

**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT NEEDS AND ORGANIZATION
AFFILIATION: AN ASSESSMENT OF FAMILY AND CONSUMER
SCIENCES EDUCATION ASSOCIATION MEMBERS**

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Professional associations serve to promote the interests and aims of the profession and to provide professional development opportunities for its membership. The research problem of this study was to investigate the professional development needs of family and consumer sciences (FCS) professionals and to assess members' perceptions of how effectively those needs were met, fulfilled, or addressed by the professional organization, specifically the Family and Consumer Sciences Education Association (FCSEA). Participants for the study were randomly selected from the current FCSEA membership list. Respondents completed a needs assessment survey designed to assess members' perceived professional development, benefits gained from membership, and ways in which the Association might function as an external resource. A four-point Likert scale was used for participant responses. Of the 400 surveys sent, 158 were completed and returned for a 39.5% response rate. Results from the research indicated that members perceived the FCSEA publications available through membership to be the best sources for professional development. Respondents suggested that the Association provide more information regarding family and consumer sciences curriculum and coursework and that FCSEA should develop and implement an interactive web site to provide educators both with access to sharing with other FCS professionals and links to additional resources. Respondents indicated that, within the profession, FCSEA is highly regarded as providing leadership for FCS professionals and that FCSEA membership is viewed as a professional obligation. However, members indicated concern that this commitment is not recognized by others (i.e., employers, peers) signifying a need for FCSEA to do more in the areas of marketing the profession and providing networking with professionals outside the discipline. It is suggested that FCSEA use these data for identifying members' professional development needs in order to attract new members, retain current members, and enjoy a stronger professional organization. Further, it is recommended that similar research be conducted that includes members from the American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences (AAFCS) and the Association of Career and Technical Education (ACTE) to obtain input from a larger population.