

F A L L 2 0 1 1

# Think College!

Vermont @UVM/CDCI



## Best Semester Thus Far!

Yes, so maybe it is our only semester thus far, but we can confidently say it will be a tough one to top. Between stellar grades, lunch with friends, and avoiding flying tennis balls and racquet balls, a moment did not go by without academic, vocational, social, and physical growth. Our students all worked exceptionally hard and they get a tip of the hat; you made this semester such a magnificent success. This newsletter captures some of the hard work and fun we had throughout UVM's fall 2011 semester. Enjoy!

## A Message from the Director

Think College Vermont @UVM/CDCI is an initiative of the Center on Disability and Community Inclusion (CDCI) at UVM. Over the last 30 years, CDCI has been a leader in the area of education for students with intellectual disabilities and developmental disabilities from age birth to 21. We have always supported the full inclusion of individuals with disabilities and our over 20 projects reflect the value of inclusion. Think College Vermont @ UVM/CDCI is a US Department of Education, Office of Post Secondary Education grant funded for 5 years (2010-2015).

Starting in August 2011, 4 students became enrolled in the Certificate of Professional Studies Program through Continuing Education as part of Think College Vermont. This newsletter highlights the experiences these students have had taking UVM courses along side other UVM students, joining clubs and activities on campus, and developing friendships. Other UVM students from a diverse field of majors have provided academic, social and employment support through our mentorship program.

## Save the Dates!

Spring Classes  
Begin  
**January 17th**

Spring Break  
**March 5<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup>**

GMSA Voices  
and Choices  
**May 14<sup>th</sup> & 15<sup>th</sup>**

GSMA's annual  
statewide self-  
advocacy  
conference

Spring Conference  
**May 9<sup>th</sup>**

Think College VT &  
VT APSE conference  
on Postsecondary  
education and  
supported  
employment.

Thank you for taking the time to read our newsletter that highlights the experiences of the students as well as their UVM mentors and faculty. For more information visit our website:

<http://www.uvm.edu/~cdci/thinkcollege>



To opening doors,  
Susan Ryan  
*Project Director*  
*Executive Director of CDCI*

## From the Students!

Our students wrote journals about their experiences and submitted to our Program Blog on a regular basis. We chose a favorite passage from each student, but please visit our blog (<http://blog.uvm.edu/thinkcol>) for more fun reflections!



### Taylor Terry

I saw my friend Joy, and I said hi to her. She came in and sat next to me in class while she was having a snack before class. I like Joy because she is a nice person to talk to, and she is very sweet and wonderful. She wants to work with children someday just like me. Another friend I saw in class today was Kelsey. She is a very nice person to talk to. I see her working as a special educator someday. Kelsey wants to work with children in a daycare center or work in a school as a special educator. I think that Joy and Kelsey will be good teachers in the future, and they will be great at teaching children.

### Stirling Peebles

I finally told my support staff that I wanted to try taking the bus by myself to UVM. I started this adventure on Monday... My mother drove me down to DOL [Department of Labor] and she waited in the line with me as I waited for the bus to arrive.

The Links bus came into the parking lot of the Department of Labor and it stopped in front of the line to pick up people who were going to Burlington. As I stepped on to the bus I took my UVM card and I swept it through their system. I walked down the narrow lane in the bus and I found a great seat by the window. A minute later the bus finally took off and I felt awesome about it. As I sat in my seat I finally took my headphones and my phone out of my backpack. I plugged my headphones into my phone and I started to listen to my music. I feel like a real college student and it totally feels awesome.

#### Note:

Stirling's passage was modified from her personal blog; you can find a link to her blog at our official blog website. Please feel free to follow her!





## Bernard “BJ” Parrott

When the Children Cry: By White Lion on their album Pride...

The reason I love this music video is because it reminds us that we are role models for the children of today. One line that I like a lot says, “look at what we have caused and what we destroyed.” They are referring to the living environment we have made for ourselves surrounded by war, drugs, poverty, hunger, inequality, and child abuse. It is now up to us to change this. As my contribution I would give stuff to the food shelf, and give money to Salvation Army at Christmas. The fact that I am at a prestigious university and getting a college education makes me a role model for the children today. It took me 10 years to come to college but I am here now, which means that other people can too. I am proud of what I am doing, and hope that one day I can be a mentor too; and, with my love for history, I will help people in the Think College Program. The video is 24 years old but the message still rings true today.

Here is the link for the video, enjoy it until your socks fall off: <http://bit.ly/cDYVir>

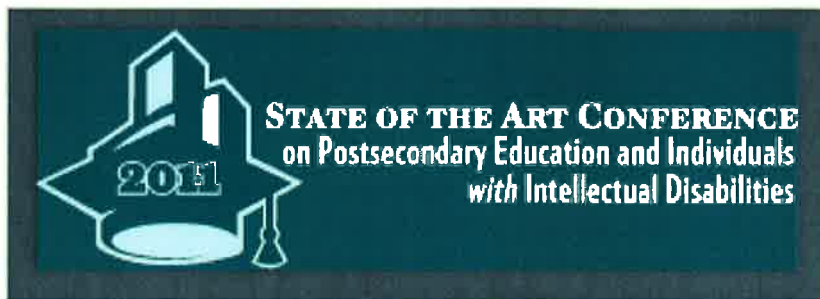


## Leah Boardman

I am very happy that I am in the Think College program. I have more confidence in myself. I can't wait to start my new class next semester. I am very proud of myself because my mom and I have found this special college for special people. I will be sad when I leave the Marche and all of the very nice people behind.



Meg Grigal, Sharon Lewis, and Deb Hart at 2011 State of the Art Conference (Photo compliments of Think College! @ICI, Boston Facebook Page)



## TPSID National Collaboration

**On November 2-3, 2011, the Think College Vermont staff from UVM and JSC attended the *State of the Art Conference on Post-Secondary Education and Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities* at George Mason University in Washington, DC. (<http://www.sscsid.org/>)**

This national conference provided an opportunity for colleges and universities, researchers, program staff, parents, and self-advocates to discuss the current state of research and practice in the field.

Conference strands included Fiscal Resources for Postsecondary Students with intellectual disabilities, Leadership and Sustainability, Promoting Systemic Change, Program Development and Evaluation, Transition to College, Research, Academic, Social, Independent Living, and Employment.

Keynote speakers included Sharon Lewis, Commissioner on the Administration on Developmental Disabilities, Lynnae Rutledge, Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration, and Sue Swenson, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services.

Bryan Dague  
*Program Coordinator  
Employment Specialist*



## New Resources from our Coordinating Center, Think College! @ICI, Boston



**Think College Island**  
a place for middle school students to start thinking about and planning for college.

<http://www.thinkcollege.net/think-college-island>



Visit our new learning environment featuring multimedia and discussion

<http://www.thinkcollege.net/think-college-live>

## Meet Some Friends of Think College Vermont

### Suzy Comerford, Associate Dean College of Education and Social Services

I have been thinking about each and every one of you and have been following your blog posts. I am thrilled that you are taking the healthy risks involved in trying out many of the new experiences college brings. Congratulations to all of you. There are so many clubs and activities to choose from here. Thank you for having the courage to try.

Suzy Comerford  
*Associate Dean*  
College of Education and Social Services



### Deb Baker-Moody, Academic Coordinator

My hat goes off to the Think College Vermont students! They rose to the challenge of college level courses with hard work and determination. They were models to all UVM students. It is exciting to see their growth and the potential for new possibilities because of this new access to higher education.

Deb Baker-Moody  
*Academic Coordinator*  
Think College Vermont @UVM/CDCI



### Bryan Dague, Program Coordinator

Congratulations to all on a very successful launch of Think College Vermont! Our team of students, mentors, and staff has made this a very rewarding experience as we push the boundaries of full inclusion for people with disabilities. This unique and innovative program will continue to change perspectives and expectations. Thanks for a great semester.

Bryan Dague  
*Program Coordinator*  
*Employment Specialist*





## Molly Nagel, Think College Vermont Mentor

Molly Nagel is a senior at The University of Vermont with a major in Community and International Development and a minor in Political Science. She hails from Melrose, Massachusetts. Along with being a Mentor for Think College Vermont, Molly keeps her schedule full as a member of the Delta Delta Delta Sorority and UVM Class Council. Molly is taking her phenomenal talents abroad next semester, and she will then graduate in May. Everyone at Think College Vermont will miss her dearly!

### *A Farewell from Molly...*

Dear Think College,

I have had quite a lot of jobs for a person my age. I was always concerned with being independent and making my own money and have been working small jobs since my first year of high school, spanning from bakery sales girl to chimney sweep assistant. When I received an email at the end of last year about an on campus job that didn't require work-study, I was instantly interested. Little did I know that email would lead me to one of the greatest work experiences—no, just greatest experiences—I have ever had.

After further exploration, I knew Think College was the place for me. Having spent some time with people with intellectual disabilities, I knew that Think College was unique in its understanding of their needs and abilities, and would be a program of which I would be proud to be a part. When I got the email saying, "Welcome to Think College!" I could not have been more ecstatic. We met for training, and I immediately felt comfortable with both the other mentors and the staff. It was the first time that I had ever been in a work setting where you could tell the people were there because they all deeply cared about the success of the program (and the students), not just the wage they were making or how good it would look on their resumes.

When the time came to finally get to know the students, I was nervous – nervous that we wouldn't get along or that I wouldn't know how to help them – just plain nervous. However, my nerves quickly calmed. The students were so excited just to be there. I was surprised by their astounding positivity as a group. They were so excited to be on campus—meeting new people, trying new things. Even though I was meant to be their mentor, I found that it was often the students who were rubbing off on me. Their excitement was contagious and I started looking at my school day with a greater appreciation than I had before. The wonderful friendships that I made through this program allowed for one of my most fun semesters at UVM.

I am incredibly sad to be missing out on all of the Think College excitement next semester, but am sure the relationships I made here will be long lasting ones. Even though I will be a world away next semester, I know numerous Facebook updates, blog entries, and video clips from you all will ease the homesickness. Good luck to everyone as we enter the New Year; I am sure this semester will be even more exciting than the last!

Love,  
Molly Nagel



## Anna Kite, Think College Vermont Mentor

Anna Kite grew up in the wonderful, beautiful Denver, Colorado with her younger sisters and two dogs. She is a third year student at UVM studying as an Elementary Education major with an Environmental Studies concentration. She plays on the UVM Club Field Hockey Team as well as on an intramural soccer team during the winter. She also enjoys art, listening to music, being outside, riding horses, and spending time with the people she loves.



### *A Farewell from Anna...*

It has been a true honor to be a part of the Think College Vermont program. I have learned so much from everyone I have worked with this semester. To be a member of a group working for such a progressive and important cause has added a great deal of meaning to my college experience.

Getting to know Stirling, BJ, Leah, and Taylor this semester has brought me to truly understand that college should be available for anyone who wants it. These students are bright, passionate, hard-working, wonderful people; and to be a part of their journey towards showing this potential to the world has been incredibly rewarding. I have a great deal of respect for each of them and consider them role models for myself.

In January I will be studying abroad in Panama. It is a chance for me to challenge myself both personally and academically. Think College has inspired me to go off on such an adventure. Seeing the strength and courage that each of the students in this program has makes me want to test my own limits, and work towards my own potential, just as they have this semester at UVM.

So thank you to everyone at Think College Vermont! It has been a truly wonderful semester. This is not goodbye, it's just see ya later. Good luck next year, and keep your eyes peeled for a post card from Central America!

All my best,  
Anna





# EXCITED FOR SPRING SEMESTER

We are happy to announce BJ Parrott will study under Harvey Whitfield, in his History Since 1865 course.

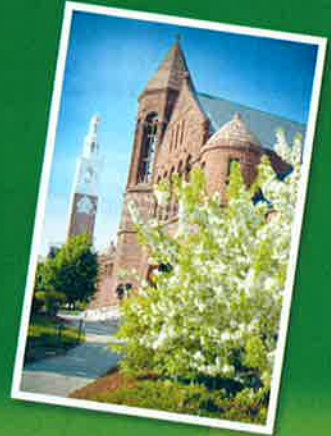
Leah Boardman will take Susan Munkres's Farm to Table: Our Food System.

Stirling Peebles will study under Peter Tkatch, in his Introduction to Acting, this spring.

Taylor Terry will continue her track to becoming a preschool teacher; she will take Introduction to Early Education with Jeanne Goldhaber.

A special welcome goes out to our newest student, Nicole Villemaire. She will begin courses at UVM this spring!

We hope you are as excited as we are to kick off a new semester. May everyone have a wonderful holiday and a restful winter break!



## iPads! iPads! iPads!

The students became absolute pros with the iPads this semester. They stored and accessed their course work and schedules in DropBox, built and updated their personal schedules using QuickOfficePro, kept regular journals using MyJournal, and maintained social networks by using email and Facebook apps. Over the break, the iPads will be updated with a new college-mandated system. When the students return, we will dive right back into iPad learning starting with an orientation to the new system! I am looking forward to exploring new apps for assisting students on campus, in the classroom, and beyond.

I hope you enjoyed our first newsletter. Please do not hesitate to send along anything you would like to see in future issues.



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Visit us on Facebook and Twitter!



New From GMSA: "Paying for Think College Vermont: A Guide"

<http://bit.ly/v6mq29>

Happy Holidays  
And Best Wishes in the New Year!

Kiersten Hallquist  
Program Manager

