

CASE STUDY—continued

scientific inquiry as a means to determine the truth in a court of law.

For criminal justice administrators, speaking truth to power with facts and evidence can be difficult and sometimes pointless. This does not mean that facts and evidence don't matter, but they must be understood within the context of political interests and the power that people have to influence criminal justice administration and management. In fact, and somewhat ironically, this same colleague has written about how the use of knowledge in criminal justice organizations serves both symbolic and instrumental purposes of criminal justice administrators and reflects certain values and preferences. Understood this way, it is easy to see why knowledge acquisition will always be subservient to

political interests, both internal and external to criminal justice organizations.

CASE STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What role, if any, should empirical evidence play in criminal justice decision making and policy making? What role should politics play in the same processes?
2. Do you agree or disagree with the judge's ruling in this case study, and what are your arguments for the position you hold?
3. What is the role of social science research in criminal justice administration? How best can criminal justice researchers speak truth to power?



Think like an Administrator

How does a criminal justice administrator speak truth to power? What if he or she knows, for example, that a particular activity or program does nothing to actually improve the organization or address crime in any way? Take, for example, the influence of the Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) program on police activities and its acceptance among police administrators as an effective strategy to keep young people off drugs. Yet, there is no evidence that the DARE program does anything in relation to long-term drug usage among young people. (We will examine particulars of the DARE program in Chapter 15.) The program may have other benefits that were unintended and positive, such as pulling communities together to address other issues of significance, for example, vacant buildings and gang activity.

1. At the end of the day, how do we speak to others, especially influential community members, about programs that are not effective, even if they are well liked by them?
2. Do we as criminal justice administrators have both a moral and legal obligation to speak out against something we know does not work?
3. How does politics influence the adoption or deletion of an activity or program in a criminal justice organization?
4. Is politics always a "dirty" word, or should we separate the negative connotations of politics from the political process as a way things get done in criminal justice organizations? Is this distinction noteworthy and valuable to criminal justice administrators?
5. Can you envision the political process ever not being a part of criminal justice administration?