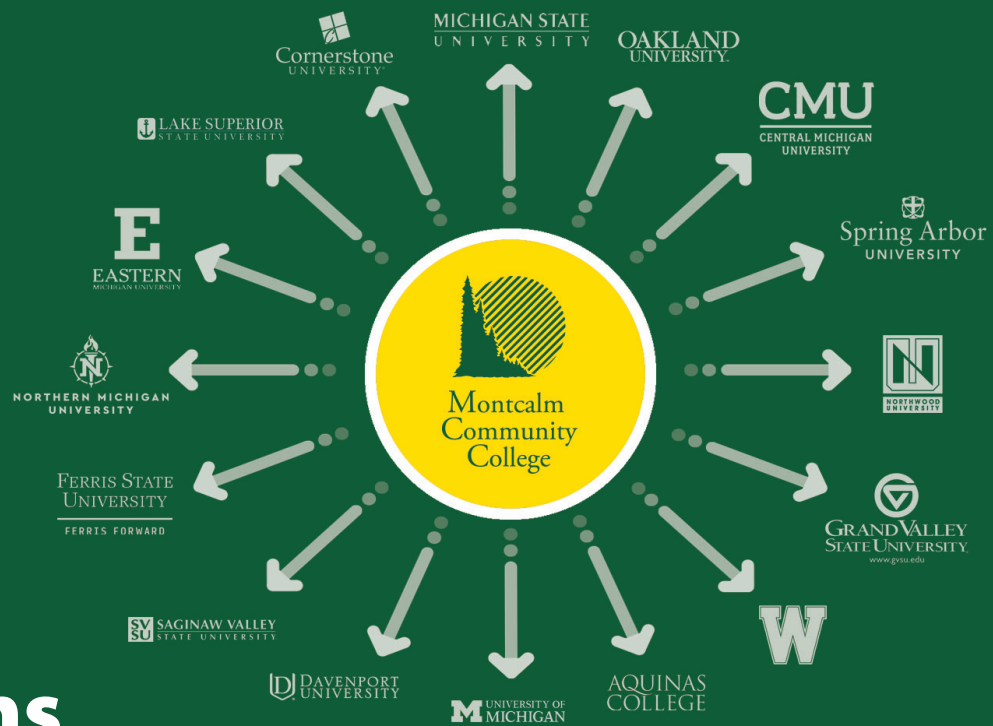


transferoptions

By Shelly Springborn

Statewide agreements offer MCC students more transfer options



The new MiTransfer Pathways simplify transferring to a four-year college or university

Transferring to a four-year college or university from Montcalm Community College (MCC) is even easier, thanks to several statewide agreements that offer seamless transfer pathways to other institutions.

MiTransfer Pathways, a partnership between the Michigan Community College Association (MCCA), the Michigan Associate of State Universities (MASU) and the Michigan Independent College and Universities (MICU), identified programs with high enrollment and/or high labor market demand to build multi-institutional transfer pathways so students can enroll at a participating community college, complete an associate degree, transfer to another institution, and complete a bachelor's degree in the identified program of study.

MCC Vice President for Academic Affairs Rob Spohr said MiTransfer Pathways provide a guaranteed transfer option for students. MCC offers these pathways in art, biology,

business, communication, criminal justice, exercise science and psychology.

"Most other states have a system where there is a higher education authority that governs the transfer of courses between colleges and universities, but Michigan does not have a system like that. That means our students can take classes with us and depending on where they go, the credits may or may not transfer," Spohr said. "The MiTransfer Pathways changes that, so students know if they follow the agreement, their credits will transfer to other participating institutions."

"What's nice for our students is that they can start with one of these seven program areas, complete the requirements, and transfer to any of the other participating institutions," said Counselor Brandy Bunting.

"It's peace of mind for students that as they move forward, they can go to any participating institution in Michigan and have their classes transfer," Spohr added.

The agreements specify major-specific courses that students should complete while enrolled at MCC that are common across all bachelor's programs in these areas in Michigan. Requirements of the Michigan Transfer Agreement are built into the pathways. (See sidebar for more information about the Michigan Transfer Agreement.) MCC academic counselors and advisors now have clearer details for students about which courses they should complete and how those courses apply to degree programs at participating colleges and universities across the state.

"We often have students who don't know what they want to study," said MCC Director of Student Success and Advising Lisa Gardner. "These agreements take the pressure off students to have to decide early on which school they want to transfer to. They can have some flexibility to take some classes, figure out if they even like that pathway and then investigate the transfer schools."

MCC Student Success Counselor Tore Skogseth said participation with MiTransfer Pathways agreements prompted MCC to look at its offerings relative to the pathways and expand opportunities for students.

"The guides have helped us develop more classes that students can take here that will transfer for their majors including courses in psychology, communications and art history," Skogseth said. ■

For more information

Visit montcalm.edu/transfer

Email studentsuccess@montcalm.edu

Call 989-328-1264

"What's nice for our students is that they can start with one of these seven program areas, complete the requirements, and transfer to any of the other participating institutions,"

-- MCC Counselor Brandy Bunting

About the Michigan Transfer Agreement

The Michigan Transfer Agreement (MTA) allows students to complete general education requirements at one college or university, then transfer those courses to meet general education requirements at another college or university, without any special exceptions.

To fulfill the MTA, students must successfully complete at least 30 credits, with at least a 2.0 gpa in each course and at least one credit completed at the institution awarding the MTA. These credits should be met according to the following distribution:

- One course in English Composition
- A second course in English Composition or one course in Communications
- One course in Mathematics from one of three pathways: Pathway to Calculus (includes College Algebra), Statistics or Quantitative Reasoning
- Two courses in Social Sciences (from two disciplines)
- Two courses in Humanities and Fine Arts (from two disciplines, excluding studio and performance classes)
- Two courses in Natural Sciences including one with laboratory experience (from two disciplines)



MICHIGAN TRANSFER AGREEMENT saved MCC alumna time, money

By Shanika P. Carter

Making the decision to attend Montcalm Community College turned out to be the best choice for Elise Ensing and her pursuit of higher education.

Ensing, of Gowen, graduated from MCC with high honors in 2017, earning a Liberal Studies Certificate and Associate of Science and Arts. She also completed her basic educational requirements under the Michigan Transfer Agreement, which allows students to complete general education requirements at one college or university, then seamlessly transfer those courses to meet general education requirements at another college or university.

Transferring to Grand Valley State University (GVSU) the summer of 2017 to pursue a degree in Diagnostic Cardiovascular Sonography, the 23-year-old named many benefits that came with attending MCC first.

"It worked out pretty well with starting at MCC because I was able to knock off a handful of extra classes by transferring into Grand Valley with a degree," Ensing said, expressing her satisfaction with the MTA. She explained that the MTA saved her both time and money, as she was able to complete a year of general education coursework that she would have most likely had to take upon transferring if she had not attended MCC.

Other incentives included scholarships, which Ensing said covered most of her books her first year at MCC. The location was also convenient so she could continue working her job and living at home, not having to worry about moving into a dormitory or renting an apartment.

Finally, MCC's class sizes made a difference in Ensing's learning experience.

"I believe I really benefited from the smaller class sizes, and yet do not feel as if I received any less education than those who went to universities to start with," she explained.

Ensing applied for the well-known Diagnostic Cardiovascular Sonography program at GVSU, adding that her interest in sonography began in her freshman year of high school after job shadowing her uncle.

"I applied, got a written interview, an in-person interview, and was accepted into the cardiovascular program. Come to find out, only about 16 students are accepted each year for the cardiac program," Ensing shared. In the end, she graduated Magna Cum Laude in April 2019.

When she is not "looking at people's hearts with an ultrasound all day" in her roles as Cardiovascular Sonographer or Echo Tech, Ensing spends her spare time working in her vegetable and herb garden, reading, road biking with her boyfriend (whom she met at MCC in her American Literature class), traveling, and spending time with her one-year-old nephew and two-year-old niece. ■



I wasn't **ready** to move away from home

By Shelly Springborn



When Cat Hazekamp first came to Montcalm Community College, she knew she would be transferring to another institution to finish her bachelor's degree.

"I wasn't ready to move away from home," said Hazekamp, who grew up in the Stanton area and now resides in Ionia. "My first two years were going to be taking classes to meet my general education requirements, so I thought I may as well save myself some money by starting off at the community college and figuring out what I wanted to do."

Hazekamp graduated with high honors from MCC in 2014 with an Associate of Arts and transferred to Aquinas College. She originally was pursuing a degree in education with plans to become a teacher. However, she decided to change majors and earned a bachelor's degree in psychology. From there, she earned a master's degree in social work at Michigan State University.

These decisions may have changed the course of her career, but she is still working with children, which is what she intended to do all along.

"When I started doing my field placements for teaching, I realized being in a classroom was not what I wanted to do," she said.

Hazekamp, age 26, recently began working with the Montcalm Care Network as a home-based therapist.

"I work with kids who are at high risk for being removed from the home for things like residential treatment placement or CPS (child protective services)," she explained. "I just basically go in and do therapy with them and their families to help the parents learn skills to help their kids and to help the kids learn coping skills."

Of her educational journey, Hazekamp said the hardest part of the transfer puzzle was deciding which school to attend after MCC.

"At the time, I also applied to Calvin College, and I met with transfer representatives at both Calvin and Aquinas to see which of my MCC courses would transfer and other classes I should take at MCC," she said.

"I liked Aquinas' program a little better, and more of my classes transferred there. They also offered me a transfer scholarship," Hazekamp said. ■

"I would encourage students looking to transfer to sit down with an advisor at MCC and the transferring institution to make sure their classes will transfer."

-- Cat Hazekamp

transferoptions

ONE COURSE

inspires

transfer

student



By Shelly Springborn

When Liz Hill started taking classes at Montcalm Community College, she thought she wanted to be a veterinarian. She had a plan – get her basics done at MCC and then transfer to Michigan State University.

But one class and one instructor changed it all and now she's on a path to her dream career.

The 28-year-old from Crystal said when she graduated from high school, she didn't know what she wanted to do, so she entered the workforce.

"It wasn't until a couple years after I graduated that I decided I wanted to start school, but I didn't know what for. I went to MCC. It was close. I knew the campus a little bit. It was familiar," she said.

Early on, she met with Academic Advisor Lisa Gardner.

"She set me up for my first semester and helped me decide what classes to take. I decided to work toward my Associate of Applied Science since I had a passion for science and was thinking of going to school to be a veterinarian," Hill said.

That summer, she took a Nature Study course taught by Biology Instructor Heather Wesp, and it changed her life.

"I just loved that class," Hill said. "I had taken biology, but this was another level of appreciation of ecosystems, endangered animals and conservation.

Hill started looking at conservation-type degrees. With a clearer vision of what she wanted to study, she knew she was going to finish her education at MCC and transfer to complete her bachelor's degree. While considering her options, she attended a transfer fair at MCC where she met with representatives from several other institutions.



"It can be overwhelming to compare schools. It was really convenient to be able to talk with representatives from a bunch of schools all in one day," she said.

With some knowledge from her visit, she did more research to determine how her MCC credits would transfer to other institutions and eventually chose Lake Superior State University (LSSU) in Sault Ste. Marie.

Hill graduated with honors from MCC in 2016 with an Associate of Applied Science, a Liberal Arts certificate and she completed all of her basic educational requirements under the Michigan Association of Collegiate Registrars & Admissions Officers (MACRAO) transfer agreement, now the Michigan Transfer Agreement (MTA). She went on to earn her bachelor's degree in Fisheries and Wildlife Management with a concentration in wildlife management from LSSU. She is now considering options to pursue a master's degree in secondary education, with the goal of eventually teaching at a community college or in an adult education program. Her decision stems back to the Nature Study course she took at MCC.

"Heather Wesp was a role model for me," she said. "I feel there's something very special about teaching people who want to be in your class." ■

MCC EARLY COLLEGE
alumni SHARES HER
'amazing'

transfer experience

By Shanika P. Carter



"Amazing" is one of the words that Andrea Gallagher used to describe her experience at Montcalm Community College (MCC) as an Early College student.

As part of the program, the 21-year-old from Carson City, earned her Associate of Science degree and Liberal Studies certificate in 2017, while completing her high school diploma. Her experience set the stage for her to transfer to Ferris State University.

"It is a program that takes time and dedication to your studies, but you will reap the rewards of an early head start throughout the rest of your college and career," Gallagher said of the Early College program, adding that she felt immersed in the college atmosphere right from the beginning.

Gallagher also appreciated the various skills she gained in the Early College Program, explaining how the soft skills taught her how to study, manage her time better, and be successful in her college coursework.

"After I graduated, I realized just how well the Early College program had prepared me when I witnessed my high school friends dropping out of college," Gallagher said. "They did not have the soft skills necessary to succeed in a university where professors have hundreds of students per class and no time for one-on-one work with each student."

With a strong support system, including regular meetings and interactions with her mentor and the Early College staff, Gallagher saw progress throughout her time in the program. She graduated with honors and was accepted into the Phi Theta Kappa honor society. Gallagher was also pleased that many of her MCC courses transferred to Ferris, which allowed her the time to work on a minor and still graduate in a timely manner.

Gallagher graduated Cum Laude from the Ferris State Honors Program in May with a bachelor's degree in biology, with a focus in pre-medicine and a minor in small business and entrepreneurship.

She is planning to return to college in fall 2021, and is currently applying to medical schools while taking a gap year to gain experience in the medical field working as a medical scribe.

In her spare time, Gallagher enjoys woodworking projects, hunting, and helping on her family farm. ■

"My goal is to become an orthopedic surgeon and someday own a practice of my own. It was Michelle Gibson's microbiology class that helped me to decide I wanted to be a doctor,"

-- Andrea Gallagher

