

Indiana State University Residential Life

An Assessment of the Effectiveness of the Lincoln Leadership Community

Background

In 2006 – 07 the Office of Residential Life assessed the progress of students participating in the Lincoln Leadership Community. The Lincoln Leadership Community (LLC) project seeks to develop leadership skills through instruction, community engagement, and experiential learning.

LLC seeks to produce leaders who strive for excellence, while keeping a positive attitude, being responsible, compassionate and serving as a role model. The purpose of this assessment was to;

- To look at the effectiveness of the current program
- To identify ways of improving the LLC program
- To better understand the needs of the members
- To use the assessment to help determine if the LLC was ready for expansion
- To use the assessment to help seek outside funding for the program

The assessment project was conducted by Les Anne Dant, Assistant Director of Residential Life for Administration and Craig Enyeart, LLC Advisor and Area Director for Hines/Jones and Lincoln Quad. Data was collected from new and returning LLC members, parents of LLC members and the LLC advisor. Both on-line web forms and paper surveys were used to collect the data. There was a 96% return rate for the LLC member self-assessment, a 42% return on the parent survey, and a 100% return on the advisor evaluation.

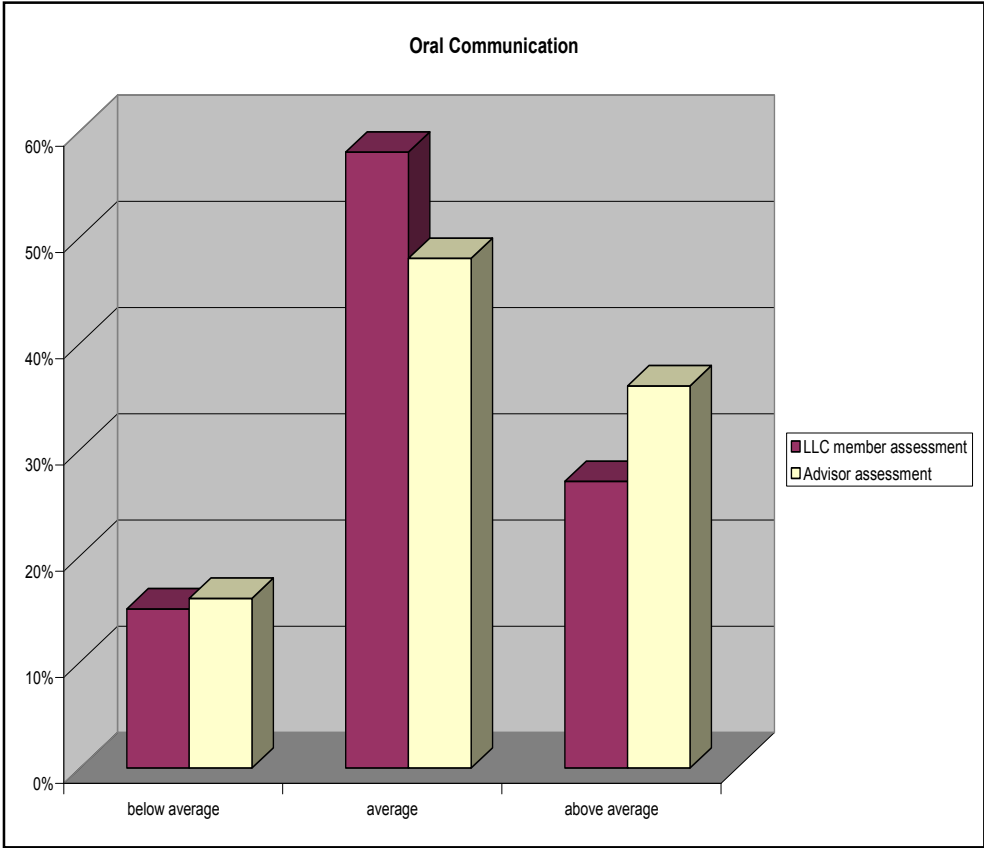
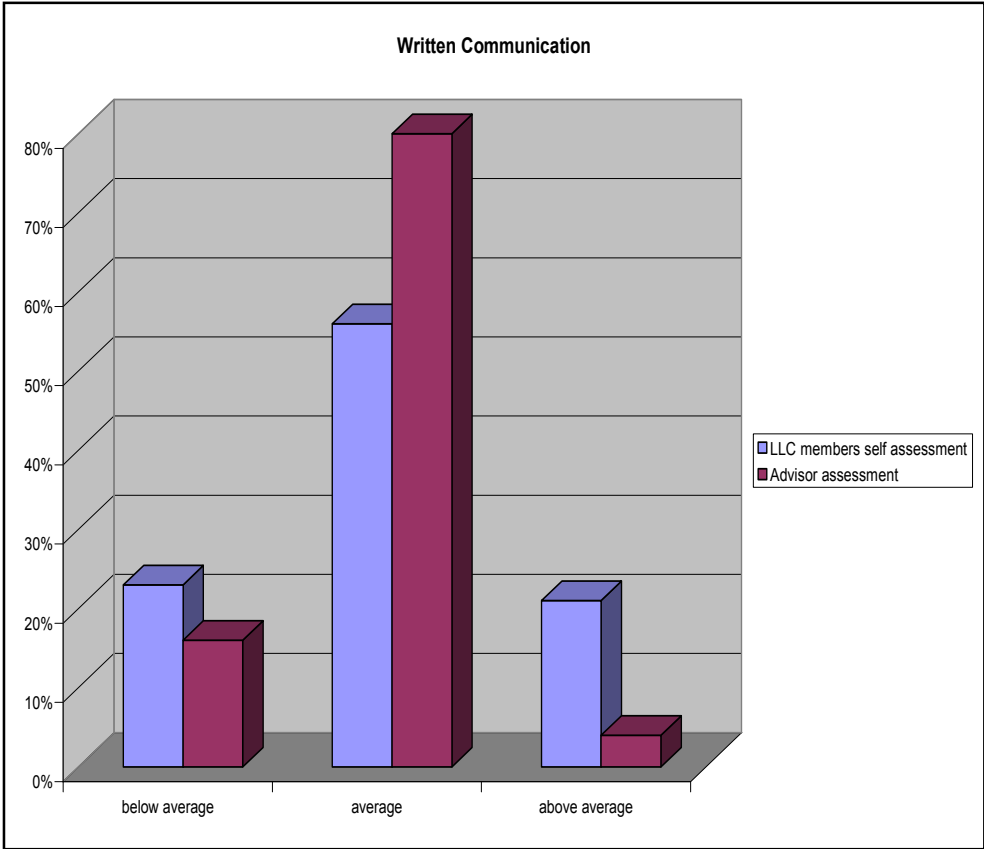
To assess the effectiveness of the current program, to measure the growth of the members, and to determine the needs of the members, the following skills were measured for this assessment

Communication

- Lifelong learning
- Critical thinking
- Commitment to ISU
- Community service

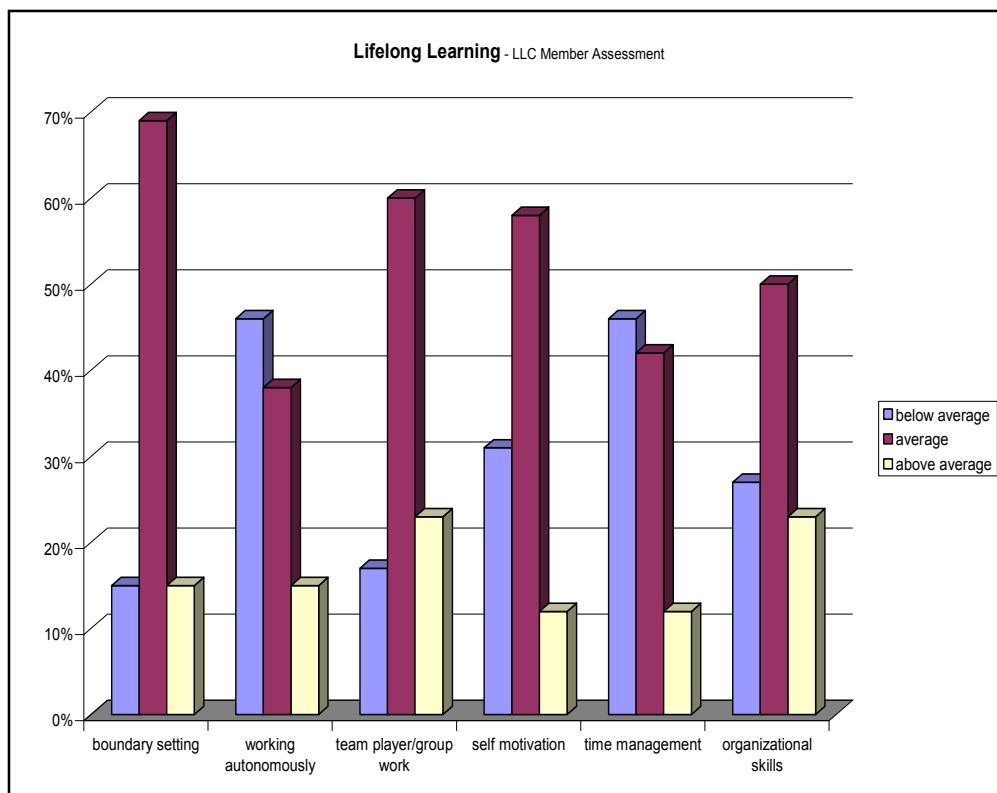
Communication

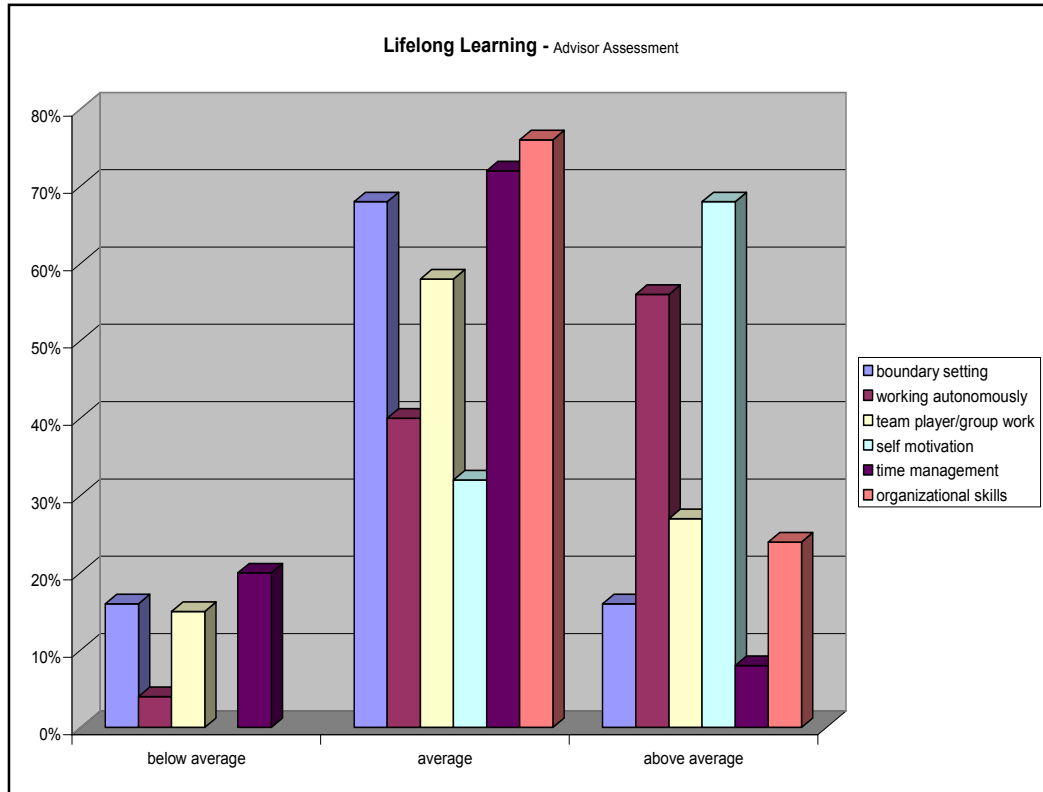
Just over 50% of the LLC members see themselves as having average written and oral communication skills. These results are validated by the advisor's evaluation of these skills. Craig reported that 80% of the members have average written communication skills, while 48% of the membership has average oral skills and 36% are showing above average oral communication skills. Parents reported improved confidence in oral speaking, better grades and the development of overall skills in their students who are LLC members. Both performance in LLC meetings and activities along with grades and observations from parents showing that members of the LLC have average or better than average communication skills. The LLC is not necessarily teaching these skills, but it is assisting members with improving and practicing these skills in a non-threatening environment.



Lifelong Learning

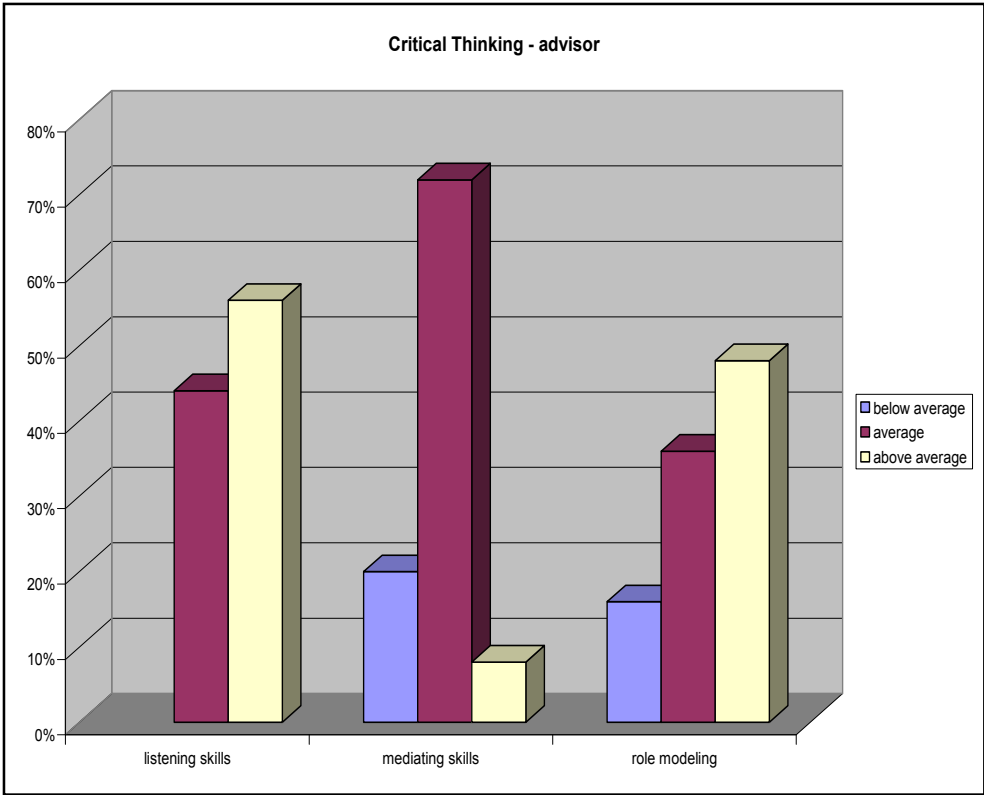
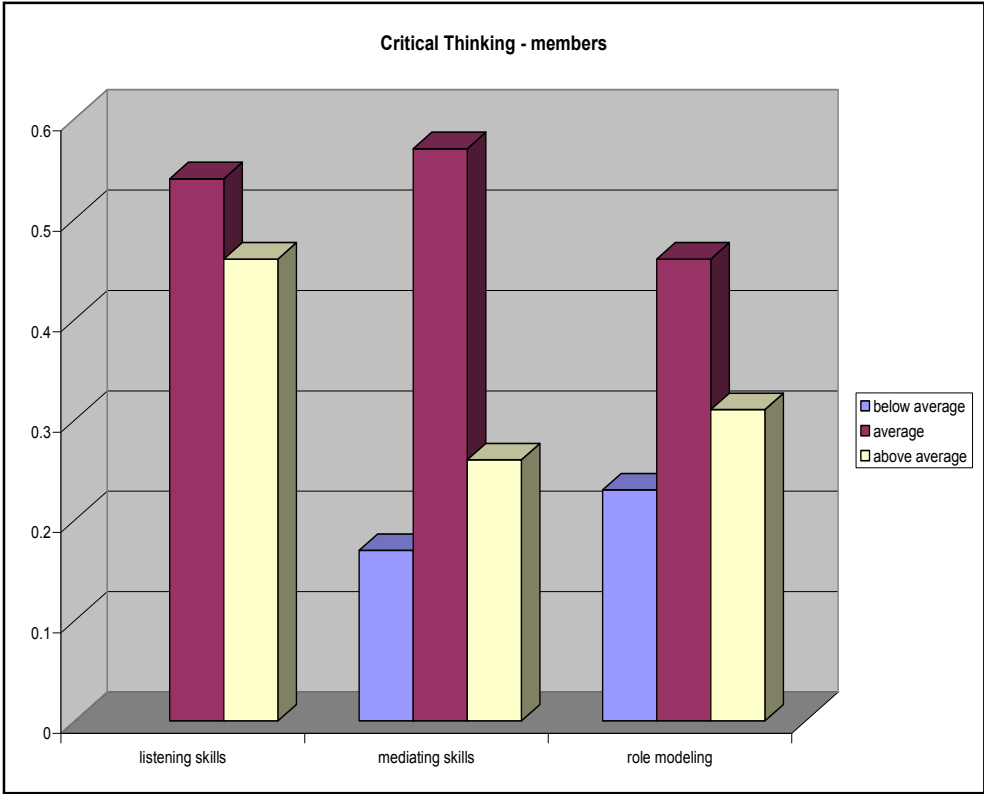
It was found that the members underestimated several of their lifelong learning skills. The advisor and members agreed on their boundary setting skills and team player skills. The membership underestimated their skills in self-motivation, time management and organizational skills. The advisor ranked 100% of the group as average or above average in self-motivation and organizational skills. The members really underestimated their skills at working autonomously. The advisor has observed that 96% of the membership is average or above average in this area. Parent responses support the fact that on average the members are underestimating themselves. Parents made the following comments about lifelong learning skills and student in the LLC: has very firm goals, much more organized and better time management, grade and study habits have improved, developed leadership skills, chosen in her geography class to be a team leader, classmates commented on her leadership skills in a positive way, less procrastinating, being more responsible and very committed to goals. All of this shows that the LLC program is helping the members develop better lifelong learning skills that will benefit them now and in the future.

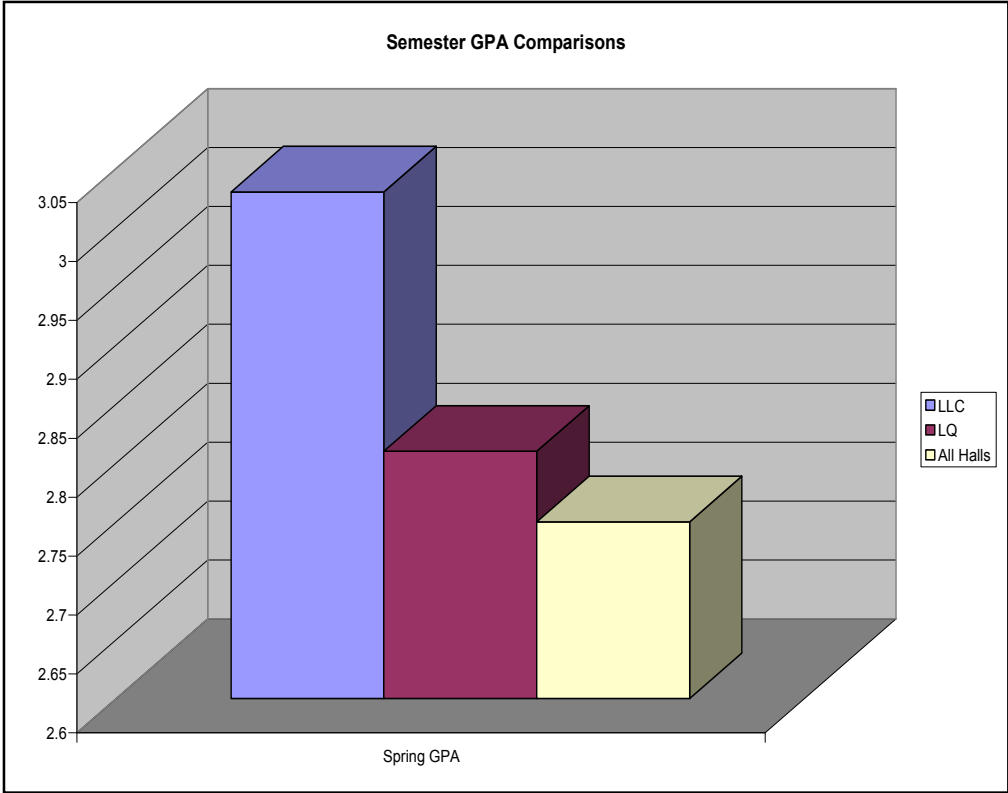
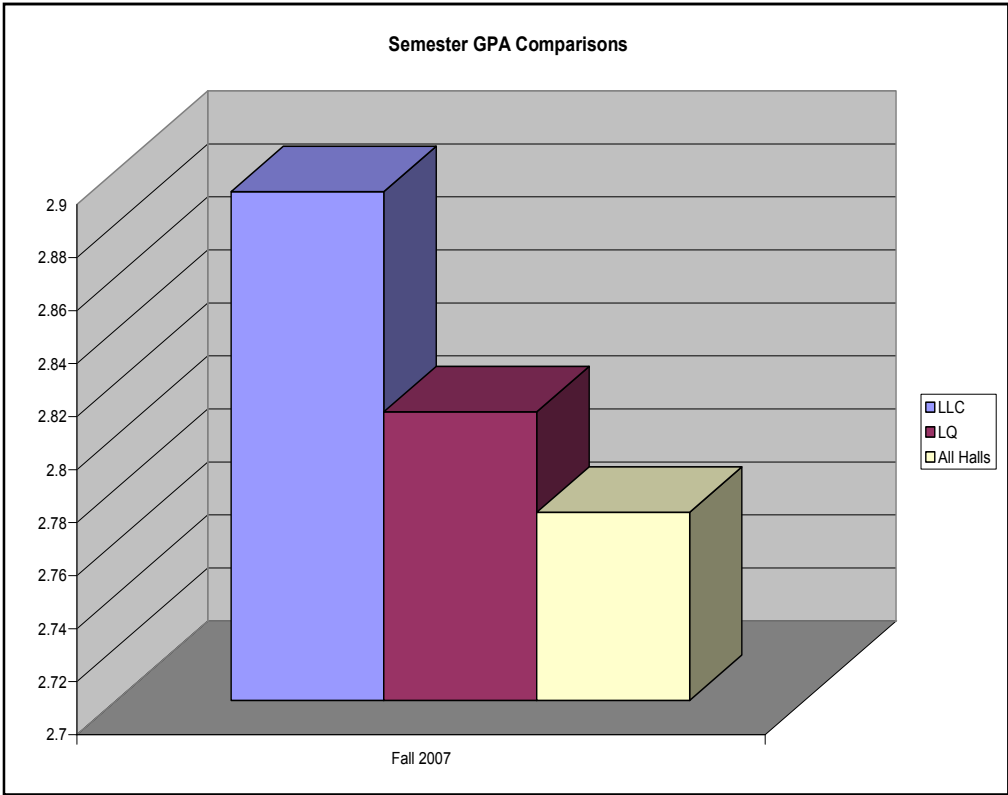




Critical Thinking

Again the membership self-evaluation is validated by the observations of both the advisor and the parents. The advisor did rank the percentage of members with average and above average mediating skills lower than the membership. In part, this is based on the skills some members used while trying to resolve conflicts with suitemates. While members do have mediating skills, by and large they need more practice using and refining the skills. The members of the LLC are very good role models for both other ISU students and younger siblings at home. Parents have observed a marketed improvement in self-confidence and increased maturity in their students who are LLC members. Parents also commented on the sense of accomplishment, improved grades and independence of their student. Parent comments about grades are supported in the following charts.





Commitment to ISU & Community Service

This is one area the needs to be improved. Only about half of the membership is really involved in organizations here at ISU. While several members are involved in many organizations and special internships: Greek members, band, departmental clubs, service organizations, Residential Life Leadership Peer Advocate, Public Safety Community Service Officer, Eli Lilly internship, University Assistant, Disney internship, etc. Past members have also become president of the Residence Hall Association, Residential Life Resident Advisor, and Residential Life Peer Advocate. Some of the members belong to nothing besides the LLC. The LLC did participate as a group in a community service project to help with Indiana Special Olympics and some of the members volunteer to do other community service projects as individuals. While some parents commented on how great their student's campus involvement has improved due to the LLC, some parents commented that they would like to see the LLC more involved in community service and campus events. With only one advisor to oversee the day-to-day functions of the LLC, it has been very difficult to follow up with members on community service projects and their involvement on campus. Next year the number of Residential Life staff members working with the LLC will increase by two. We have hired a current LLC member to serve as a Leadership Peer Advocate and one of the Assistant Hall Directors assigned to work in Lincoln Quad next year will serve as an addition advisor to the LLC. This will help the LLC membership do more community service and increase their involvement on campus.

Need to expanded of the LLC

The following are comments that support the need to look at future expansion of the LLC program:

Current LLC Members

- would like to see the program expand and include at least another stairwell
- would like to see a good mix of freshman, second and third year LLC members
- would like more staff to help with the program and to do more activities
- like having separate meetings/activities for the 1st years and 2nd years along with total group activities
- had 6 current members apply for the new Leadership Peer Advocate (LPA) position and during the interviews they all spoke of the need to expand LLC

Advisors

- would like to see the program expand and feel it is time
- need more staffing to help expand the activities and to do more community service
- number of members returning and interest by freshman show a need to expand the program
- need to make sure the program does not expand too quickly - need individual attention to the members
- 14 LLC members are returning next year, plus 2 juniors and 1 sophomore has joined for next year
- we had to stop sending out applications and turn down some good applicants because of a lack of space in the LLC for next year
- have one member returning who is required by their sorority to live in the Greek stairwell, there for freeing up on bed

New Freshmen - interested in the 2007 - 08 LLC

1. As of May 1, 2007 there have been 318 requests by incoming freshmen for information and applications to the LLC.

2. as of May 1, 2007 requests for applications from 55 new freshmen have not been granted due to lack of space
3. have received several parent telephone calls in May concerning the LLC being full and their student being disappointed
4. as of May 1, 2007 have had one request to put an incoming freshman on a waiting list for the 2007 - 08 LLC
5. have 2 new transfer students as members

Parents

6. continue the program and increase freshman participation
7. I really believe this is a good program for college students
8. I feel this is a very important part of molding strong adults for the future and hope you can continue to grow, with a few changes
9. good ideas to have the program
10. Keep a good thing going!
11. I believe programs like the LLC are important to college campuses - they encourage positive growth and development of students

We received a 42% return on the parent surveys. 90% of the surveys were very positive about the LLC program and the growth of their student. One parent commented that *she* was somewhat disappointment in the program, however she goes on to admit that her son missed several LLC meetings/activities and was mostly involved with the band.

The comments of one parent really sums up what the LLC program is all about. She wrote, "C was a 2.6 GPA student in high school though she worked diligently. I knew with her work ethic that she would be a great success in college, but even I had no idea. C is carrying a 3.76 and is extremely confident now - 360 degree turn around and I credit much of this to being accepted to LLC prior to the fall semester. The sense of accomplishment and community – a sense of going to LLC and belonging is a powerful tool. This is especially true for our freshman. C was never really convinced she could survive the transition – LLC helped make her a successful first term student! Continue the program and increase freshmen participation as appropriate..."

In conclusion, we find that the program is effective, that the members continue to improve their leadership skills and that parents are very supportive of the program. The LLC needs to focus more effort on community service and campus involvement next year. The recommendations from the current members, advisor and parents are to expand the program. Interest from incoming freshmen and their parents seem to support this recommendation. Several steps will need to be completed in order to do that:

Increase staffing – done

Increased support from Residential Life – done

Seek outside funding – in the process of submitting a grant request to Pepsico

Increase marketing of the program to ISU, current students and incoming freshmen

Allocation of additional living space for members and increased resources.