

### Background

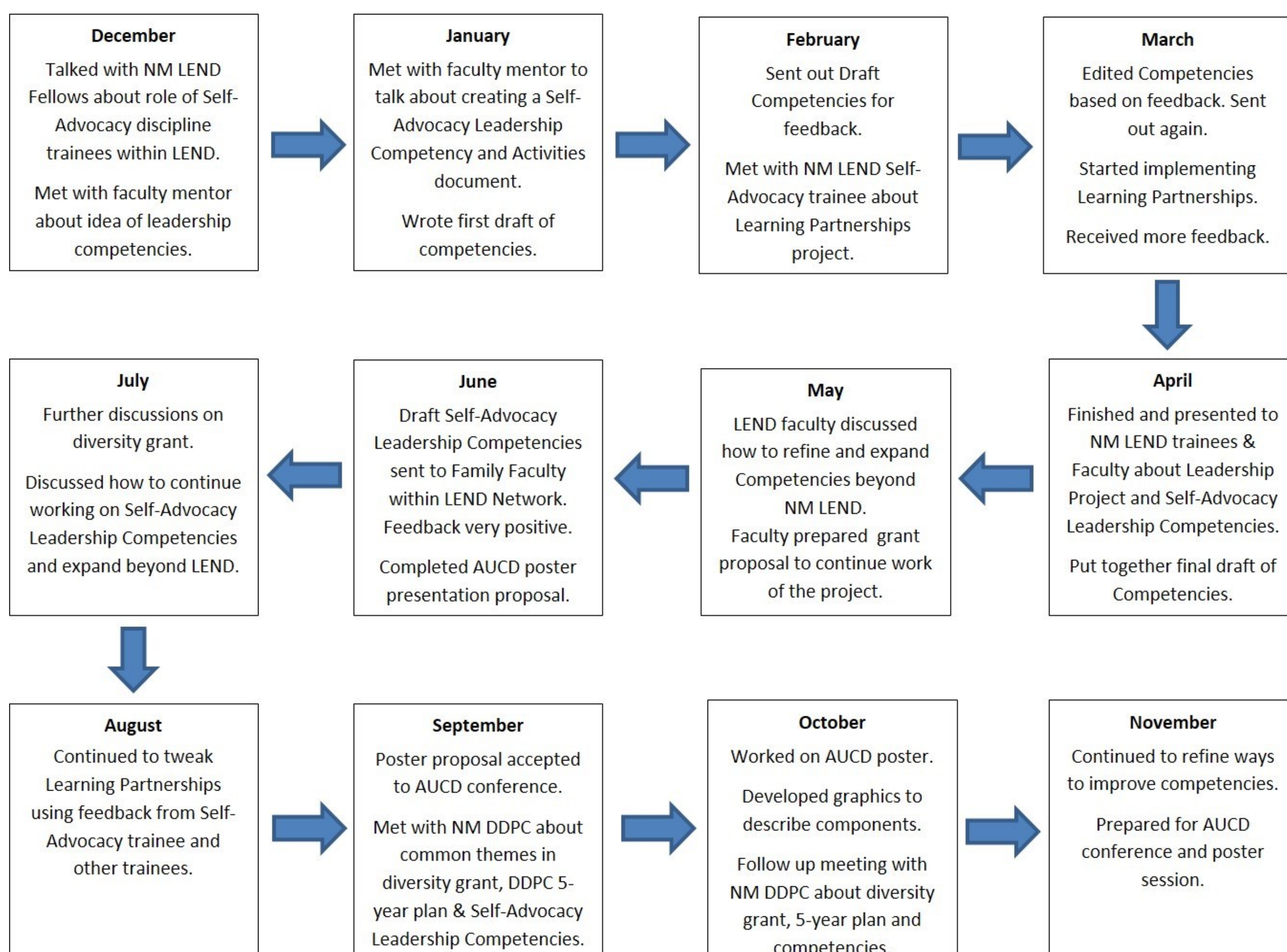
In New Mexico we need and want to develop active and committed self-advocacy leaders to help shape services and policy. Nationally, there is a push for self-advocates to be at the forefront of training and actions involving people with disabilities.

Historically the New Mexico (NM) LEND curriculum has included individuals with disabilities on panels, as part of the Family and Community as Faculty match project and as an occasional trainee. NM LEND wanted to develop a Self-Advocacy discipline where a person with a disability could learn leadership skills while providing opportunities for other LEND fellows to learn from them.

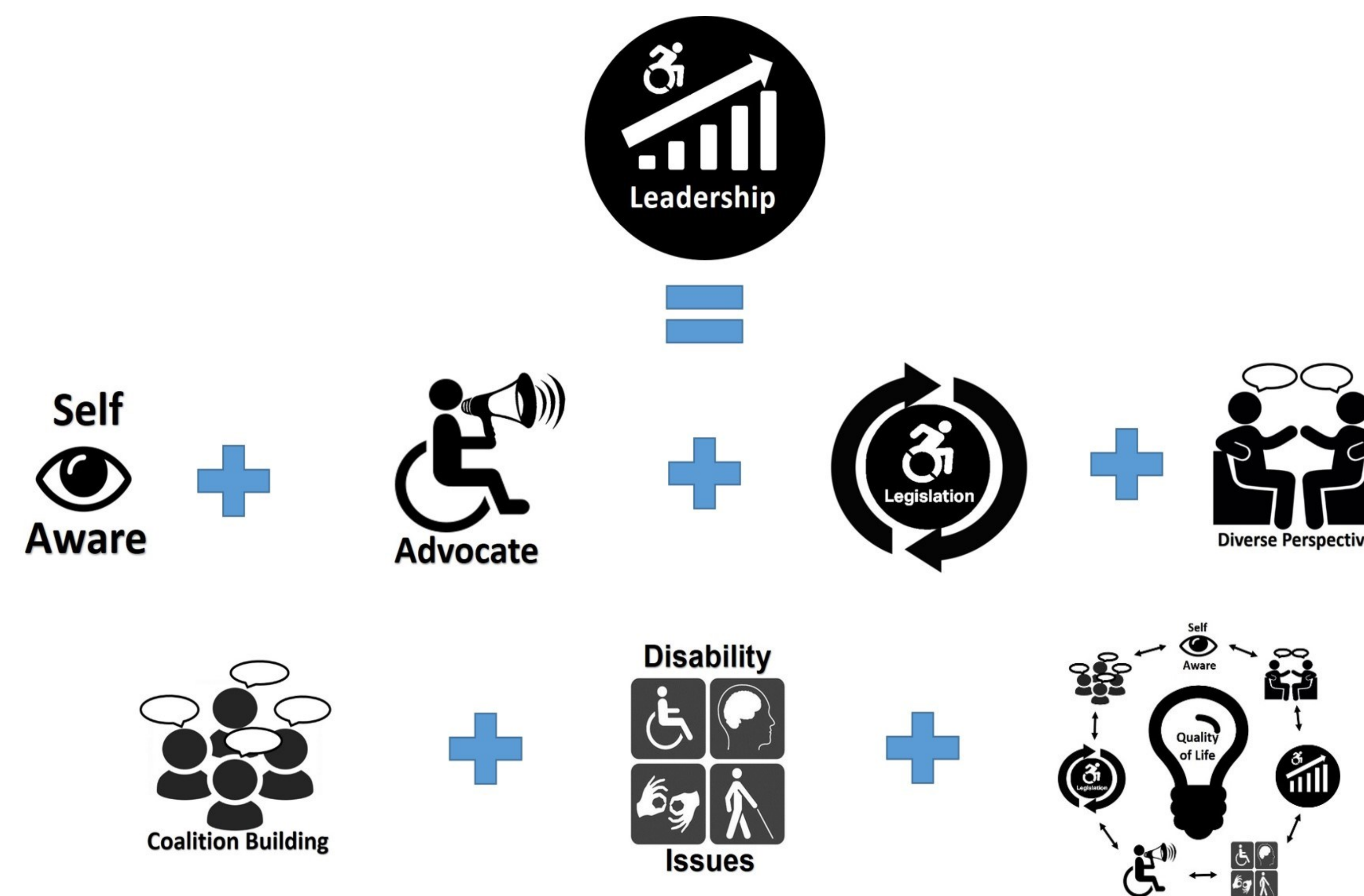
Input and involvement from individuals with disabilities was essential, modeling “Nothing about us without us.” The big question was: “How do we integrate and support self-advocates in the LEND leadership curriculum and ensure the experience is meaningful for self-advocates and fellows from other disciplines?”



### Process



### Developing Future Leaders



### Self-Advocacy Leadership Competencies

- Competency 1.0** (Self Aware icon): Increase self-awareness to better understand how disability impacts someone.
- Competency 2.0** (Advocate icon): Increase one's ability to advocate, using knowledge of policy, awareness of stereotypes, actively participating in movements, setting personal goals and effectively standing up for one's self.
- Competency 3.0** (Legislation icon): Identify ways that someone with a disability can promote systems change through participation in the political process, communication with policymakers, effective participation on boards and committees, and understanding how disability rights relate to human rights.
- Competency 4.0** (Diverse Perspectives icon): Understand the diverse perspectives of all stakeholders, including people with disabilities, their allies, people from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds, policymakers and other professionals.
- Competency 5.0** (Coalition Building icon): Effective coalition building that promotes dialogue and common goals among community members from diverse perspectives.
- Competency 6.0** (Disability Issues icon): Develop an understanding and awareness of various disability issues.
- Competency 7.0** (Quality of Life icon): Understand how best practices in the field of disability, such as patient and family-centered care, self-determination, and purposeful therapies promote better quality of life for individuals with disabilities.

### Learning Partnerships Hands-on Learning and Experience



- Teach leadership skills.
- Provide opportunities for self-advocates to experience leadership.
- Allow partners to learn from each other and gain an appreciation of what each one brings.
- Model interdisciplinary teams that meaningfully include the adult with a disability.
- Allow fellows the opportunity to reflect on the experience.

Designing a Learning Partnerships experience was a leadership project of NM LEND Self-Advocacy fellow, Laurel Deans. Each trainee was given the opportunity to sit with and provide support for her as the Self-Advocacy fellow during seminars. The purpose was to give other NM LEND fellows the opportunity to learn what it is like to appropriately support someone with a developmental disability in an academic setting and to get to know the Self-Advocacy fellow.

A handout was provided outlining the expectations for the Self-Advocacy discipline partner and one or more partners from another discipline. At the end of the seminar, they reflected on the experience through a short feedback form.



### What's Next?

- Solicit community feedback with suggestions for additions and changes from self-advocates and partner organizations as competencies are finalized.
- Finalize competencies.
- Share with other self-advocacy leadership programs, including other LEND programs. They could use selected components of the competencies.
- Use finalized competencies in the New Mexico LEND program for future Self-Advocacy discipline trainees to ensure a meaningful experience that builds leadership skills and helps prepare self-advocates for opportunities to be leaders. How these are used will change and evolve over time.
- Evaluate feedback as competencies are put into practice and make updates as necessary. Trial and error is where this starting point turns into reality.
- Add companion resources as appropriate.
- Find opportunities to share leadership competencies with others, including poster sessions.
- The desired outcome is to help cultivate more effective leaders so we can build a stronger self-advocacy movement in New Mexico.
- Leadership is learned and earned.