

VT LEND Program

- Two online graduate courses-3 credits each
- Weekly participation in discussion boards
- Training days-Distance trainees participate via Adobe Connect, web conferencing platform and local trainees in person
- Internships, Legislative & Family Connection activities occur in trainee's local area

Background

Completely distance accessible program

- **Rural VT:** 2014-15- expand state-wide training
- **US Virgin Islands Collaboration:** 2016- provide LEND training to 2 trainees/year
- **First self-advocate fellow:** 2017- Vermonter who lives & works in the DC metro area

Technology

- Cameras, microphones added in VT LEND conference room
- Two UVM staff provide technology support during the training days
- Laptops provided to distance trainees as needed

"Having the VT LEND program distance accessible...allowed me to excel in a supportive environment"

Nicole Leblanc, Self-Advocate Fellow



Educational coach

Academic Supports:

- Direct service/support for training activities & online classes
- Weekly meetings to review & organize supports in all program areas
- Coordinate with University Accessibility Office about accommodations and other services
- Monthly meetings self-advocate & faculty mentor

Technology supports:

- Technology Self-Assessment defines training & support needed for successful remote access & participation
- Training & ongoing support in Blackboard
- Coordination with University technology supports

Material/resource accessibility:

- Ensures all online class articles/readings and training day materials are cognitively accessible & video lectures/videos are close captioned.

Faculty Training

- Cultural Responsive mentoring & teaching
- Universal Design for Learning
- Consistent format of all classes/trainings
- Plain Language materials at least 1 week in advance
- Support trainees to provide natural supports to each other on group projects
- Provide cognitively accessible feedback to all trainees

All Faculty/Staff/Trainee & Fellow training

- Use of microphones & pacing of communication during training days
- Small group work with remote & in person trainees
- Meeting facilitation during TA activities with remote trainees having active roles

Lessons Learned

- Self-advocate critical addition to diverse perspectives
- Power of natural supports in cohort
- All trainees report power of learning together as peers/partners in projects
- Self-advocate supports helpful to other trainees
- Reinforced our belief LEND programs can be distance accessible & fully inclusive without separate tracks for different disciplines
- Best way to train leaders to create inclusive communities