



The Next Step Social Justice Retreat | 2012 Report

What is THE NEXT STEP?

The Next Step Social Justice Retreat is an annual retreat designed to give UVM students an opportunity to explore issues of social justice and identity. Each year, a diverse group of about 65 students and facilitators have gathered to spend a weekend of community building and dialogue.

For the first five years of The Next Step, a planning committee of retreat alumni, past facilitators, and UVM professional staff managed the program. The Next Step is currently a program of Student Life's Leadership & Civic Engagement Programs (LCE), and we rely heavily on our campus partners for facilitators, recruitment, and support.

I thank you for your past and future involvement with The Next Step program – we couldn't do it without you, and your commitment to promoting social justice in our co-curriculum is inspiring. I hope you enjoy our report and look forward to hearing from you!

Best wishes,
 Laura E. Megivern, M.Ed.
 Assistant Director of Student Life
 for Leadership & Civic Engagement

Next Step Goals

- Provide the opportunity for students to tell their own stories and hear the stories of others
- Provide a beginning understanding of the intersection of privilege and oppression
- Encourage coalition building between students across difference.

Furthermore, we hope students leave the Next Step with an understanding of what culture is, an awareness of who they are as cultural beings, new connections with others on campus, commitment to this “next step” of engaging in social justice work, and personal goals for beyond the retreat.

Who's involved in THE NEXT STEP?

2012, by the numbers:

68 UVM Community Members including:

48 participants +

20 facilitators and leadership team

10 graduate students + 47 undergraduate students from all academic units

Our Participants and Facilitation Team Are*:

Gender:

19% male-identified | 76% female-identified

4% transgender | 6% chose not to identify

Race:

34% people of color | 21% multiracial

30% white | 14% chose not to identify

Sexual Identity:

67% LGBTQA | 35% heterosexual

15% chose not to identify

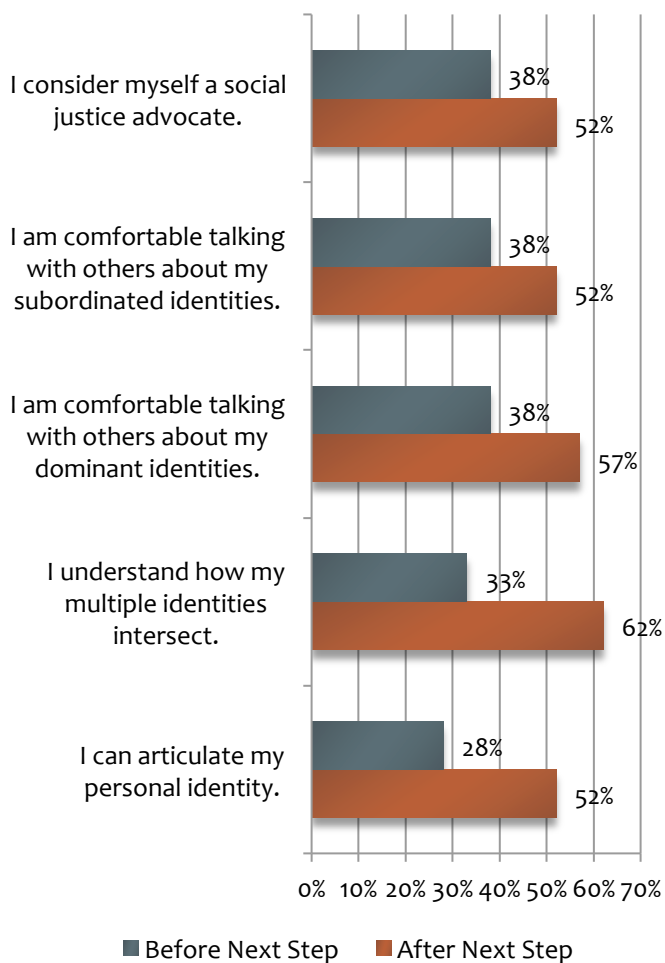
*: some community members chose to identify with multiple categories. To respect their choices, a few people were counted twice, thus these percentages may not add up to 100 exactly.



What do Participants say about The Next Step?

“Thank you so much for this retreat. A year later, I am still feeling the confidence I gained by being a part of such a wonderful and meaningful experience.”—2011 participant

How Does Next Step Affect Participants?



Participants who strongly agreed with the above statements, before and after Next Step 2012

Ways You Can Get Involved With Next Step

Facilitate. We are looking for both lead facilitators and small group facilitators. Lead facilitators are responsible for finalizing and updating curricula, training small group facilitators, and facilitating all large group portions of the retreat. To apply, a letter of interest and resume should be sent to Imegiver@uvm.edu by April 16, 2012. Small group facilitator applications will be available at the start of the Fall 2012 semester, and due on September 24, 2012.

Advise. Join our Next Step Advisory Board. The board meets approximately three times per year, and consults with the Next Step Leadership Team about the program's strategic direction, improvements to the program, and ways that the Next Step can support the diversity and social justice co-curriculum across the UVM experience for our students.

Recruit. Help us recruit new facilitators and participants to the Next Step by spreading the word to individuals, programs, and across campus.

Engage. Talk about Next Step with students and other members of the UVM community. Ask how they are taking the Next Step in their social justice journeys. Become a fan on facebook!

[facebook.com/uvmnextstep](https://www.facebook.com/uvmnextstep)

One year later, 85% of participants agree they have less anxiety when interacting with diverse others.

"[as a result of participating in Next Step] I have become more aware of the privileges I possess in life. My ability to pay attention to what is going on around me has also sharpened and as a result I am able to engage in deep conversations with those around me at the most random moments." – 2011 participant

"Next Step really set the tone for me regarding where I felt I belonged, and what I wanted to get involved with at UVM. It opened up a whole new world and has made me so much more open minded." –2011 participant

"I loved being able to share my story. I've never shared before and it was powerful."—2012 participant

"This year was a wonderful experience of comfort and love shared between individuals who care about social justice, what it means, and how we can apply what we understand for our neighbors." –2012 facilitator