








College Options for Students with Developmental Disabilities and Autism

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Overview of Programs

| <i>Click on program name for its website</i> | High School Transition | College Campus Programs | | | Life-Long Learning |
|--|--|---|---|---|---|
| Program | <u>Project SEARCH</u>  | <u>Howard Center SUCCEED</u>  | <u>Think College Vermont</u>  | <u>College Steps</u>  | <u>Peer Teaching & Learning</u>  |
| Primary Focus | Vocational training & employment | Independent Living, College inclusive academics, employment | Inclusive academics, transition services & employment | Inclusive academics transition services & employment | Life-long teaching & learning |
| Credential | High School Diploma | SUCCEED Certificate | UVM Certificate of College Studies, Degree | Certificate of Higher Learning or Degree | Participants receive a certificate each semester |
| Population Served | High school students and young adults with developmental disabilities and autism | Students on autism spectrum & intellectual disabilities | Students with developmental disabilities and autism | Students living with social, communication or learning challenges | High school graduates and adults with intellectual & developmental disabilities & autism |
| Length of Program | 1 year (final year of high school) | 2-3 years | 2-4 years | 2-4 years | Participants attend as long as they wish |
| Housing | NO | YES | Independent living option | YES @ Castleton U only | NO |
| Age-Range | 18-35 | 18-25 | 16-30 | 16-30 | 17-70+ |
| Locations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Windsor County – Dartmouth/Hitchcock • Chittenden County - UVM Medical Center • Rutland County – Rutland Regional Medical Center | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Burlington area colleges | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University of Vermont • Champlain College | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Northern Vermont University - Lyndon • Northern Vermont University - Johnson • Castleton University | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bradford, VT • Brattleboro, VT • Colchester, VT • Hardwick, VT • Moretown, VT • Morrisville, VT • Newport, VT • Randolph, VT • Springfield, VT • St. Johnsbury, VT |



Think College at the University of Vermont

- ▶ Federally funded grant from 2010-2015
- ▶ 2-3 year Certificate of College Studies or degree
- ▶ 14 students currently enrolled, 40 completed certificate
- ▶ Academic courses across 25 departments, 30 vocational internship sites
- ▶ Peer mentor support from UVM students
- ▶ UVM impact
- ▶ 90% employment rate
- ▶ Research and Evaluation through National Coordinating Center

Admissions Criteria for Think College

- Transition age (generally 18-26 years of age)
- Documentation of disability and need of support
- Transportation plan to get to and from campus (the program does not provide or coordinate transportation)
- Student must demonstrate functional communication and basic literacy and math skills
- Student demonstrates moderate level of independence, motivation, and emotional stability
- Moderate flexibility and ability to manage stress
- Student desires to continue learning and increase autonomy and independence
- Students must comply with the UVM Student Code of Conduct
- Family/guardians will support the student's education, development of independence, and employment outcomes
- Continuing Education students
 - Certificate
- Matriculated students
 - Degree



Student Expectations

- ▶ Enrollment in Think College is a privilege, not an entitlement
- ▶ UVM students and are held to the student code of conduct
 - ▶ Behavior & Academic Integrity
- ▶ Accommodations, not modifications
- ▶ UVM Student Accessibility Services



Think College at the University of Vermont

Academic Enrichment

- Enroll in UVM classes with peer mentor support

Social & Recreational Activities

- Meet new people and participate in social & recreational activities

Life Skills & Self-Advocacy

- Improve daily living skills & increase independence and confidence

Career Skills & Work Experience

- Explore careers, develop employability skills, & establish a career path

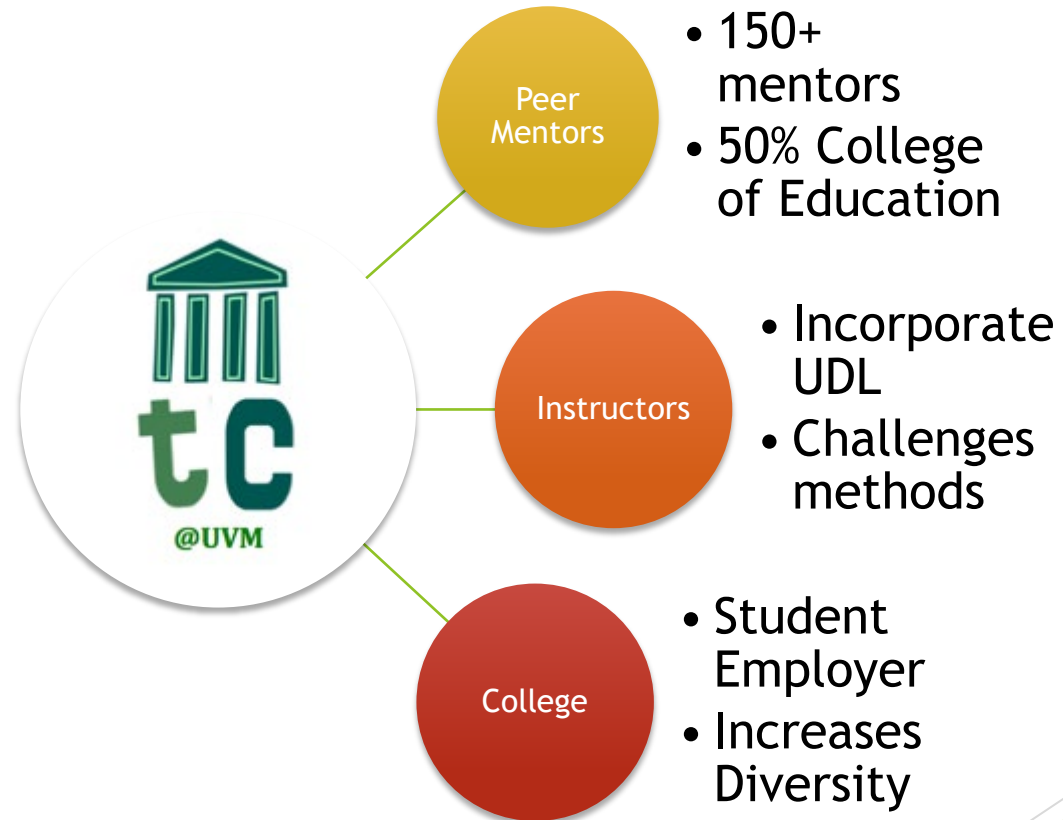




Peer Mentors

- ▶ **Mentors help students:**
 - ▶ Attend class
 - ▶ Communicate with professors
 - ▶ Prepare for class and plan assignments
 - ▶ Study and review their coursework
 - ▶ Develop relationships with their peers
 - ▶ Support and encourage students with high expectations in a strength-based way to foster independence
 - ▶ Navigate campus life

Think College Program Impact



Structured For Success



ACADEMIC ENRICHMENT

Academic support is customized to the student's subject interests and individual needs.



SOCIAL INTEGRATION

Peer Mentors help our students immerse themselves in the social aspects of college life.



INDEPENDENT LIVING

We promote self-advocacy and independent living skills, from personal finances to self care.



WORK EXPERIENCE

Training and internships address everything from resume writing to managing relationships.

Eligibility

1

Documentation of
social, communication,
or learning disability

2

Interest in exclusively
pursuing academic
instruction via
partnering college
campus

3

Aspirations of
independent living
and vocational
autonomy after
graduation

Outcomes

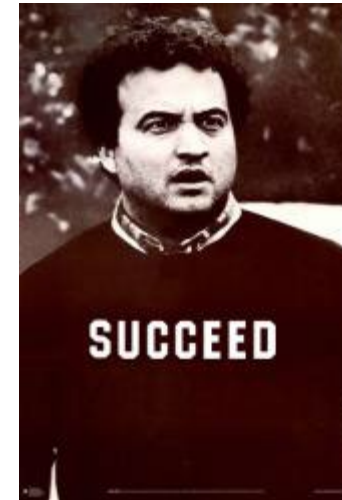
The primary goal of College Steps is to prepare students for meaningful careers and autonomy after graduation from college. Therefore, College Steps places a strong emphasis on self-advocacy, employment, and independent living skills as components of our service.



Howard Center's SUCCEED Program

Central Program Components

- ▶ Education
- ▶ Career Development
- ▶ Campus Life
- ▶ Residential/Independent Living



Eligibility Criteria

- ▶ High school graduates between the ages of 18-25
- ▶ VT residents who meet diagnostic criteria for Medicaid Waiver and System of Care funding priority
- ▶ Meet independence & safety requirements
- ▶ Full year participation (2-3yrs total)
- ▶ SUCCEED is voluntary!

Transitional Living



What Do Supports Look Like?

- ▶ Guidance philosophy
- ▶ Staffing patterns for a mobile team
- ▶ Front loading then fading
- ▶ Academic supports
- ▶ Safe navigation of campus & community
- ▶ Exposure to social opportunities

Funding for College Programs

Program Fees

1. HCBS funds direct program supports
2. DDS provider agencies contribute funding
3. State DDS grants to partnering agencies and students
4. Education's IDEA funds for transition services
5. SSA PASS Plans and ABLE Accounts fund individual need
6. Private pay

College Tuition

1. VSAC non-degree grant up to \$3,000
2. DVR contributes up to \$2000 per year
3. PASS Plans & ABLE Accounts
4. Education Dual Enrollment paid by VT State
5. Class audit for non-credit at reduced rates
6. Private pay
7. Community scholarships
8. Department of Children and Families grant

Soft-Skills Employers are Seeking:

- ▶ In a 2008 survey conducted by the National Association of Colleges & Employers (NACE), the top characteristics employers are seeking in new hires were all *soft-skills* including:
 - ▶ Communication ability
 - ▶ Strong work ethic
 - ▶ Initiative
 - ▶ Interpersonal skills
 - ▶ Teamwork
- ▶ The U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) recognizes that these skills are equally important for youth with disabilities yet are often lacking.
- ▶ Post-secondary programs such as Think College, College Steps and SUCCEED can address and build these skills.

Soft-Skills Employers are Seeking:

Communication ability

- Courses such as *Written Expression* or *Public Speaking* greatly improve and enhance both written and verbal communication skills.

Strong work ethic

- Students take typical courses with high expectations and complete vocational internship.

Initiative

- Students must show motivation and initiative to be successful.

Interpersonal skills

- Simply being a university student provides many opportunities to develop and improve interpersonal skills.

Teamwork

- Coursework often involves small group projects.

International Innovative Policy Award on Employment

- ▶ The State of Vermont Post-Secondary Education (PSE) Initiative promotes college education and industry-based career training for transition-age youth with developmental and/or intellectual disabilities, and access to lifelong learning. The policy aim is for enhancing the employment options in the open labour market. In 2019 over 200 young people and adults participated across 19 transition, education, or life-long learning programmes. PSE graduates have an 84 per cent employment rate.
- ▶ https://zeroproject.org/policy/pol21_3027_aw/



Program Contacts

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