LENA

LEADERSHIP EDUCATION NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Office of Student Life at
The Ohio State University

2018-2019 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 received Leadership Confidence and Need-for-Improvement 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 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,* both undergraduate and graduate/professional students had Overall Leadership Scores of **4**.

- Out of all four leadership areas, **Charisma** was the area with the most perceived room for growth for both undergraduate and graduate/professional students.

- Undergraduate students' confidence for Purpose and Vision and Accomplishing Tasks were both significantly higher than for Building Relationships and Charisma. The Building Relationships score was also significantly higher than the Charisma score.

- Graduate and professional students' confidence for Purpose and Vision, Accomplishing Tasks and Building Relationships were all significantly higher than Charisma.

- Undergraduate students most wanted to get involved as leaders by becoming **officers in a student organization**.

- Graduate and professional students most wanted to get involved as leaders by **presenting at 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 2018-2019 academic year, which took place from October 19, 2018 through July 31, 2019. LENA was advertised across campus via marketing materials for all students to take, as well as emailed to a random sample of 5,000 students (4,000 undergraduates and 1,000 graduate/professional students). A total of 635 students (509 undergraduate and 126 graduate/professional students) took the assessment during this time period.

One-way analysis of variance (ANOVAs), repeated measures ANOVAs and independent samples *t*-tests 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	*n*	Percent
Undergraduate	509	80.2%
Graduate/Professional	126	19.8%

Undergraduate Students by Year	*n*	Percent
First-year	168	33.0%
Second-year	131	25.7%
Third-year	95	18.7%
Fourth-year and beyond	115	22.6%

SCORING

Overall Leadership Score

Students received 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 comprised 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]	

[1]These 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 lower 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.

Need-for-Improvement Scores

To give students an idea of their areas for growth as a leader, they received Need-for-Improvement Scores in addition to their Overall Leadership and Leadership Confidence Scores at the end of the assessment. The process for calculating Need-for-Improvement Scores was similar to the process for the Leadership Confidence Scores. 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. Need-for-Improvement was on a Likert scale (1 – *do not see a need to improve*, 3 – *would like to improve some* and 5 – *would like to improve a great amount*). It is important to note that these scores were self-reported, which means that the scores represent the students' *perceptions* of how much they needed to improve in each of the four leadership areas. Higher Need-for-Improvement Scores indicate more perceived room for growth. Similar to the Leadership Confidence Scores, students had to answer at least 80% of the Need-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, Leadership Confidence Scores and Need-for-Improvement Scores. All scores provide students information about where they stand as a leader at the time of the assessment. Need-for-Improvement Scores provide students with where they have the most room for growth in terms of their self-reported leadership skills. The final section of this report discusses leadership-related involvement during the rest of students' time in their academic careers.

OVERALL LEADERSHIP

After taking LENA, students received a summary with nine total scores: Leadership Confidence and Need-for-Improvement Scores for each of the four leadership areas, as well as an Overall Leadership Score. This Overall Leadership Score is a more general measure that depicts students' self-efficacy regarding their ability to lead a group. In terms of mean and standard deviation, scores for undergraduate students ($n = 486$, $M = 4.03$, $SD = 0.48$, Range = 2.2 to 5.0) were comparable to those of graduate and professional students ($n = 122$, $M = 3.96$, $SD = 0.48$, Range = 2.3 to 4.9).

LEADERSHIP CONFIDENCE

The following tables show average Leadership Confidence Scores of undergraduate and graduate/professional students. Higher percentage scores 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 and Accomplishing Tasks were both significantly higher than Building Relationships and Charisma. The Building Relationships score was also significantly higher than Charisma.

Undergraduate Students ($n = 510$)

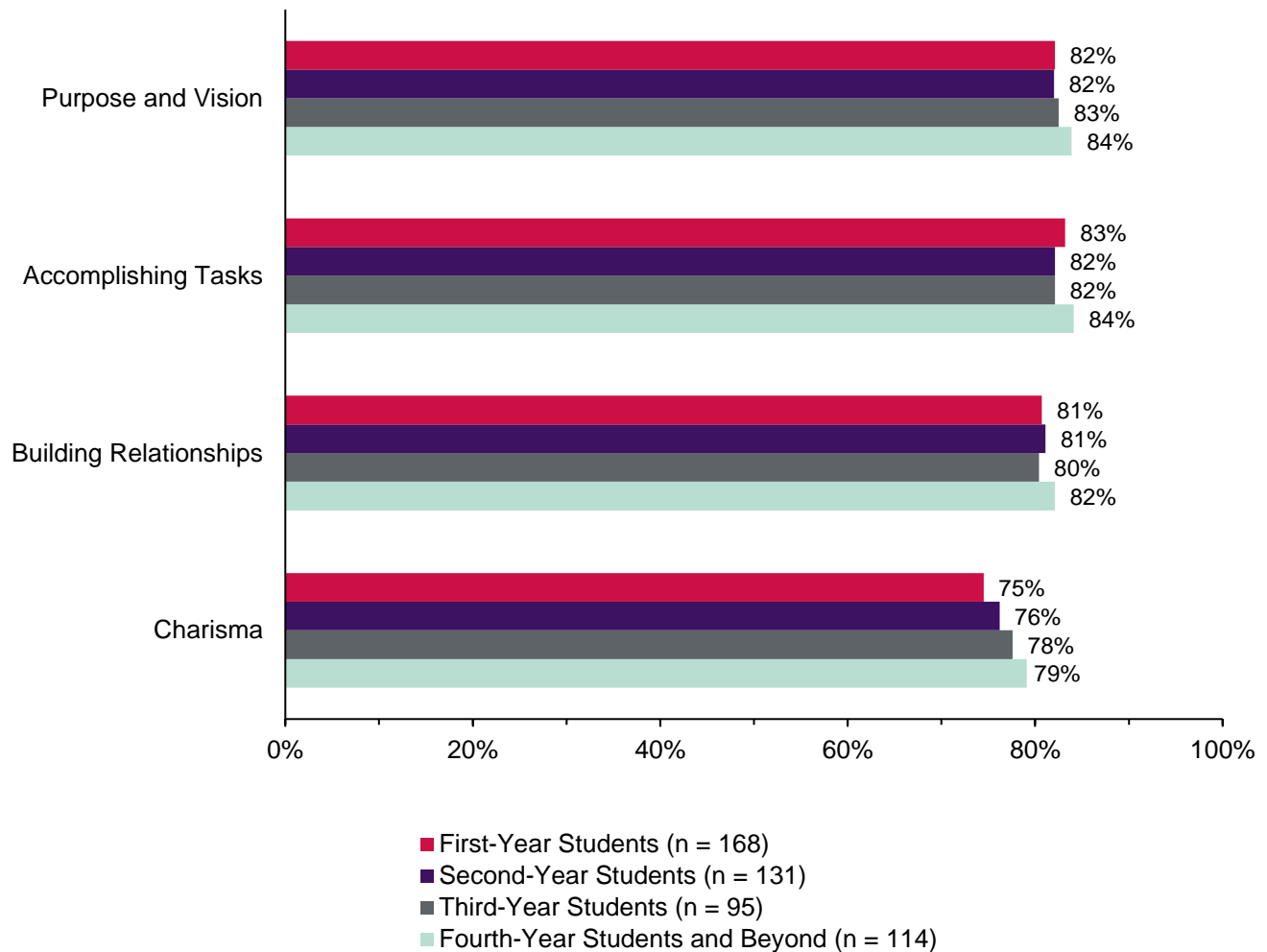| Leadership Area	Score
Purpose and Vision	82.5%
Accomplishing Tasks	82.9%
Building Relationships	81.0%
Charisma	76.6%

A repeated measures ANOVA also revealed several statistically significant differences on scores across the four leadership areas for graduate and professional students. Scores for Purpose and Vision, Accomplishing Tasks and Building Relationships were all significantly higher than Charisma scores. An independent samples *t*-test determined that there were no significant differences when comparing undergraduate students' Leadership Confidence Scores with those of graduate and professional students.

Graduate and Professional Students (*n* = 126)

Leadership Area	Score
Purpose and Vision	82.4%
Accomplishing Tasks	82.2%
Building Relationships	80.8%
Charisma	76.4%

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

Purpose and Vision
- 82%
- 82%
- 83%
- 84%

Accomplishing Tasks
- 83%
- 82%
- 82%
- 84%

Building Relationships
- 81%
- 81%
- 80%
- 82%

Charisma
- 75%
- 76%
- 78%
- 79%

■ First-Year Students (n = 168)
■ Second-Year Students (n = 131)
■ Third-Year Students (n = 95)
■ Fourth-Year Students and Beyond (n = 114)

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*p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001   5

NEED-FOR-IMPROVEMENT

The following tables show average Need-for-Improvement Scores of undergraduate and graduate/professional students. Students were scored on a scale from 1 to 5 (1 – *do not see a need to improve*, 3 – *would like to improve some* and 5 – *would like to improve a great amount*) and higher scores indicate greater need for improvement. For example, the mean scores for undergraduate and graduate/professional students are all around 3, meaning students would like to improve on all areas somewhat, though some areas more than others (see below). It is important to note that these are students' *perceptions* of how much they should improve in each of the four leadership areas.

A repeated measures ANOVA, which analyzes differences between scores within-person, revealed that scores for Purpose and Vision and Accomplishing Tasks were significantly lower than Building Relationships and Charisma scores among undergraduate students. The average score for Building Relationships was also significantly lower than Charisma. Students indicated that they wanted to improve on Charisma the most, followed by Building Relationships, followed by Accomplishing Tasks, followed by Purpose and Vision.

A repeated measures ANOVA revealed that scores on Purpose and Vision and Accomplishing Tasks were significantly lower than Building Relationships and Charisma scores among graduate and professional students. The average score for Building Relationships was also significantly lower than Charisma. Graduate and professional students indicated wanting to improve on Charisma and Building Relationships more than Purpose and Vision and Accomplishing Tasks.

Undergraduate Students ($n = 454$)

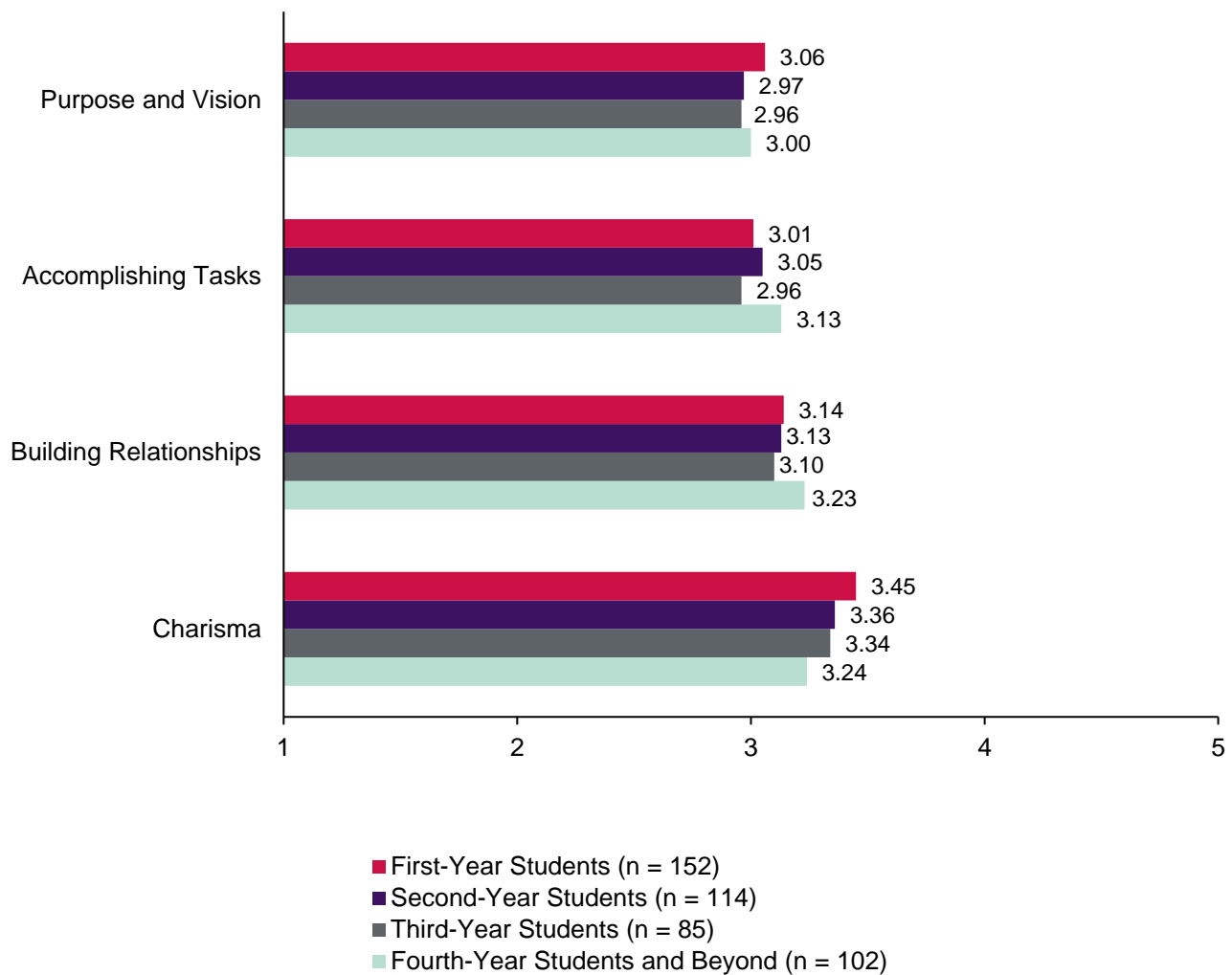| Leadership Area	Score
Purpose and Vision	3.00
Accomplishing Tasks	3.04
Building Relationships	3.15
Charisma	3.36

Graduate and Professional Students ($n = 120$)

Leadership Area	Score
Purpose and Vision	3.05
Accomplishing Tasks	3.01
Building Relationships	3.24
Charisma	3.37

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Additionally, an independent samples *t*-test determined that there were no significant differences in average Need-for-Improvement Scores between undergraduate and graduate/professional students.

The following chart shows average Need-for-Improvement Scores of undergraduate students broken down by year of study. It is important to note that higher scores indicate more perceived room for improvement. A one-way ANOVA determined that there were no significant differences in Need-for-Improvement Scores when comparing undergraduate students by year.

Average Need-for-Improvement Scores by Year

Purpose and Vision
- 3.06
- 2.97
- 2.96
- 3.00

Accomplishing Tasks
- 3.01
- 3.05
- 2.96
- 3.13

Building Relationships
- 3.14
- 3.13
- 3.10
- 3.23

Charisma
- 3.45
- 3.36
- 3.34
- 3.24

■ First-Year Students (n = 152)
■ Second-Year Students (n = 114)
■ Third-Year Students (n = 85)
■ Fourth-Year Students and Beyond (n = 102)

Note. For Building Relationships and Charisma for first-year students, *n* = 153 because not all students responded to enough items to receive a Need-for-Improvement Score.

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 this information, 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 or in their graduate/professional programs. The following table lists the most frequently reported leadership-related opportunities that undergraduate students chose when taking the assessment along with the top leadership-related opportunities that graduate and professional students chose.

Top five leadership-related opportunities students seek

Undergraduate	Graduate/Professional
Officer position in a student organization ($n = 243$)	Presenting at conferences ($n = 49$)
Attending a leadership conference ($n = 189$)	Peer or undergraduate student mentor ($n = 46$)
Voluntary leadership training/workshop ($n = 172$)	Officer position in a student organization ($n = 45$)
Peer mentor ($n = 169$)	Voluntary leadership training ($n = 37$) Supervisory role at work ($n = 37$)
Leading a group project in a course ($n = 163$)	Community activism ($n = 36$)

Note. The *n*s in this table exceed the total *n* because this was a select all that apply question. Additionally, voluntary leadership training is a form of training or workshop that students self-select into for their own benefit, as opposed to required leadership training such as a required President or Treasurer training for a student organization.

CONCLUSION

Examining differences in leadership skills among undergraduate and graduate/professional students can provide practitioners with insight on how to structure leadership opportunities. Although Overall Leadership Scores were nearly identical for both undergraduate and graduate/professional students, both groups believed they still had room to grow regarding leadership skills. No statistically significant differences were found when comparing scores between undergraduate and graduate/professional students. However, 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 needed improvement.

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.

APPENDIX A: PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

	Undergraduate		Graduate/ Professional	
	n	**Percent**	*n*	**Percent**
Total	509	100.0%	126	100.0%
Sex				
Female	313	61.5%	73	57.9%
Male	193	37.9%	52	41.3%
Unknown/undisclosed	3	0.6%	1	0.8%
Race/Ethnicity				
African American/Black/African	45	8.8%	5	4.0%
Asian	54	10.6%	23	18.3%
Hispanic	6	1.2%	2	1.6%
Two or more races	51	10.0%	13	10.3%
Native American/American Indian/Alaska Native	1	0.2%	1	0.8%
White	333	65.4%	71	56.3%
Other race/unknown	19	3.7%	11	8.7%
First-Generation Student Status				
Continuing generation	397	78.0%	116	92.1%
First-generation	112	22.0%	10	7.9%
Citizenship				
Domestic student	442	97.1%	103	85.1%
International student	13	2.9%	18	14.9%
Age				
18-24	482	94.7%	65	51.6%
25-34	16	3.1%	39	31.0%
35-44	5	1.0%	18	14.3%
45+	6	1.2%	4	3.1%
Undergraduate Academic Level				
First-year	168	33.0%	--	--
Second-year	131	25.7%	--	--
Third-year	95	18.7%	--	--
Fourth-year+	115	22.6%	--	--

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 includes "Sex" rather than "Gender".