

FCCA CLERKS COUNCIL - NATIONAL SURVEY RESULTS

By Cameron Burke

Clerks have long maintained a leadership role within FCCA, but attendance at the conferences and service on committees has not matched the level of commitment reflected by deputy clerks. In order to review this issue, the Clerk's Council sent out a questionnaire to determine how FCCA was meeting

of the Clerks cited this as a good source of information. Eighty-six percent of the respondents regularly read the Journal while 11.4% indicated that they did not read the Journal.

One significant finding of this survey was that 87% of the

time than in the past. In fact 30% of the Clerks indicated that they had not attended a conference because of time constraints. Time considerations were listed as a factor in not attending conferences by an additional 30% of the respondents. This factor included such items as work schedules, family obligations and other court related travel.

It was surprising to find that cost was cited as a reason for not attending the annual conference by 10% of the Clerks. This item was listed as a contributing factor by an additional 40% of the Clerks.

This is particularly surprising because FCCA has offered low cost registration fees and reasonable hotel rates. This finding is contrary to the common perception that deputies and Clerks could afford FCCA conferences.

the expectations of Clerks of Court. One of the goals of the survey was to find out what would encourage Clerks to become more active in our association.

Questionnaires were sent to all Clerks of court and the response rate exceeded 47%. Of the responses returned, 84% were from members while 16% were from non-members or former members.

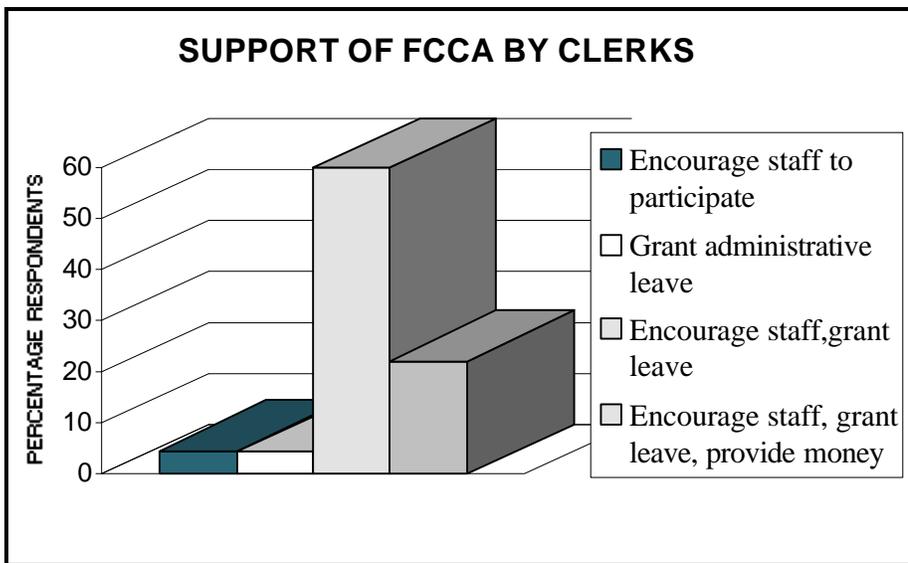
Clerks are satisfied with the FCCA Journal. Ninety two percent

Clerks would attend an add-on day to the FCCA conference which focused on emerging trends, national issues and technology. The sense of some Clerks was that the educational programs have focused on the needs of deputy clerk issues or may have been more general in nature. It is clear that Clerks want a day to exchange information, share experiences and discuss national policy issues.

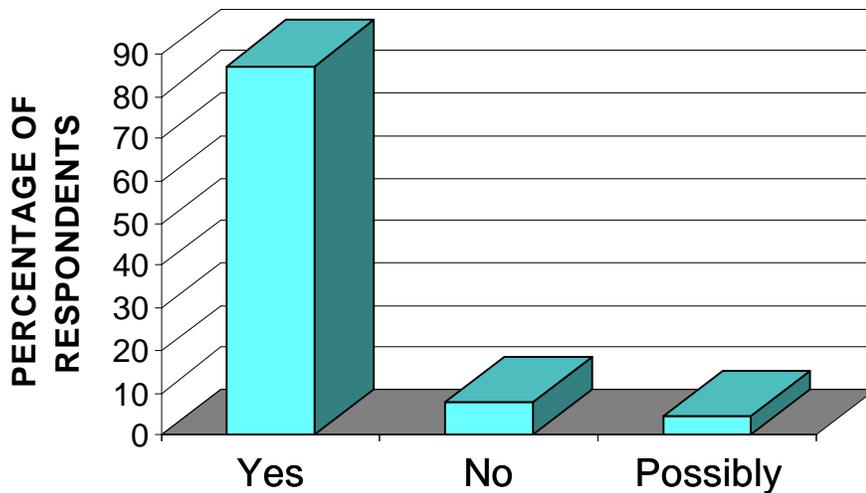
The data indicates that running courts today requires more

The survey results seem to dispel the notion that FCCA is only a social or deputy clerk organization. Only 5% cited this as a reason for not attending the national conference.

Clerks continue to overwhelmingly support FCCA. Sixty-two percent of the respondents encourage staff to participate and grant administrative leave to attend the conference. Another 22% grant leave, encourage attendance and provide



CLERKS SUPPORT FOR ADD-ON DAY AT CONFERENCE



to a tax exempt business league. This decision had a positive effect on our financial management plan. However, this tax status strongly discourages FCCA from playing a prominent lobbying role. Since that time, FCCA's primary goal has been to provide quality education to judiciary employees. The Clerk's Council will be reviewing this issue and make recommendations to the Board. It is clear from Clerk's comments that they want the association to address national policy issues.

The survey results reflected that many Clerks are active in FCCA and have provided a leadership role. Many others have not had the time to dedicate to the organization. Others suggested that if FCCA became active in national policy issues, that they would become more involved in the association.

financial assistance to attend the conferences.

While Clerks support FCCA, they have not been active on committees. Sixty-five percent of the respondents had never participated on a committee. Again, most cited time constraints of their job as the major reason for not participating on a committee. Some noted that they had not been asked to serve on a committee but would be willing to assist in any way.

In reviewing the comments from Clerks, many indicated that attendance at Circuit Conferences, national training programs and the time commitment at work made it difficult to attend conferences.

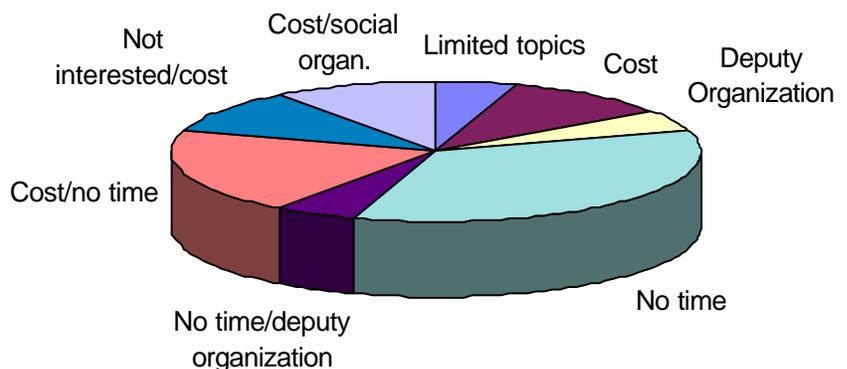
Many Clerks noted that

FCCA should become a more active lobbying organization on behalf of Clerks of Court and with other judges associations.

It should be noted that the FCCA Board addressed this issue five years ago. At that time, the Board voted to change our status

Some of the other

SOME REASONS CLERKS HAVE NOT ATTENDED CONFERENCE



substantive comments include:

- Many respondents indicated that the Administrative Office should formally approve financial reimbursement to attend the high quality educational programs.
- Some suggested that FCCA should join with other associations so that there is only one national association representing federal judiciary employees.
- Some noted that FCCA's lobbying effort before Congress and the AO has not been effective.
- Several suggested that conferences should be conducted during the winter so that they do not conflict with circuit conferences, national meetings and family vacations.

The enthusiastic comments and thoughtful suggestions in this survey reflect that unit executives are committed to improving the Federal Court Clerks Association. The continuing goal of the Clerks Council will be to improve communication with Clerks and solicit the active leadership of Clerks within the organization. The Clerk's Council will also review the suggestions contained in this survey to become more responsive to the needs of Clerks of Court.