



LENA

LEADERSHIP EDUCATION
NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Office of Student Life at
The Ohio State University

Autumn 2019 Report



INTRODUCTION

The Leadership Education Needs Assessment (LENA) is a tool designed for students at all academic levels to learn about their leadership strengths and areas for growth. The instrument was designed to measure students' leadership skills in four different areas: Purpose and Vision, Accomplishing Tasks, Building Relationships and Charisma. Students receive different scores relating to those four areas, as well as an Overall Leadership Score. The table below outlines the specific skills that make up each area of leadership. Students who take LENA are also provided with a list of resources tailored to their personal leadership needs at the end of the survey. Students are encouraged to take the survey multiple times throughout their academic career to track their leadership development over time. LENA was created by the Center for the Study of Student Life in collaboration with Student Life Student Activities at The Ohio State University.

Purpose and Vision	Accomplishing Tasks	Building Relationships	Charisma
Plan for the future	Delegate tasks	Communicate	Speak in public
Set goals	Problem solve	Motivate others	Represent self, group and/or project in meetings
Take initiative	Coordinate tasks and assignments	Develop relationships	Craft persuasive oral arguments
Seek support/resources	Obtain support/resources	Influence others	Craft persuasive written arguments
Articulate purpose of group and/or project	Accomplish goals	Mentor others	

HIGHLIGHTS

- On a scale of 1 – *not at all confident* to 5 – *completely confident*, undergraduate students had an Overall Leadership Score of 4.
- Out of all four leadership areas, **Charisma** was the area with the most perceived room for growth for students at all undergraduate levels.
- Undergraduate students' confidence for Purpose and Vision, Accomplishing Tasks and Building Relationships were significantly higher than their confidence in their Charisma. Their confidence for Accomplishing Tasks was also significantly higher than their confidence in Building Relationships.
- Undergraduate students most wanted to get involved as leaders by becoming **officers in a student organization** and by **attending leadership conferences**.

DEFINING LEADERSHIP

There is no universally accepted definition of leadership. To make sure students taking the assessment thought about the term “leader” in the same way, students were prompted to think of a leader as “someone who participates fully as a member of a group attempting to accomplish positive change”, rather than someone who holds a formal leadership position, before answering any questions regarding leadership.

METHOD

This report summarizes data from LENA collected during the autumn 2019 semester. LENA was advertised across campus via marketing materials for all students to take. A total of 386 students (374 undergraduate and 12 graduate/professional students) took the assessment during autumn semester. Due to the small sample size, graduate and professional students are excluded from this report. Please also note that scores and results may look different for students included in this report as they took the assessment voluntarily rather than a random sample that is representative of the university population where there may be more variation.

One-way analysis of variance (ANOVAs) and repeated measures ANOVAs were performed to determine if there were statistically significant differences between scores on several different variables. The following section outlines respondent demographics followed by how students were scored regarding the four different areas of leadership.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Student Level	<i>n</i>	Percent
Undergraduate	374	96.9%
Graduate/Professional	12	3.1%

Undergraduate Students by Year	<i>n</i>	Percent
First-year	112	29.9%
Second-year	137	36.6%
Third-year	58	15.5%
Fourth-year and beyond	67	17.9%

SCORING

Overall Leadership Score

Students receive an Overall Leadership Score at the end of the assessment. The score was calculated from responses to a series of statements on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from *Strongly Disagree* (scored as 1) to *Strongly Agree* (scored as 5). General statements such as, “I have the ability to lead a group to accomplish its task” and “I can engage my group in actions that improve our local or regional community” were used to measure leadership confidence in a general sense. The following table details all nine statements that comprise this score.

I know a lot more than most of my peers about what it takes to be a good leader.	I can encourage a group to work towards goals that benefit the common good.
I have the ability to lead a group to accomplish its task.	Overall, I doubt that I could lead a group successfully. ¹
In general, I’m not very good at leading a group of my peers. ¹	I am aware of what my strengths and weaknesses are as a leader.
I am confident in my ability to influence a group that I lead.	I can engage my group in actions that improve our local or regional community.
I have no idea what it takes to keep a group running smoothly. ¹	

¹These statements were reverse coded in the data cleaning process, where *Strongly Disagree* was scored as 5 and *Strongly Agree* was scored as 1, because a higher rating reflected less confidence on these items.

Leadership Confidence Scores

In addition to the Overall Leadership Score, students also received Leadership Confidence Scores for each of four leadership areas (Purpose and Vision, Accomplishing Tasks, Building Relationships and Charisma). Students were given a list of four to five leadership-related tasks that pertain to each of the four areas and were asked to indicate how confident they felt about the task on a scale of 0% - *not at all confident* to 100% - *completely confident*. Students had to answer at least 80% of the questions that pertained to the different leadership areas to receive an average score for a given area.

Desire-for-Improvement Scores

To give students an idea of their perceived areas for growth as a leader, they received Desire-for-Improvement Scores in addition to their Overall Leadership and Leadership Confidence Scores at the end of the assessment. Students were given the same list of four to five leadership-related tasks that pertain to each of the four areas, and were asked to indicate how much they would like to improve on each task. It is important to note that these scores were self-reported, which means that the scores represent the students’ *perceptions* of how much they desired to improve in each of the four leadership areas. Higher Desire-for-Improvement Scores indicate more perceived room for growth. Similar to the Leadership Confidence Scores, students had to answer at least 80% of the Desire-for-Improvement questions pertaining to each skill category in the survey to receive a score for any particular category.

FINDINGS

This report is organized into sections based on the three types of scores students receive at the end of the assessment. There is a section about Overall Leadership Scores, a section about Leadership Confidence Scores and a section about Desire-for-Improvement. All scores provided students information about where they stand as a leader at the time of the assessment. The final section of this report discusses leadership-related involvement during the rest of students' time in their academic careers.

OVERALL LEADERSHIP

The Overall Leadership Score that students receive at the end of the survey is a more general measure that depicts students' self-efficacy regarding their ability to lead a group. The average score for all undergraduate students was **4.03** ($n = 372$, $SD = 0.46$, Range = 2.2 to 5.0). The following table breaks down Overall Leadership Scores by students' year in school.

Overall Leadership Scores ($n = 374$)

Year	Score
First-year	4.04
Second-year	3.98
Third-year	4.00
Fourth-year	4.14

LEADERSHIP CONFIDENCE

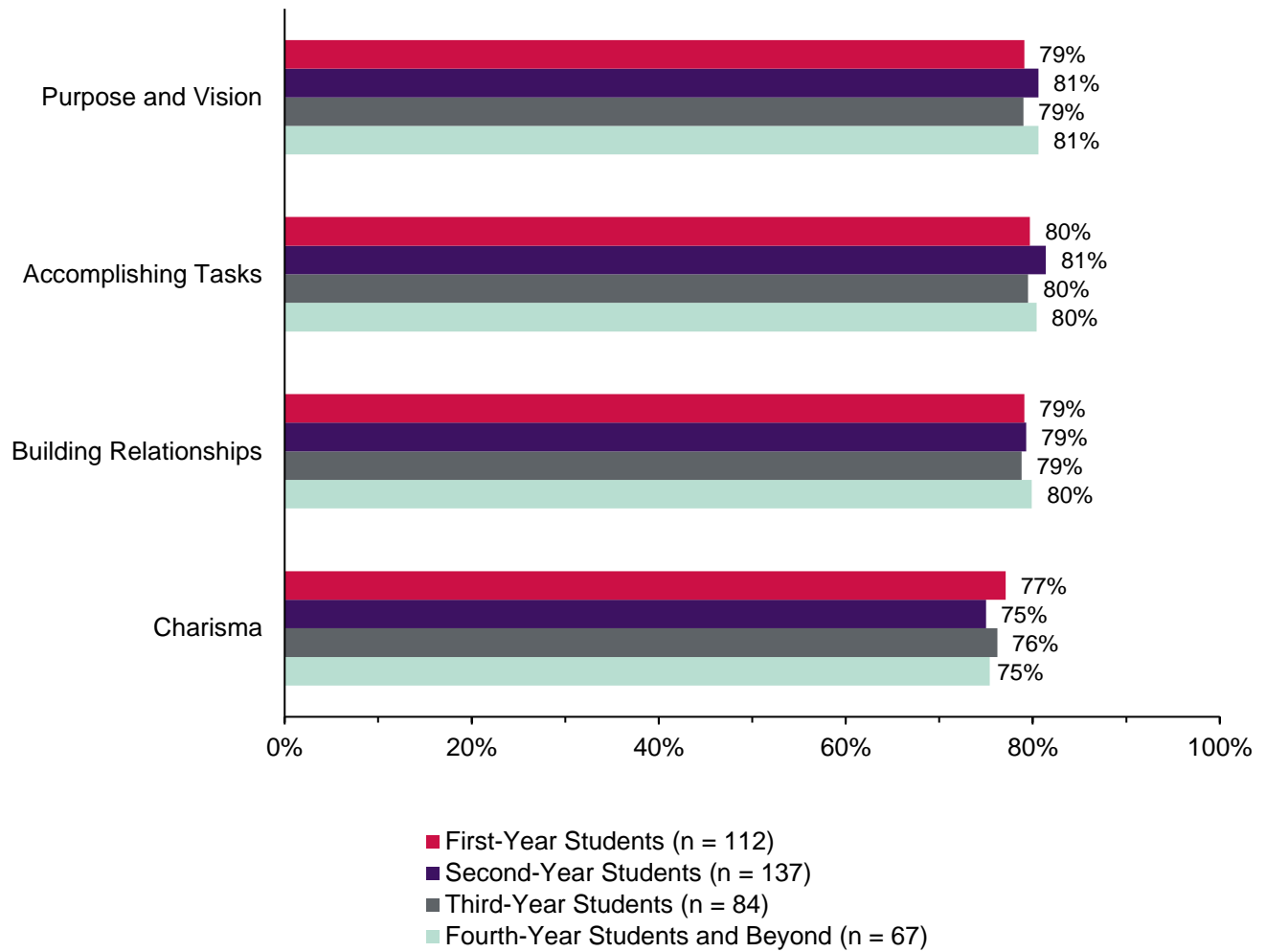
The following tables show average Leadership Confidence Scores of undergraduate students. Higher percentages indicate that students were more confident in that area. A repeated measures ANOVA revealed several statistically significant differences in scores across the four leadership scales among undergraduate students. Scores for Purpose and Vision, Accomplishing Tasks and Building Relationships were **significantly higher** than Charisma scores. The Accomplishing Tasks score was also **significantly higher** than the Building Relationships score.

Leadership Confidence Scores ($n = 374$)

Leadership Area	Score
Accomplishing Tasks	80.4%
Purpose and Vision	79.9%
Building Relationships	79.2%
Charisma	75.9%

The following chart shows average Leadership Confidence Scores of undergraduate students broken down by year of study. A one-way ANOVA determined that there were no significant differences in Leadership Confidence Scores when comparing undergraduate students by year.

Average Leadership Confidence Scores by Year



DESIRE-FOR-IMPROVEMENT

The following table shows the order in which students would like to improve in the different leadership areas. It is important to note that these are students' *perceptions* of how much they would like to improve in each of the four leadership areas. Students indicated that they wanted to improve on Charisma the most, followed by Building Relationships, then Accomplishing Tasks and finally, Purpose and Vision. There were no differences in order of importance of the four leadership areas for students at different levels.

Desire-for-Improvement (n = 359)

Leadership Area
1. Charisma
2. Building Relationships
3. Accomplishing Tasks
4. Purpose and Vision

LEADERSHIP-RELATED INVOLVEMENT

LENA provides students with information about their strengths and areas for growth as a leader, but also points students toward leadership-related resources based on what types of opportunities they indicate wanting to explore. To identify information about resources, students were given a list of leadership-related activities and were asked to select all of the activities that they wanted to engage in during the rest of their time in college. The following table lists the most frequently reported leadership-related opportunities that undergraduate students chose when taking the assessment.

Top five leadership-related opportunities undergraduate students seek (n = 330)

Assume an **officer position in a student organization** (n = 198, 60.0%)

Attend a **leadership conference** (n = 165, 50.0%)

Engage in **community activism** (n = 150, 45.5%)

Peer mentor (n = 146, 44.2%)

Assume a **leadership position outside of the Executive Board in a student organization**
(n = 134, 40.6%)

Note. The *ns* in this table exceed the total *n* because this was a select all that apply question.

CONCLUSION

Examining differences in leadership skills among undergraduate students can provide practitioners with insight on how to structure leadership opportunities. Undergraduate students scored relatively high on Overall Leadership. There were differences amongst individuals in terms of perceived skills; students, regardless of level, had more confidence in Purpose and Vision and Accomplishing Tasks

and felt that Building Relationships and Charisma could use improvement. It is important to note that these students may already be involved in leadership activities; scores and results may look different from the results of a random sample at the university.

Finally, using feedback from students on what types of leadership-related involvement they are interested in exploring can help practitioners tailor the resources and opportunities they provide to different student groups. Undergraduate students indicated an officer position in a student organization as the top leadership opportunity they want to pursue during the rest of their time in college. Attending a leadership conference and community activism were also chosen by many undergraduate students.

APPENDIX A: PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

	Undergraduate	
	<i>n</i>	Percent
Total	374	100.0%
Sex		
Female	259	69.3%
Male	115	30.7%
Unknown/undisclosed	0	0.0%
Race/Ethnicity		
African American/Black/African	37	9.9%
Asian	50	13.4%
Hispanic	5	1.3%
Two or more races	22	5.9%
Native American/American Indian/Alaska Native	1	0.3%
White	251	67.1%
Other race/unknown	8	2.1%
First-Generation Student Status		
Continuing generation	291	77.8%
First-generation	83	22.2%
Citizenship		
Domestic student	348	96.1%
International student	14	3.9%
Age		
18-24	371	99.2%
25-34	2	0.5%
35-44	0	0.0%
45+	1	0.3%
Undergraduate Academic Level		
First-year	112	29.9%
Second-year	137	36.6%
Third-year	58	15.5%
Fourth-year+	67	17.9%

Note. All demographic data were collected from the Student Information System, with the exception of Citizenship Status, which was self-reported on the survey. Additionally, the Student Information System reports “Sex” rather than “Gender”.