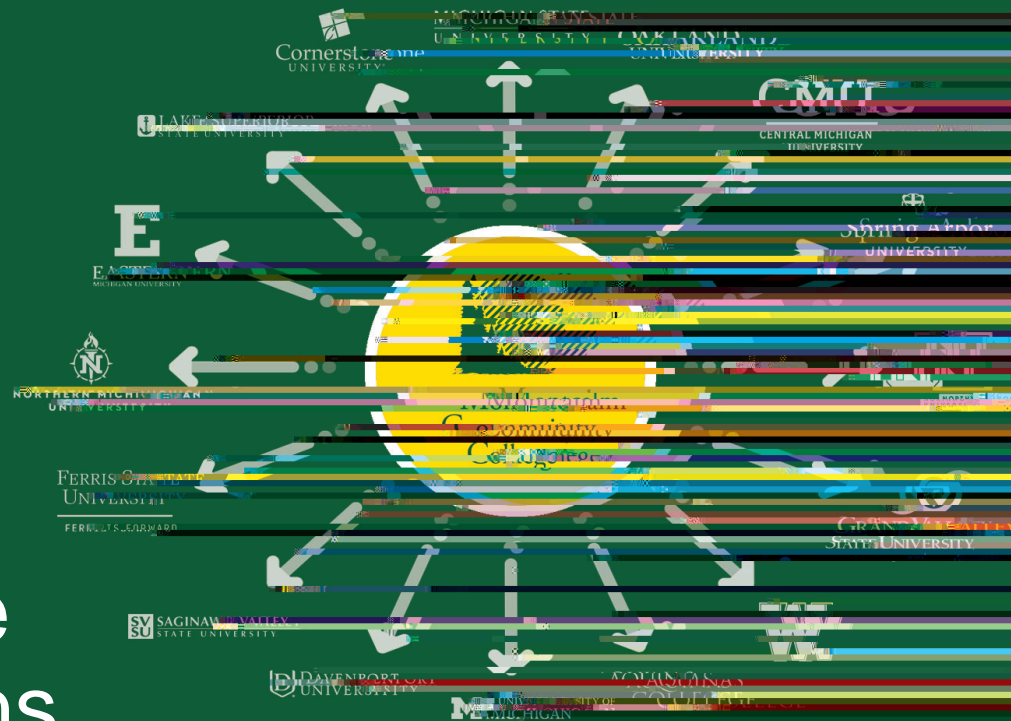


# transfer options

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.



**M**aking 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.

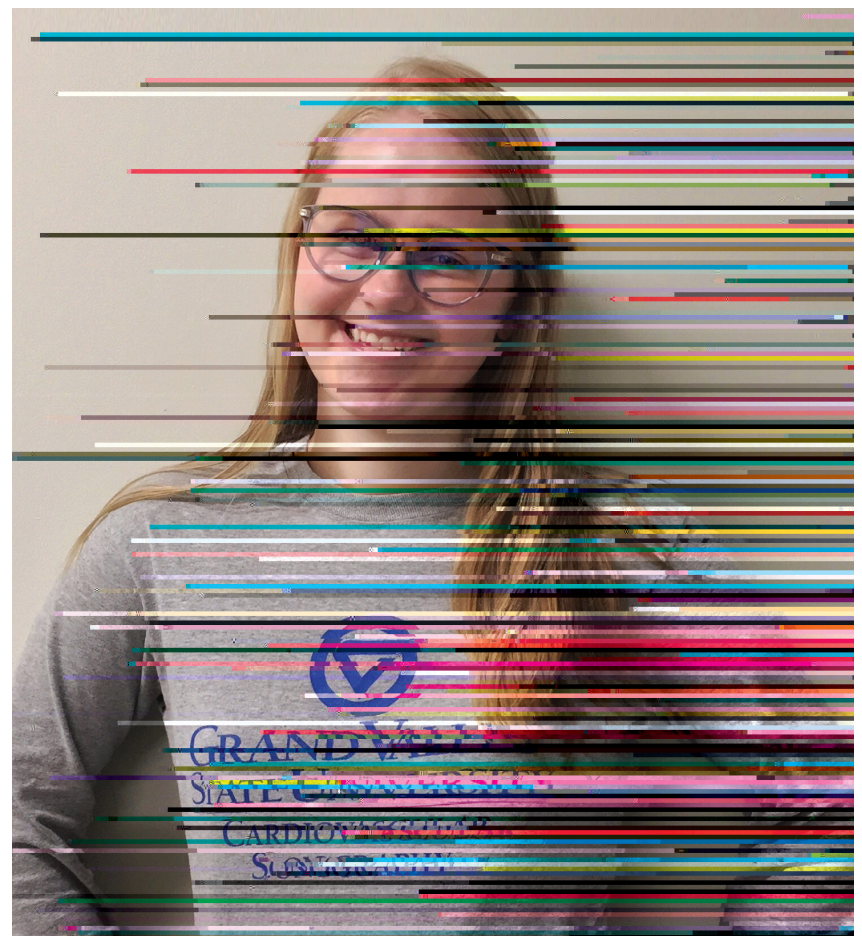
Finally, MCC’s class sizes made a difference in Ensing’s learning experience.

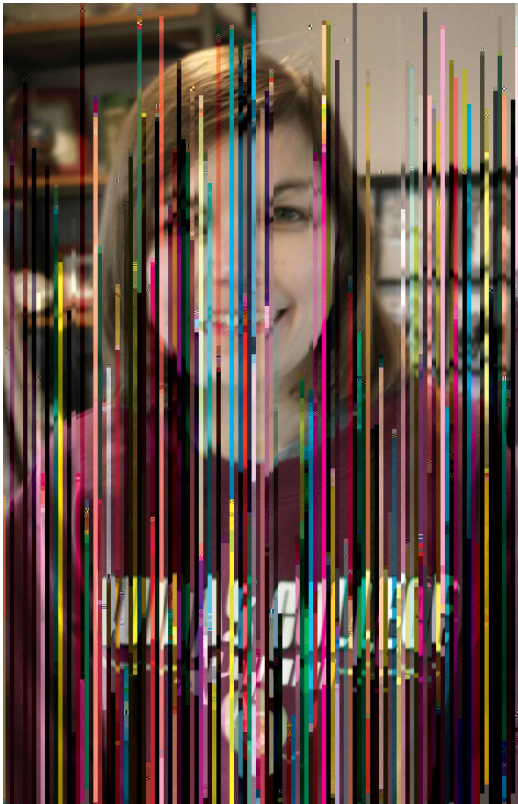
“I believe I really benefited from the smaller class sizes, and yet do not feel as if I received any less education than those who went to universities to start with,” she explained.

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

**W**hen 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."**

**W**hen 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.



“**A**mazing” is one of the words that Andrea Gallagher used to describe her experience at Montcalm Community

