

All business

MCC offers a variety of programs

By Shelly Springborn

The opportunities are endless with a degree in business. Do you like working with people? What about numbers? How about computers and technology? Or would you like to be self-employed? If you said “yes” to any of these questions, a business degree may be just the right fit for you.

Montcalm Community College Accounting and Business Instructor Bill Bishop said the college strives to prepare students for a broad range of opportunities available in the current and projected workforce.

“All the business degrees offered at MCC emphasize the knowledge and skills employers are looking for now.”

-- Bill Bishop

“It doesn’t matter if you want to work in project management, finance and accounting, information technology, health care administration, human resources, marketing, general management or be an entrepreneur – understanding the language and possessing certain skill sets required of business leaders provides a distinct advantage,” he said. “All the business degrees offered at MCC emphasize the knowledge and skills employers are looking for now.”

Bishop said many of the hottest projected job market opportunities in the next decade center around accounting and finance, management, marketing and IT.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the job outlook is good for a variety of business professions over the next 10 years.

In May 2020, the median annual wage for accountants and auditors was \$73,560 in an entry-level position with a bachelor’s degree. From now until 2029, the field is projected to grow by four percent.

For the same time frame, bookkeepers and accounting and auditing clerks with some postsecondary education can expect to earn a median annual wage of \$42,410, and the job outlook estimates growth by six percent.

Budget analysts working in government agencies, private companies and universities earn a median annual wage of \$78,970 with a projected three percent growth.

There is great potential for financial managers with a projected 15 percent employment growth and a median annual wage of \$134,180.

Employment of human resources managers is projected to grow six percent with a median annual wage of \$121,220.

If you’re interested in advertising, promotions or marketing, the job outlook is projected to grow by six percent with median annual wages ranging from \$133,460 to \$142,170 depending on the position and degree level.

Regardless of your end goal, MCC has a program that will provide the foundation for one of these careers. In addition, the college has more than 125 transfer agreements with other institutions that provide a seamless transfer of credits if you want to continue on to earn a bachelor’s or other advanced degree.

“Whether you want to prepare for a career with a two-year degree from MCC or use it as a foundation for a more advanced degree, graduates of our business programs can rest assured knowing they are making a positive impact on their future career goals and opportunities,” Bishop said. ■

For more information

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'Take a chance'

Mandy Christian finds the perfect fit at GTD and MCC

By Shelly Springborn



Mandy Christian happened to be in the right place at the right time when she applied for an accounting position at Greenville Tool and Die (GTD).

Christian was living in Belding at the time and commuting to her job as an accounts payable clerk in Grand Rapids. While she was open to seeking a position closer to home, she wasn't heavily searching for a new opportunity.

"Every time I drove by Greenville Tool, I thought I would apply if they ever were hiring a position I was qualified for," Christian said. "I had always heard it was a great company to work for."

Then it happened – she saw a message from a recruiting company that GTD was advertising for a staff accountant. She applied that day and was quickly contacted for an interview.

"I got very lucky. For the position I applied for, I didn't have all the skills or even a majority of the skills that they wanted," Christian said.

One thing she did have was the desire and willingness to learn.

"When I went for my interview, they asked if I would be willing to go back to school for accounting," she said. "Until that time, my only experience in accounting was as an accounts payable clerk. So, I didn't really know anything about debits or credits or the details of accounting. They chose to send me to MCC.

"I loved it. It was a great school for me," she said. "A lot of the classes I needed were offered around my work schedule

and if not, my employer was very generous with letting me work around my work schedule."

It was a perfect match for her with a company that has a long history of investing in its employees through education. Christian started at GTD in March 2016, and by fall, she was enrolled at MCC.

While she had attended Indiana University, where she studied psychology, Christian said she was a bit apprehensive about returning to school. Then she met Business Instructor Bill Bishop and Math Instructor Dan Long.

"They both were very patient. If I needed help, they would help me. I appreciate that. They were great," she said.

To earn her associate degree in accounting, Christian took two classes most semesters and occasionally three, as well as summer classes. Plus, some of the classes she completed at Indiana University reverse transferred to MCC, and were applied toward her degree requirements.

"Most of my classes were at night. It definitely made for long days, but it wasn't bad," she said.

Christian has been with GTD for more than five years and currently is a staff accountant and human resources assistant.

Her advice to others is "take a chance. Apply for the job you don't think you are qualified for or might be out of your comfort zone because you might get the opportunity," she said. "That's what happened to me. It has done wonders for me all the way around. I love my job!" ■

Shifting gears

Career exploration helped Hilary Gustin find her passion for accounting at MCC

By Shelly Springborn

One meeting, one career assessment test and one teacher forever changed Hilary Gustin's career path.

From an original plan to pursue a career in health care to shifting gears midway through college to earn a degree in accounting, Gustin found her passion in numbers after enrolling in her first accounting class at Montcalm Community College.

In her position as an Experienced Associate and CPA at PricewaterhouseCoopers LLC (PwC) in Detroit, Mich., Gustin works in private company and personal financial services, providing tax compliance and consulting services to privately held businesses and high net-worth individuals. For example, many of her clients are pro athletes.

However, early in life, she didn't set out to be working with stars.

"I did not expect to have pro sports teams and pro athletes that I followed as a child become my clients," she said, reminiscing of growing up in Greenville.

Gustin attended MCC over the course of four years before transferring to Grand Valley State University.

"I ended up sitting out a few semesters at MCC because I was undecided about what I wanted to do," she said.

With her mom and sister both working in health care, she thought that was her destiny, but it just didn't feel right. So, she made an appointment with MCC Student Success Counselor Tore Skogseth to talk about her options.

"He had me take a career interest assessment, and based on my results, he suggested taking an accounting class," she said. "Because of that, I enrolled in Bill Bishop's accounting class. I saw the passion

he had for accounting and that helped me spark an interest to pursue accounting. He had to be the best instructor I had between my time at MCC and Grand Valley."

"Until my senior year of high school, I pretty much envisioned going away to a four-year university – the typical living in a dorm, having a roommate and finishing college before I started work," she said. "When I truly started exploring my options for college and saw the cost of attending a university, I realized how nice it was that I could stay close to home and save a considerable amount of money by attending MCC and working full-time while I was going to school!"

Gustin graduated from MCC in 2013 with an Associate of Liberal Studies and a Liberal Arts certificate, having 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 and master's degree in accounting at GVSU and also completed her CPA credential.

She said applying for an internship at PwC was the best decision she ever made. Gustin joined PwC full-time in 2018 and is working toward promotion as a senior accountant.

"My ultimate career goal would be to someday become a partner in an accounting firm," she said, "and hopefully, when I retire, to know that I serviced my clients to the best of my ability."

Through her journey, she has insights to share with others who may be undecided in their career path.

"View every person you meet as a door that could lead you to discover a new interest or opportunity," she said. "Had I never met Bill Bishop, or seen the enthusiasm he has for accounting, I may not have been inspired to follow the path that I'm on today." ■

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