision, severity of the violation and number of previous violations;

- ❖ Modification of the existing reporting systems to include demographic information, such as race, gender and lead charge;
- ❖ Modification of the existing violation report to include the recommended level of supervision on the printed reports; and
- ❖ Modification of the List of Probation Violation Report, List of Progress Reports and List of Administrative Warrants excel downloads to include the case closing method.

The implementation of these functions provided the Department of Corrections with a tool to better manage its offender population and enable the implementation of operational efficiencies. Furthermore, these changes gave probation officers a guideline that drives the sanctions based on predefined, objective criteria, thereby reducing the danger of implicit bias influencing probation violation decisions.

In this evaluation, we sought to understand two primary areas: probation officer perceptions of the reforms and the number of probation violations filed by race. In assess both, we utilized data collected before and after the reforms, thus providing pre- and post-reform data.

Methods

Probation Officer Perceptions

Prior to the implementation of the new DACS graduated sanctions system, ten state probation officers were interviewed using an open-ended questionnaire. The officers represented all three Delaware districts (Sussex, Kent, and New Castle Counties). Probation officers were selected to participate by their supervisor and oversaw levels, 2, 3, and 4 caseloads. The average tenure of the interviewees was 10 years, 11 months with a range of 1 year 10 months to 18 years of services. The following table provides an overview of the sample:

Table 1. Number of interview participants in each county by supervision level.

	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	TOTAL
Kent County	1	1	1	3
New Castle County	1	1	2	4
Sussex County	1	1	1	3
TOTAL	3	3	4	10

Each interview was conducted by phone and lasted roughly 30-45 minutes. Responses were recorded at the time of the interview and later consolidated into one transcript. Interviewee remarks were coded and analyzed to determine patterns and trends in the data.

Please see Appendix A for a copy of the interview protocol.

After the implementation of the graduated sanctions protocol, the new DACS recording system and the implicit bias training, a random sample of probation officers were asked to participate in an online survey about their perceptions of the new graduated sanctions and DACS systems. The questionnaire consisted of 10 Likert-scale questions and one yes/no question about the officers' experience and perception of the new system.

Please see Appendix B for a copy of the survey.

Thirty-two probation officers participated in the survey. Table 2 provides an overview of the number of responding officers by level of case supervision.

Table 2. Number of survey respondents by supervision level.

Supervision Level	# of Officers
Level 2	7
Level 3	12
Multiple levels	5
Supervisor	3
Administration	1
Unknown	4

Participating officers had a mean tenure of 10 years 3 months of service, with a range of 6 months to 26 years.

Violations of Probation

To determine whether the reforms had an actual impact on the racial disparity in number of probation violations, the Delaware Department of Corrections collected archival data from the DACS. These data represented the number of Blacks and Whites (and a small "Other" category) served violations of probation (VOP) in relation to their percent of the general probationer population.

The initial batch of data was violations of probation from June 1, 2011 through February 28, 2012, prior to the implementation of the reforms. The post-reform probation violation data covered the time period July 1, 2013 through December 1, 2013.

Results

Probation Officer Perceptions

Pre-Reform

All interviewed probation officers indicated that they used graduated sanctions regularly and believed that the system helped in their supervision. In particular, the officers like the flexibility of the system offers in tailoring their supervision efforts to individual probationers. Without this flexibility, most officers felt that their options in working with their probationers would be greatly reduced.

Officers also noted that their sanctions were always recorded in their DACS notes and then outlined in their violation reports, when appropriate. Most interviewees spoke of the need to provide a historical overview of the case for the judge as the primary reason for including the information in their reports. Others spoke of a desire to justify their violation request to the judge by describing the efforts already made on behalf of the probationer.

The officers interviewed mostly stated that they anticipated the new automated DACS recording system will be a positive improvement in the graduated sanctions process. As the primary benefits, interviewees cited the ability to easily review cases and access updates in real time for probationers as the primary benefits.

Several probation officers expressed concern about the ease of use of the new automated system. While most officers expressed an appreciation for what the Department of Parole and Probation was attempting to accomplish by automating the sanctions system, many stated that there would be a learning curve in its implementation and hoped that the Department had training designed to ease officers into the new system.

Other officers were concerned that the new requirements would actually be more work for the officers, and that management would not take that into consideration when designing and executing the system. There was some apprehension that the needs of the officers will take a back seat to the needs of management.

Another concern mentioned by two officers was that officers would be held to a specific range of sanction options for particular violations, instead of being permitted the flexibility they have now. One officer stated that limiting options to drop-down boxes would eliminate the officers' ability to tailor sanctions to each probationer. Another officer indicated that being limited to a specific set of options would decrease her/his rapport with probationers, as well as introduce a "cookie-cutter" approach to supervision.

In the interviews, there was a tendency for officers who have more experience to be more skeptical about the new system, and for less-experienced officers to be more accepting of the proposed changes.

Post-Reform

Probation officers completed an online survey after the reforms to assess their perceptions and experiences with the graduated sanctions systems and the DACS modifications. Surprisingly, officer impressions of the modifications did not vary much from the pre-reform interviews conducted, and results to the survey were similar to the interview findings. Officers tended to agree that the DACS system was helpful and beneficial to their jobs, but were less likely to agree that the graduated sanctions modifications made their jobs easier or that the new protocol was helpful to them in their jobs.

Responses to each of the survey questions, along with the mean for each response, can be found in Table 3. The original five-point rating scale¹ was collapsed into three points: Strongly Disagree/Disagree; Neither Agree nor Disagree; and Strongly Agree/Agree.

Table 3. Survey responses to the post-reform questionnaire.

	N	Strongly Disagree/ Disagree (n/%)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (n/%)	Strongly Agree/ Agree (n/%)	Mean
The graduated sanctions protocol is an improvement in probation/parole supervision.	31	7/22.6	11/35.5	13/42.0	3.19
The graduated sanctions protocol provides greater flexibility in my supervision work.	31	9/29.1	10/32.3	12/38.7	3.16
The graduated sanctions protocol makes my job easier.	31	12/38.7	11/35.5	8/25.9	2.77
The graduated sanctions portion of DACS makes my job easier.	31	13/42.0	7/22.6	11/35.5	3.00
The graduated sanctions system is helpful to me in my job.	31	4/12.9	12/38.7	15/48.4	3.42
I am glad that the Department switched to the graduated sanctions protocol.	31	9/29.0	15/48.4	7/22.6	2.84

¹ Where 1 = Strongly Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree; 4 = Agree; and 5 = Strongly agree

	N	Strongly Disagree/ Disagree (n/%)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (n/%)	Strongly Agree/ Agree (n/%)	Mean
I am glad that the Department modified DACS to include graduated sanctions	31	6/19.4	12/38.7	13/41.9	3.26
Entering information into DACS is easy.	31	1/3.2	7/22.6	23/74.2	3.90
Generating reports from DACS is easy.	30	0	5/16.7	25/83.3	3.97
DACS increases efficiency in my job.	31	1/3.2	3/9.7	27/87.1	4.23

It should be noted that, for many questionnaire items, the majority of responses fall into the “Neither Agree nor Disagree” category. Generally respondents use this category if they fall into one of the following groups:

- They have had mixed results in using the new system;
- They are neutral on the system; or
- They have not used the system and, therefore, cannot rate it.

It is likely that respondents in this evaluation fell into the first two categories, as only officers who were familiar with the system were asked to participate in the survey. Further investigation is warranted to better understand this phenomenon.

In addition to questions about the DACS and graduated sanctions systems, survey respondents were asked basic demographic information. There was no relationship between length of time on the job and perceptions of the graduated sanctions and DACS changes, meaning that officers responded similarly to the survey items regardless of how long they had worked for the Department of Corrections. There was also no relationship between the officers’ responses and their level of supervision.

As can be seen in Table 3, the items which received the strongest agreement are those that pertain to the DACS as a whole, including:

- “DACS increases efficiency in my job,” with a mean of 4.23;
- “Generating reports from DACS is easy,” mean 3.97; and
- “Entering information into DACS is easy,” mean 3.90.

These results mirror the statements made during the pre-reform interviews in that officers spoke highly of the DACS at both times.

Some of the narrative comments that support these high ratings include:

- *DACS is a great system in general for reports. There are a lot of reports that could be generated if more training was given. One must explore the system to find all of the somewhat hidden capabilities;*
- *I would not know how to keep paper records. It is a great tool that enhances an officers [sic] ability to supervise and keep an accurate log; and*
- *Easy, but time consuming.*

Both before and after the reforms, officers were less enamored with the graduated sanctions protocol and its DACS reporting. As can be seen, those items which received the lowest scores tended to be about the graduated sanctions protocol:

- “The graduated sanctions protocol makes my job easier,” with a mean of 2.77;
- “I am glad that the Department switched to the graduated sanctions protocol,” mean 2.84; and
- “The graduated sanctions portion of DACS makes my job easier,” mean 3.00.

Comments that supported the above ratings were:

- *This makes another step in a system that is receiving more and more individuals on probation daily with less and less officers;*
- *Each sanction we use takes more time per office visit and backs each Officer up on an already overloaded case loads [sic]; and*
- *I don’t believe it was necessary to be so extremely documented, as the officers do it already.*

However, some respondents answered favorably to the items about the graduated sanctions protocol. Several of their comments follow:

- *It was something PO’s were doing already, now it is just documented a little better for the Judges to understand;*
- *If done properly, audits are easier as well as VOP reports. The officer should be able to present a strong report to the court if a VOP is necessary; and*
- *With having the sanctions documented on one page to view, this makes it easier to summarize what has been done to bring the offender back in compliance with his/her conditions of supervision and what course of action to take next.*

Probation officers also had specific recommendations to improve the graduated sanctions protocol. Suggestions included:

- *Have the sanction comments visible in the window of casenotes instead of having to click on them;*

- *Elimination of higher levels of approval for sanctions as it is time consuming and limits the effective sanction options that do not require approval. Officer's [sic] should be trained in the appropriate use of higher sanctions and implement as necessary without approval;*
- *The closing of cases is too easy. Makes for accidental closures. Need at least another "Are you sure you want to make these changes" options before you can save changes on the overall screen;*
- *Have the sanction comments visible in the window of casenotes instead of having to click on them.*

In sum, while the DACS is viewed as a useful tool for probation officers, those parts that support the graduated sanctions are seen as difficult to use, time consuming, and, perhaps, unnecessary.

Survey narrative comments can be found in Appendix C and the full data set can be found in Appendix D.

Violations of Probation

To evaluate whether the RJIP reforms were effective in reducing racial disparities in probation violations, we looked at the rates of probation violations before and after the reforms. Following is a review of those findings.

Pre-Reform

Data outlined in Table 4 show that, while Black probationers accounted for 46.19% of the total number of probationers during the pre-reform time period, they made up 50.09% of all filed violations. This produced a difference of +3.90 points.² On the other hand, Whites made up 53.36% of total probationer population and only 49.89% of violations during this time period, leading to a percentage point difference of -3.47. The variance in point differences between the Black and White probation violations indicated that Whites were less likely to be violated than were Blacks.

Table 4. Nine month statewide totals for Level II-III VOPS and Probationers by race (6/1/2010 – 2/28/2011)

	# of VOPs	% of Total VOPs	# Total Probationers	% of Total Probationers	Difference
Black	2,258	50.09%	17,912	46.19%	+3.90
White	2,249	49.89%	20,692	53.36%	-3.47
Other	1	.02%	172	.44%	-.42
Total	4,508	100.00%	38,776		

² If there were no racial disparity in probation violations, the point spread would be 0 for both Blacks and Whites, indicating that the percent of VOPS perfectly mirrored the proportion of each racial group in the general population.

Post-Reform

The second batch of data, as shown in Table 5, were collected after all reforms were enacted, between July 1, 2013 and December 1, 2013. As can be seen, the disproportionate number of Black probation violations was reduced at this data collection period. Blacks had a point difference of +1.18, and Whites had a difference of -.83. Probation violations were more equally split between the two races than in the first data collection period, indicating that there was less disparity in VOPs between Blacks and Whites.

Table 5. Five month statewide totals for Level II-III VOPS and Probationers by race (7/1/2013 – 12/1/2013)

	# of VOPs	% of Total VOPs	# Total Probationers	% of Total Probationers	Difference
Black	1,308	44.31	5,075	43.13%	+1.18
White	1,641	55.58%	6,637	56.41%	-.83
Other	3	.10%	54	.46%	-.36
Total	2,952	100.00%	11,766		

It should be noted that these data do not take into consideration historical information which influences violation decisions, such as prior violations, crime of record, probationer history, etc. Nor do the data tease out which reform contributed to the positive outcomes. Still, the reduction in disparity is encouraging given the short time frame and the relative newness of the system.

Please see Appendix E for the complete violation of probation reports.

Summary and Recommendations

This evaluation suggests that the reforms had a positive impact on the disproportionate racial representation in probation violations. Officers violated fewer Blacks, proportionately, during the post-reform period than during the pre-reform period. This is good news indeed.

In general, probation officers were satisfied with their ability to impose graduated sanctions on probationers. Most felt that the level of flexibility afforded them was adequate in their supervision practices. In general, they also believed that the DACS is a useful and easy tool.

However, in the post-reform phase, officers continued to experience difficulty in utilizing the graduated sanctions protocol within the DACS. They felt it was time-consuming and cumbersome and was merely a tool for management.

Based on the data, we have several recommendations:

For Practice:

- ❖ Create an instruction manual for the DACS and the new graduated sanctions protocol;
 - Training was an important component of both the interviews and the online survey phases of the evaluation;
- ❖ Consider reducing the level of approval needed for lower level sanctions;
- ❖ Draw on the enthusiasm of the newer staff to push the graduated sanctions protocol;
- ❖ Provide training to court personnel and other stakeholders in the graduated sanctions protocol; and
- ❖ Offer implicit bias and bias-free decision making to all segments of the justice system.

For Future Evaluation:

- ❖ Develop and implement an evaluation design that will take into consideration previous probationer history, to control for past offenses, other violation efforts, and other relevant probationer characteristics and
- ❖ Continue to review archival data over longer periods of time to validate the findings of this evaluation;

The findings of this evaluation indicate that the reforms implemented by Delaware had at least preliminarily positive outcomes. Further evaluation is needed to determine whether these reforms can reduce the disproportionate minority representation in probation violations.

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

**Racial Justice Improvement Project
State of Delaware
Department of Probation and Parole
Participant Interview Protocol**

Name:

- ❖ **Do you currently use graduated sanctions as part of your supervision strategy?**
 - **How does it work for you?**

- ❖ **Give me an example of a case in which you have already used graduated sanctions.**
 - **Was it helpful to use a graduated sanctions system in that case?**

 - **Would you have liked less flexibility?**
 - **Why or why not?**

 - **More flexibility?**
 - **Why or why not?**

- ❖ **When you use them, do you document them in DACS case notes? Do you include them as part of your violation of probation report?**
 - **Why or why not?**

- ❖ **What do you see as the benefits of automating the graduated sanctions system?**

- ❖ **What might be the challenges of implementing the new automated computer system?**
 - **How do you expect those will be overcome?**

APPENDIX B

POST-REFORM QUESTIONNAIRE



Delaware Probation Officer Survey

- * 1. **The graduated sanctions protocol is an improvement in probation/parole supervision.**

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ N/A

Additional Comments

* 2. **The graduated sanctions protocol provides greater flexibility in my supervision work.**

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ N/A

Additional Comments

* 3. **The graduated sanctions protocol makes my job easier.**

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ N/A

Additional Comments

* 4. **The graduated sanctions portion of DACS makes my job easier.**

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ N/A

Additional Comments

* 5. **The graduated sanctions system is helpful to me in my job.**

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ N/A

Additional Comments

* 6. **I am glad that the Department switched to the graduated sanctions protocol.**

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ N/A

Additional Comments

* 7. **I am glad that the Department modified DACS to include graduated sanctions.**

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ N/A

Additional Comments

* 8. **Entering information into DACS is easy.**

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ N/A

Additional Comments

* 9. **Generating reports from DACS is easy.**

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ N/A

Additional Comments

* 10. **DACS increases efficiency in my job.**

- ☐ Strongly agree
☐ Agree
☐ Neither agree nor disagree
☐ Disagree
☐ Strongly disagree
☐ N/A

Additional Comments

* 11. **Have you experienced difficulty with the recent changes to the DACS?**

- ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Additional Comments

12. **Do you have any additional comments about the graduated sanctions or the DACS modifications?**

* 13. **Is there anything that you would like to see modified in the current DACS or graduated sanctions protocol?**

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* 14. What level of supervision do you provide?

* 15. How long have you worked at the Department of Correction?

APPENDIX C

NARRATIVE RESPONSES TO THE PROBATION OFFICER POST-REFORM ONLINE QUESTIONNAIRE

NARRATIVE RESPONSES TO THE PROBATION OFFICER POST-REFORM ONLINE QUESTIONNAIRE**1. The graduated sanctions protocol is an improvement in probation/parole supervision.**

- It does nothing but let the courts know we have addressed the issue prior to the violation and the judges are not liking that we are doing it from our end. I have had several judges ask why the previous violations have not been addressed and have had to explain the graduated responses to them.
- It is something that numerous officers have already been doing on their own and explain in the history of supervision section. Now that it is mandated it does to a point take away from violations and is an extra step that isn't necessary.
- This Officer was already using internal sanctions to help offenders become more compliant with their conditions of probation.
- I believe that these sanctions have been in place for some time; however they are well documented on one page for Probation and / or the courts to view. To view all this information in one location, saves time and will provide precise information to the courts if a violation report is submitted.
- It better informs the judges of the efforts made by officers prior to filing a VOP.
- We already perform the task in our scheduled case notes. This seems to be a tool for the Supervisors/Regional Managers. The supervision requirements for Level 4 don't always relate to Level 3. We have fewer cases, but should be supervising them much closer.
- Agreed that they are useful, as they were informally used prior to DACS implementation. Found to be more useful when used with lower level offenders.
- Officers have been imposing graduated sanctions for years. The protocol provides a different platform to document these activities.
- This process is semi common practice amongst most officers; it is just more clearly documented via the graduated sanction process and DACS case note.
- I have only used the verbal warning sanction thus far. For me, this is the same as I have done in the past 16 years (unless there is a threat to victim or community safety.) I documented in case notes of the issue and it would be noted in a VOP report if needed. Regardless, I am optimistic that this protocol may have some benefit to P&P supervision and the judicial system as a whole.
- Many officers already used graduated sanctions in one form or another prior to official implementation of this protocol.
- I believe it may be clearer in showing attempts made to get the offender back in compliance.
- It is neither. I was already doing these things before, but I just didnt have to document every time I verbally warned someone about their non-compliance.
- Really don't know yet if it is an improvement in P&P cause it hasn't been in effect long enough to see if it will make a difference with the Judges or not.

- it is something we have always done - while the extra documentation is good for proof, it is also seen as taxing and time consuming for other officers.

2. The graduated sanctions protocol provides greater flexibility in my supervision work.

- I was utilizing a system like this prior. I would make the offenders report in more frequently, refer them to treatment, conduct more home visits, and if the situation called impose curfews. Accomplished this by progress reports to the judge. This is another step that just takes more time from me to more effectively supervise a caseload.
- The protocol does not provide greater flexibility. It mandates more of our time in an already busy schedule.
- Found that the flexibility has remained about the same. Graduated sanctions have more so served as a formal way to document the informal sanctions that were previously used at a Probation Officer's discretion.
- Probation officers have always had the flexibility and legal authority to use graduated sanctions.
- The ability to impose sanctions has always existed. This is simply a better way of tracking what we should already be doing.
- See previous comment.
- I like the ability to impose "minor" sanctions without supervisor approval or going through the Court.

3. The graduated sanctions protocol makes my job easier.

- This makes another step in a system that is receiving more and more individuals on probation daily with less and less officers.
- More responsibility and job duties with below average pay.
- Formal use of graduated sanctions is more time consuming as it requires input into DACS formally and cannot be used as a basis for violation.
- The graduated sanctions protocol adds another step of documentation to the process.
- It is my opinion that this mainly applies to graduated responses to offender compliance, more so than responses to non-compliance.
- It actually takes more time rather than making a note of how their non-compliance was handled, but does make it easier to sanction a person and move the case as "clean" instead of waiting for a Judge to approve a "no action be taken at this time PR"

4. The graduated sanctions portion of DACS makes my job easier.

- Due to the fact that they have changed the standards that the graduated sanctions operate under but haven't yet changed the scoring system for the LSIR's you can still have people who need a sanction but you can't place one without extra steps due to the fact that they fall outside of the scoring system (Low-Moderate and High-Moderate). The system is what is normally expected with a DACS operating system.
- Each sanction we use takes more time per office visit and backs each Officer up on an already overloaded case loads.
- With having the sanctions documented on one page to view; this makes it easier to summarize what has been done to bring the offender back in compliance with his/her conditions of supervision and what course of action to take next.
- It is considerably more time consuming.
- Again different case loads, Cannot access yet at Level 4

I just need to know how to use it. I have used it once and had to ask for help from a Super User.
- It doesn't make an Officer's job easier but it does allow for formal documentation of an addressed issue.
- The system provides a platform for all negative graduated sanctions to be captured in one place on the violation of probation report.
- If done properly, audits are easier as well as VOP reports. The officer should be able to present a strong report to the court if a VOP is necessary.
- Have not seen much change to date. As stated above, I have only used the "verbal warning" so far. Have not filed a VOP with graduated sanctions yet.
- Additional time is required to enter the sanction in DACS, thereby adding to case processing that is already very time-consuming.
- There is a little more work involved than just putting in a DACs note.

5. The graduated sanctions system is helpful to me in my job.

- As previously stated, this is something I was already doing.
- The graduated sanctions are a liberal approach to slap the offender on the wrist for violating his/her probation.
- I'm sure it will be if I change case loads. It will give a better picture of what the Offender has been doing thru the course of his probation. Sometimes officers forget about the 2 weekend sanctions that were given early in someone's sentence for not reporting ect.
- Graduated sanctions were previously already used in some capacity by Officer's & now inputting the sanctions into DACS allows for clarification that issues with Probationer's are addressed.
- If/when a VOP is filed, the sentencing authority can readily see what efforts have been taken by the supervising officer in attempting to get an offender into compliance. I believe this will be EXTREMELY useful for the presenting Court Officer.
- I think the only thing it may improve is when the probationer goes back in front of the Judges they can see that we actually do work with these people as much as we can and that we don't just lock them up for small things.

6. I am glad that the Department switched to the graduated sanctions protocol.

- I don't believe it was necessary to be so extremely documented, as the officers do it already.
- This is an unnecessary protocol that was created by individuals who have no operational concept of what probation in Delaware is.
- Each Offender needs to be held more accountable for their actions. Sanctions have done little to change the behavior of the violent offender.
- It adds to the credibility of Officer's operations.
- If the DOC needs to measure success in the use of EBP then implementation of graduated sanctions and a mechanism in DACS to track the information will assist us in collecting necessary data. Probation officers and the courts were already using graduated sanctions in supervision of offenders.
- This process was cited previously in my history of probation portion of a Violation Report. I feel that it appears to weaken my violation in the regards that if I cite a condition for a graduated sanction that condition does not show up in my exhibit B, thus sometimes showing only one or two conditions that are being cited for the current violations.
- I think seasoned officers have been doing their own graduated sanctions for the most part. I also think many of us are already reinforcing positive behaviors when seen. In the past, I have given probationers "rewards" for good behaviors such as a curfew free weekend, or permitting travel to neighboring Maryland to attend something (i.e. movies, OC, concerts) other than business, medical or court appointments.
- It was something PO's were doing already, now it is just documented a little better for the Judges to understand

7. I am glad that the Department modified DACS to include graduated sanctions.

- There are other tools that the Department could implement in DACS that would increase my job effectiveness rather than graduated sanctions.
- DACS is a great system that is many years ahead of other States. I'm not sure of the cost associated with adding the graduated sanctions in DACS; one would have to look at the cost/benefit ration. The sanctions could have just been added like a case note instead of more like a violation.
- It is more time consuming, but the efforts prior to VOP are well documented.
- As a tracking mechanism
- This will benefit Judges and court officers at court appearances.
- It doesn't allow for the notes made to be spell checked.

8. Entering information into DACS is easy.

- When DACS is working properly entering information in DACS is very easy.
- This is a generalized question, does it pertain to sanctions or is it meant to be general? DACS in general is a great system. Using it for sanctions is very time consuming.
- Easy, but time consuming.
- Very easy to use.
- I wish that I could signify easily which graduation sanction goes with which condition. The current way, it appears that I gave multiple sanctions to multiple condition violations, and I think that it should be an option to which sanction applies to which conditions, but allow for a sanction to include multiple conditions as an option as well.

9. Generating reports from DACS is easy.

- When DACS is working properly entering information in DACS is very easy.
- DACS is a great system in general for reports. There are a lot of reports that could be generated if more training was given. One must explore the system to find all of the somewhat hidden capabilities.
- wish JFC reports could be generated
- Especially if the Officers uses them on a weekly basis.
- Easy to use.

10. DACS increases efficiency in my job.

- DACS is a tool to assist in the supervision of offenders in the community and also in the institutions. There are other things that it could do which are in its capabilities that would increase my efficiency even more but it does increase my efficiency.
- DACS is a great tool that is always evolving.
- I would not know how to keep paper records. It is a great tool that enhances an officers ability to supervise and keep an accurate log.
- It is as good as the data entered.
- With things being electronic, it makes things more efficient. I wish that there was an upload feature so that we could upload PDF documents of sentence orders or current signed conditions. Possibly require the documents to be uploaded and a notification of needing new documents be populated when there is a new sentence. This could cut down on some of the actually paper files.

11. Have you experienced difficulty with the recent changes to the DACS?

- There was a problem, but that problem has been resolved so no.
- There is always a learning curve with each new application. The changes take time to get used to.
- Recent change, when you are in a current case note (example)- Office Visit, you can no longer view previous case notes. If the offender has a question regarding treatment appointments for example and I would like to document this during our current office visit, I can no longer view this information from a previous screen.
- The inability to scroll through older case notes while entering a new case note (office visit) is a problem. We frequently need to look back into case notes while typing a new note.
- Any change however mild is complicated to some extent. The hard part is to limit the interference, and for the most part this has been achieved.
- There are many issues that need resolved in DACS.
- Very little- it's just a matter of using the screens a few times.
- They have been corrected but it was inconvenient when you could not access old notes while writing in a new note.
- The supervision fee features are garbage.
- Not at this time. For a bit, there were some problems where you couldn't look back at a case notes when you were typing one in but that was fixed.
- --entering some graduated sanctions has been difficult - errors for various reasons.
--generating reports sometimes doesn't work - possible adobe problem.

12. Do you have any additional comments about the graduated sanctions or the DACS modifications?

- Graduated sanctions are a liberal approach to help the Court system and jail system to become less crowded. If the penalties for crime and violation of probation were more harsh it would add a higher deterrent level.
- I believe that this is a great tool to use. It will allow the officers to view exactly what they have done to bring the offender back in compliance before writing to the court. Having all your sanctions in location, it will save the officer's time. In the past, I have had to view case notes that sometimes date back to a year of supervision to see what has been done or what hasn't been done. This tool will certainly save officers time and make managing their caseloads easier.
- Give the operators written instructions. It seems my notes or having the Super User sit at my PC to fix the problem, does not solve future issues. It does not count at 0300 in the morning when you are by yourself at the office and are trying to make it work.
- The only challenge is that the options offered in the Graduated Sanctions are limited and effective sanctions require higher levels of approval which adds to the time spent.
- It is a good way to track if officers are supervising offenders properly. Instead of reducing violations, it may simply result in people being sanctioned for something that they otherwise would have just been warned about.
- A problem arises when you can't site the Offender for the allegations of noncompliance when you execute an Admin. Warrant. Then it just looks like your executing an Admin. for something minor when in truth you have all the other allegations stuck in the Graduated response; which the sentencing authority is unable to see.
- I have seen VOPs and presented cases in Court (as court officer) based solely on one dirty urine or some other minor technical violation. The "History of Supervision" was barely several small paragraphs that included demographic and job info but not much else (other than required criminal history and such). That is not how we were taught as cadets to write a VOP. I feel that is an issue with individual officers AND their supervisors for approving such a weak report. I think graduated sanctions would be most beneficial for those officers.
- much like any change, it is good for "SOME" officers - others don't embrace it. There is no follow up from management to enforce them.
- It is something that we were already doing. Now, it just diminishes the seriousness of a VOP. It softens consequences of unaccountability to ineffectiveness.

13. Is there anything that you would like to see modified in the current DACS or graduated sanctions protocol?

- how slow it is at times
- I would like to see a section added to the field sheet that indicates whether or not an individual is a convicted felon.
- Other than more options in case notes and some other minor changes nothing too pressing.
- Make it more like a case note as opposed to a undertaking like writing a violation.
- Graduated Rewards added.
- Elimination of higher levels of approval for sanctions as it is time consuming and limits the effective sanction options that do not require approval. Officer's should be trained in the appropriate use of higher sanctions and implement as necessary without approval.
- There should be a less time consuming way for officers to impose sanctions that require a judges signature. As it stands now the officer must type a formal case note under graduated sanctions in addition to the standard case note and write a progress report to impose the condition(s). There is much redundancy. Once the graduated sanction case note is enter DACS should be able to produce a form that can be submitted to the court for approval or an agreement with the court on use of standard graduated sanction such a drug/alcohol evaluation without submitting a progress report.
- Too new to tell.
- The removal of the graduated sanctions.
- Suggestion: Should Graduated Sanctions be populated in Progress reports, Admin's and VOP reports so the sentencing authority can gauge the degree of the violation as a whole, to observe if the proper intervention (Graduated Response) was used to exhibit compliance or for a Clear History of Supervision for compliance vs. noncompliance. Question: Are we able to site the offender in the Exhibit-B of the Violation or Admin. for noncompliance with the Graduated Response which has led to the Violation as a whole?
- No, it is more involved to enter the graduated response than say a DACs note, but it is still very doable.
- There are problems with looking back on previous case notes while you are typing a new case note. This is problematic because when you are unable to look back on previous conversation with offenders you may not be reminded to follow up on certain topics or problems you previously observed or wrote about.
- The Supervision Room Waitlist function under Case Management needs to be implemented so that we are properly notified when offenders are in the building. It was created on DACS, but is not used by the Department.

The Judges/Court Staff/AG Office/PD Office do not seem to understand the graduated sanctions protocol. Therefore, making it difficult to recieve the appropriate sentencing for offenders at Violation Hearings.

In addition, Judges/Court Staff/AG Office/PD Office do not seem to understand the risk assessments that Probation is required give to each offender. Whether it be a LSIR/DVSIR/Static-99, when an

offender is flowed down or up due to the risk assessment the Judges/Court Staff/AG Office/PD Office generally seem to have a problem with this even though this has been state law for several years now.

- Greater ability to collect statistical information. A live supervision plan that can be modified by the officers as progress is made or lack of.
- The supervision fee features are garbage.

The closing of cases is too easy. Makes for accidental closures. Need at least another "Are you sure you want to make these changes" options before you can save changes on the overall screen

- Have the sanction comments visible in the window of casenotes instead of having to click on them.
- The ability to print graduated sanctions to allow both the Officer and offender the opportunity to discuss and sign the sanction acknowledging its occurrence. Also, the ability to access DACS case notes/reports while entering the graduated response.
- I'd like to see the graduated sanctions protocol removed. But if it has to remain in use, there should be more choices and more relevant choices for the sanctions in regards to the issue.
- Too early to tell

APPENDIX D

RAW SURVEY DATA

APPENDIX E

PROBATION VIOLATION DATA

2011 AND 2013