CARIBBEAN ASSOCIATION OF JUDICIAL OFFICERS

CAJO

VIRTUAL CONFERENCE YEAR 2021

Virtual Conference Year Programming Report

Judgment Writing Refresher Course

May 27th 2021

The Caribbean Association of Judicial Officers (CAJO) brings together the region's Chancellors, Chief Justices, Judges, Masters, Registrars, Parish Judges, Magistrates, Tribunal Members, Executive Court Administrators, and other judicial staff. The first meeting of judicial officers across the region took place in June 2009 in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago and this marked the birth of the CAJO. With its own Constitution and membership, the CAJO was ably headed by Hon Mr Justice Adrian Saunders, President of the Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ), who served as Chair from 2009 – 2019. The CAJO is led by a Management Committee which comprises judicial offices elected at the Association's Business Meeting held biennially. At present, Hon Mr Justice Peter Jamadar, Judge of the CCJ, serves as Chair of the Association with Hon Mme Justice Vivian Georgis Taylor-Alexander, Judge of the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court, as Vice-Chair. The Management Committee comprises 15 members from almost all countries in the region. The CAJO is also supported by its Research and Programme Coordinator, Elron Elahie. The CAJO provides a host of judicial education engagements for judicial officers across the region including its Biennial Conference, training programmes and workshops on various topics and areas of law and practice, and a biannual Newsletter, CAJO News.

Overview

On Thursday 27th May, 2021 from 1:30 - 4:00 p.m., the CAJO hosted the first of its 2021 programming as part of its virtual conference year. The Judgment Writing Refresher Course was facilitated by the Hon Mr Justice Dennis Morrison and was open to judicial officers and key judicial research counsel from across the region. The session was very well-attended with 185 participants engaged in the course.

The majority of participants were Magistrates and Parish Judges. For quite a number of participants, this was the first judgment writing course they had ever attended.

Of the 185 in attendance, 80 participants filled and submitted the session feedback form. The insights from this form are presented below.

Insights

The session feedback form contained eight (8) questions; half of those questions engaged quantitative measures and the other half engaged qualitative assessments. For questions that asked participants to rate various elements using a Likert scale (1 to 5), 5 was the highest rating. Seven of the eight questions were required to be filled for successful submission. The question asking for final comments remained optional.

The below insights are set out in two categories: **Session and Judicial Education Impact** and **Key Takeaways**. The first presents participant feedback on the quality and impact of, and benefit from the session as well as the CAJO's performance as a judicial education provider. The second category explores participant assessment of what worked, what stood out, and what can be improved.

Session and Judicial Education Impact

Participants were asked to rate, on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being the highest, three areas of the session: **Information Shared, Quality of Delivery, and Engagement**. None of the participants rated any of these as 1, and a nominal percent of participants gave a rating 2 and 3 for each of the three areas. **Between 15% and 25% of participants rated a 4 for each area, and over 70% gave scores of 5**. Figure 1 below shows a breakdown of this data.

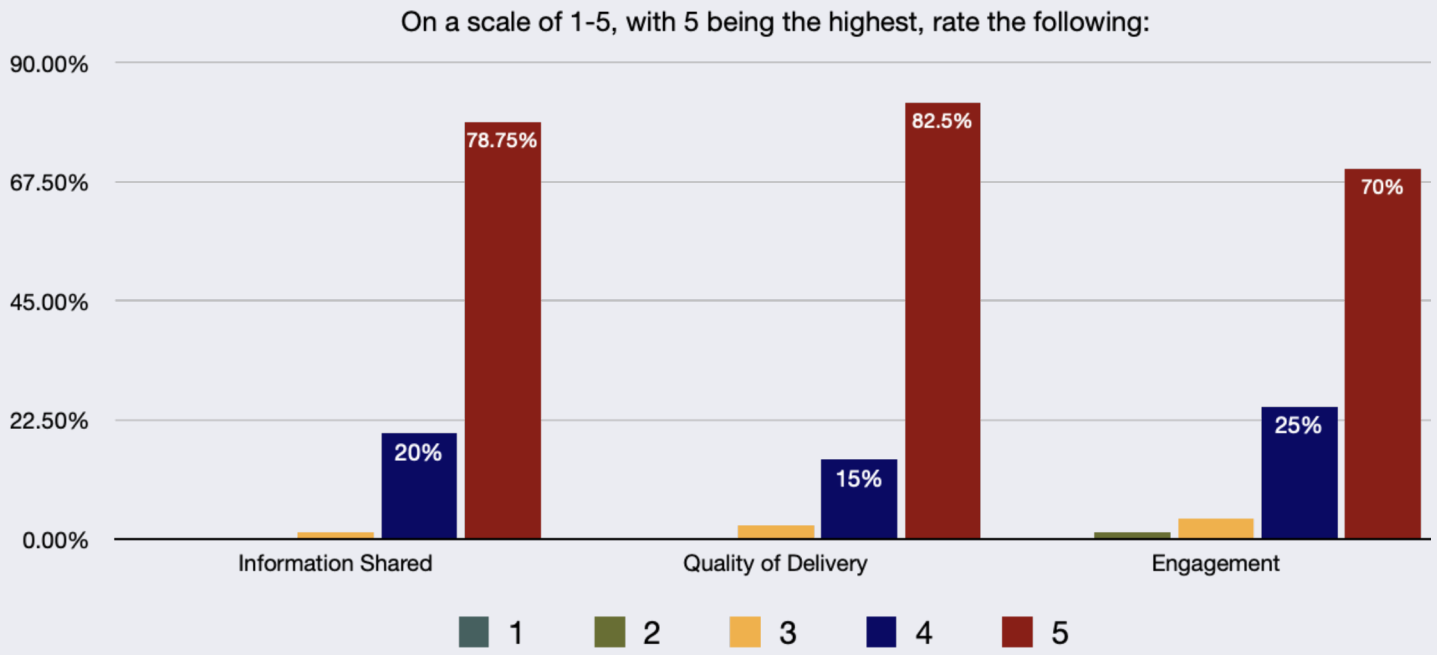

Figure 1 - Participant Rating (1-5) of Information Shared, Quality of Delivery, and Engagement

Similarly, using a rating scale of 1-5 with 5 being the highest, participants were asked to rate their degree of benefit from the session. Only 6% rated their degree of benefit as 3, and **30% and 64% rated their benefit from the session as 4 and 5 respectively**. None of the participants rated their benefit as 1 or 2. Figure 2 presents this data.

Session and Judicial Education Impact Cont'd

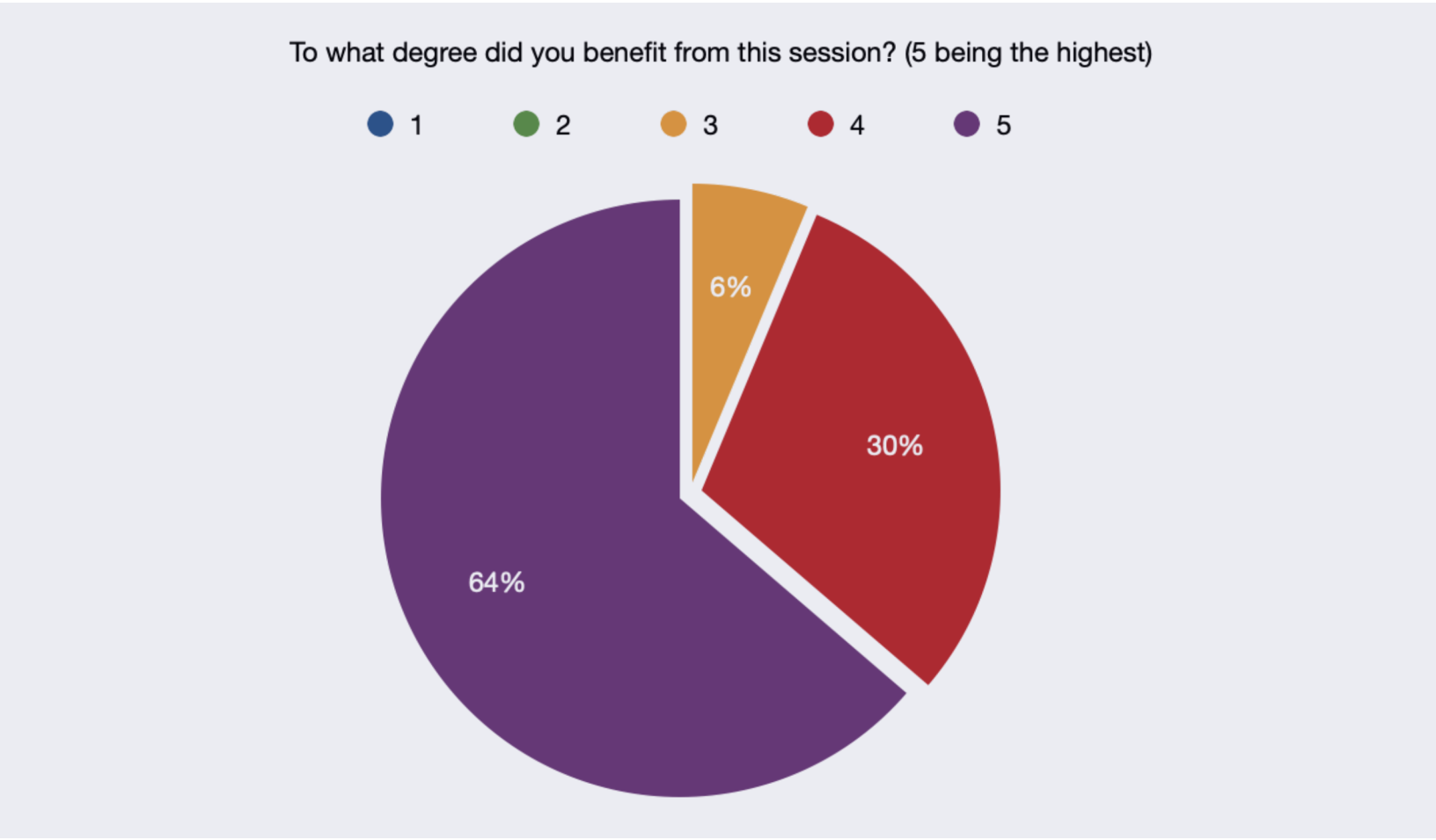

Figure 2 - Participant Rating (1-5) of Benefit from Session

In the final two quantitative measures which sought to ascertain the session impact and the CAJO's performance, participants were asked whether they would recommend the Judgment Writing Refresher Course to their colleagues and to rate, on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being the highest, the CAJO's performance as a judicial education provider. Notably, **100% of participants state that they would recommend the course to their colleagues**. And, as it relates to the CAJO's performance, **25% and 75% rated the CAJO 4 and 5 respectively as a judicial education provider**. Figures 3 and 4 show this data.

Session and Judicial Education Impact Cont'd

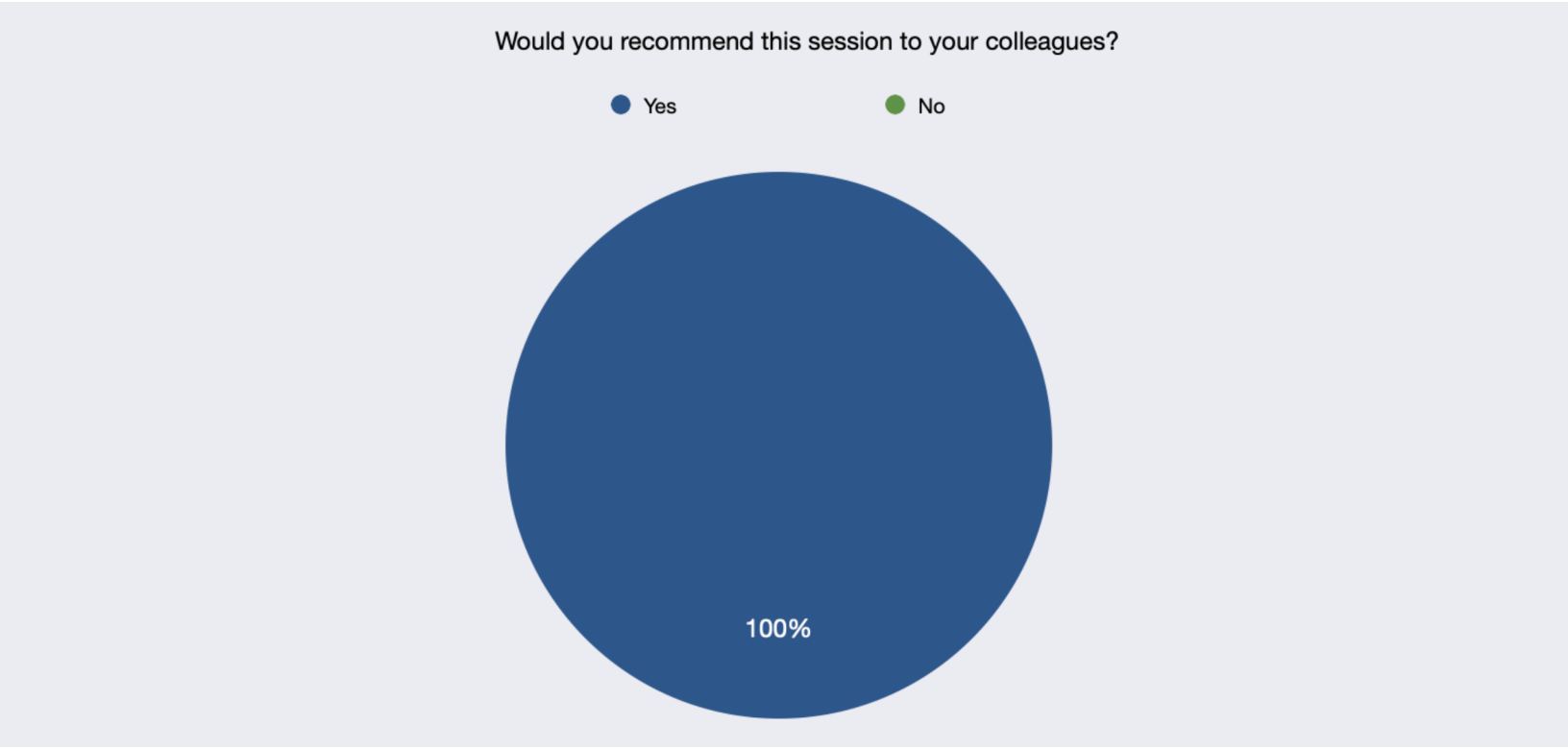

Figure 3 - Participant Recommendation of Session

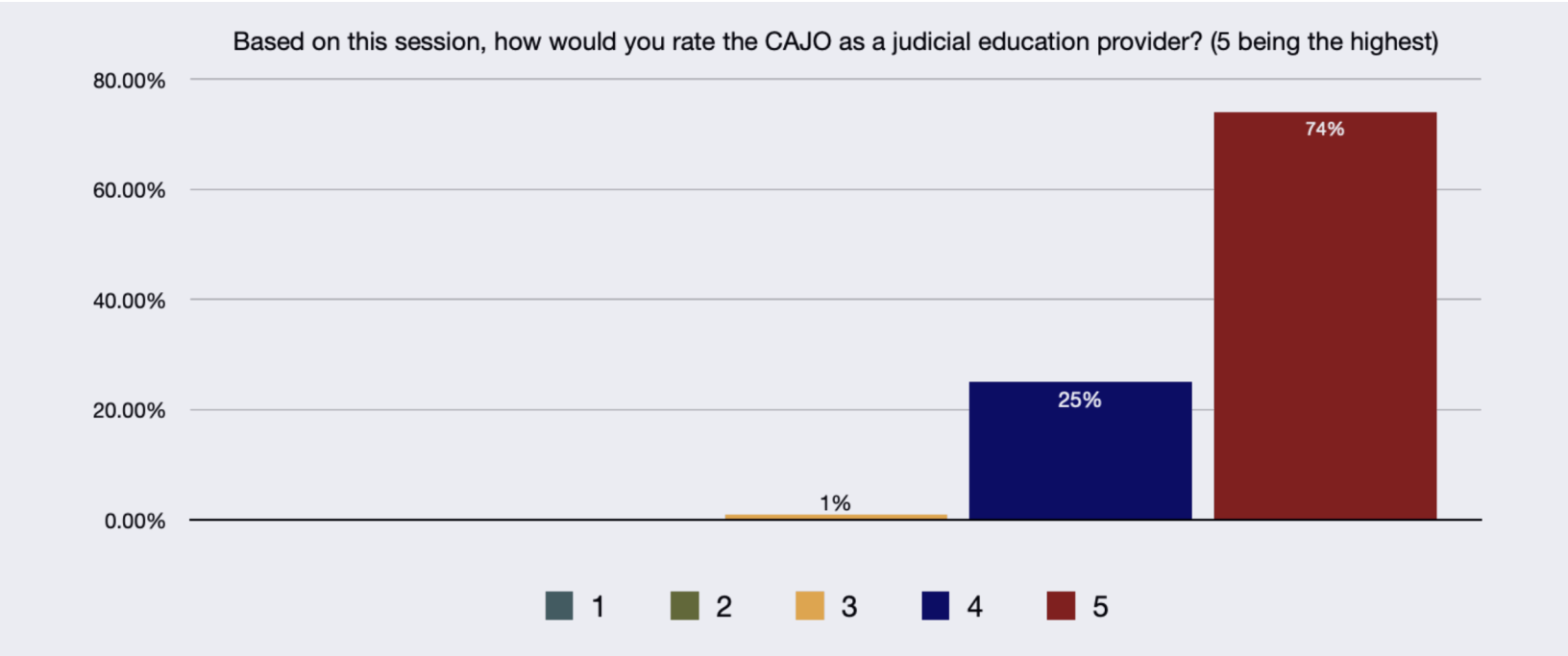

Figure 4 - Participant Rating (1-5) of the CAJO as a Judicial Education Provider

Key Takeways

Participants were asked to provide comments in three areas: **what was most useful from the session, a most significant learning, and suggestions to improve the session**. Table 1 below captures a summary of the responses submitted by participants, organised in order of most frequent.

Most Useful	Significant Learning	Suggestions for Improvement
- How to organise judgments	- The different organisational approaches	- None
- The use of an issue-driven template	- Use of an issue-driven format	- More participant engagement
- Need to review, take breaks, and edit	- Importance of clear communication	- More Caribbean practical examples
- Practical tools such as learning how to write how people speak	- The importance of an introduction	- Group activities
- Provoking questions which trigger moving beyond comfort zones	- That every judicial officer faces challenges in writing judgments	- Tailored to specific types of judicial officers

Table 1 - Most Useful, Significant Learnings, and Suggestion for Improvement based on the session

A number of participants also left final comments (which was an optional ask) and all expressed congratulations and gratitude to the CAJO and Justice Morrison for an excellent session.

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