

# POINTS OF PRIDE: TRANSFER PROGRESS IN MICHIGAN

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# Contents

About the MCSS .....	2
Acknowledgements .....	2
Executive Summary .....	3
Our Collective Priorities .....	4
Michigan Transfer Network .....	4
MiTransfer Pathways .....	6
Points of Pride .....	9
Point #1: Equitable Access to Transfer Opportunities .....	10
Point #2: Simplified Course Selection and "Light the Fire" Courses .....	12
Point #3: Aligned Mathematics .....	14
Point #4: Engagement Within the College .....	16
Point #5: Relationships Between Institutions .....	17
Point #6: Data-Informed Decision Making .....	18
Continuing our Progress .....	21

## About the MCSS

This publication was released by the Michigan Center for Student Success at the Michigan Community College Association. The Michigan Center for Student Success was created in 2011 with the vision of providing state-level support to Michigan's 28 community colleges by serving as a hub connecting leadership, administrators, faculty, and staff in their emerging and ongoing efforts to improve equitable student outcomes, emphasizing linkages between practice, research, and policy. More details about our vision, values, and strategies along with information about MCSS initiatives, resources, partners, events, and other publications are available on the MCCA website at [www.mcca.org](http://www.mcca.org).

## Acknowledgements

This transformative work would not have been possible without the one-time state appropriation from the state of Michigan or without the partnership of our colleagues at the Michigan Association of State Universities including Dan Hurley, Bob Murphy, and Will Emerson, the Michigan Independent Colleges and Universities including Robert LeFevre, Colby Cesaro, and Shannon Dunivon and our colleagues at the Michigan Community College Association including Mike Hansen and Erin Schor. The leadership of the Transfer Steering Committee and members of the working groups that guided various aspects of the work were instrumental in the design and execution of both projects. Improving transfer student outcomes is a priority for the presidents and chief academic officers at Michigan's community colleges and their engagement throughout this work and support of their faculty and staff to participate in this project is appreciated. Our colleagues across the nation at the National Student Clearinghouse, the Community College Research Center, SOVA, Jobs for the Future, the Dana Center, and the Aspen Institute have been national leaders in elevating the importance of transfer students and providing excellent research, advice and guidance as well as our colleagues in the Student Success Center Network and especially Ken Klucznik in Connecticut. Finally, the Kresge Foundation has been a consistent supporter of the Michigan Center for Student Success and their investment in our work has been invaluable.

Thank you to Jenny Schanker, Katie Giardello, and Donna Petras at the Michigan Center for Student Success for their input on this report and their leadership and support of the Michigan Transfer Network and the MiTransfer Pathways.

## Executive Summary

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The Michigan Center for Student Success worked with partners across the state of Michigan to replace the Michigan Transfer Network and develop the MiTransfer Pathways. This report reviews the features of the Michigan Transfer Network at [www.mitransfer.org](http://www.mitransfer.org) and describes the MiTransfer Pathways which are multi-institutional articulation agreements that provide a clear pathway from the associate degree to the bachelor's degree in ten programs including Art, Biology, Business, Criminal Justice, Communication, Exercise Science, Mechanical Engineering, Psychology, Public Health, and Social Work.

While the Michigan Transfer Network and the MiTransfer Pathways are tangible examples of the progress in Michigan, there are a number of outcomes of our collective work which we believe are important points of pride. This report features six of these points of pride.

### Point #1: Equitable Access to Transfer Opportunities

*With 28 community colleges and 30 universities participating in the MiTransfer Pathways, students have more equitable access to transfer opportunities in Michigan.*

### Point #2: Simplified Course Selection and “Light the Fire” Courses

*The identification of common courses that transfer to all participating universities provides students with simplified course selection and more meaningful experiences in foundational courses.*

### Point #3: Aligned Mathematics

*Combined with other mathematics-specific initiatives, each program identified a recommended mathematics pathway course – quantitative reasoning, statistics, or pathway to calculus/college algebra – aligned with the program of study.*

### Point #4: Engagement Within the College

*The MiTransfer project helped identify opportunities to close gaps in institutional practices and supported enhanced communication between faculty, staff, and administrators at community colleges.*

### Point #5: Relationships Between Institutions

*With over 60 institutions involved in the statewide transfer work, community colleges cultivated more meaningful relationships with peers at institutions across the state.*

### Point #6: Data-Informed Decision Making

*The Michigan Transfer Network provides valuable data analysis tools available to all secure users to make better transfer policy decisions.*

The report closes with a focus on how the MCSS plans to continue this work in partnership with Michigan's 28 community colleges.

## Our Collective Priorities

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According to the [National Student Clearinghouse](#), 52% of students who earned a bachelor's degree in Michigan in 2015-16 previously earned credit from a community college. To better serve a growing cohort of transfer students, Michigan needed to invest in providing students with better resources.

The Michigan Community College Association (MCCA), with the leadership of the Michigan Center for Student Success (MCSS), partnered with the Michigan Association of State Universities (MASU), the Michigan Independent Colleges and Universities (MICU), and the Michigan Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (MACRAO) to lead two historic projects in Michigan designed to better serve transfer students.

The four organizations formed the Transfer Steering Committee in 2016 with a focus on increasing associate and bachelor's degree completion among transfer students from all backgrounds. The objective was to make the overall transfer experience more efficient, easy to understand, and simple to navigate while optimizing credit transfer.



OUR OBJECTIVE IS TO MAKE THE OVERALL TRANSFER EXPERIENCE MORE EFFICIENT, EASY TO UNDERSTAND, AND SIMPLE TO NAVIGATE WHILE OPTIMIZING CREDIT TRANSFER.

This project was supported by a one-time state appropriation grant in Fall 2017. With these resources from the state of Michigan, an enhanced Michigan Transfer Network website was launched in Spring 2019 and ten new transfer agreements, the MiTransfer Pathways, were launched in 2019 and 2020.

### Michigan Transfer Network

Michigan's first statewide effort to create a centralized repository for transfer credit equivalencies was led by MACRAO in 2007-2008. The primary purpose of the site was to provide a centralized repository to view credit equivalencies. It was an award-winning site that provided valuable information for over 10 years.

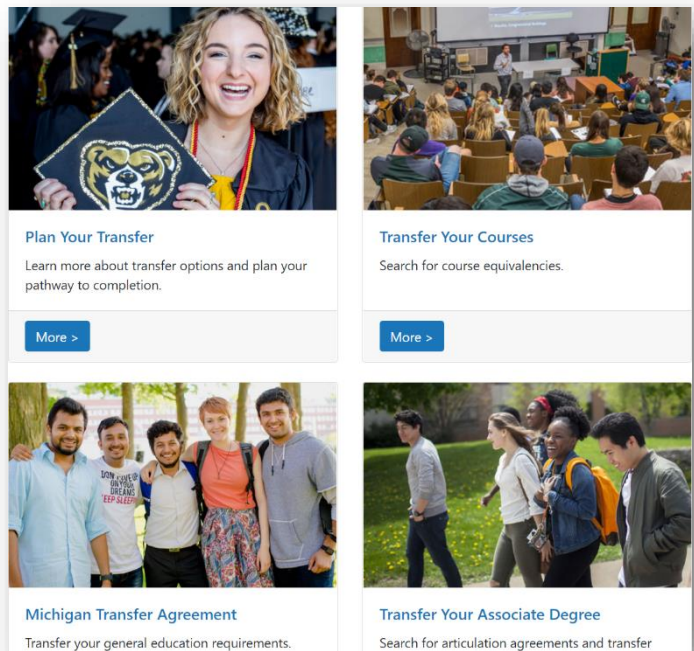
Beginning in 2014, it was clear to stakeholders that it was time to replace the site. Michigan explored several options to replace the website and ultimately choose to work with a local developer to build a custom website that would meet the needs of our unique state. Development began in 2018 and the new website launched in May 2019.

The enhanced [Michigan Transfer Network](#) delivers on the promise to provide students with transfer information that is easy to understand and simple to navigate. A [one-minute video](#) provides visitors to the site with a quick overview of all of the resources available.

Students can search for course equivalencies in the database that includes more than 1.5 million equivalencies. Expanded search features allow students to search for courses by sending or receiving institution or search by course subject and number. In addition, students can download results and save to their device.

Students can also locate information about the Michigan Transfer Agreement (MTA), Michigan's general education transfer agreement and locate articulation agreements and transfer guides. Information is also available for high school students, students transferring from outside Michigan, and military-connected students.

One of the most popular features on the website are the institutional profile pages linked from [Find Colleges & Universities](#). Students can review a map of the state of Michigan to locate a community college and find detailed transfer information. An example from Schoolcraft College (Figure 2) demonstrates that the MTN is more than just course equivalencies. Students can find information about transcripts, campus resources, and details about earning academic credit for prior learning through various forms of alternative credit.



**FIGURE 1: MICHIGAN TRANSFER NETWORK**



**FIGURE 2: INSTITUTIONAL PROFILE PAGE EXAMPLE FOR SCHOOLCRAFT COLLEGE**

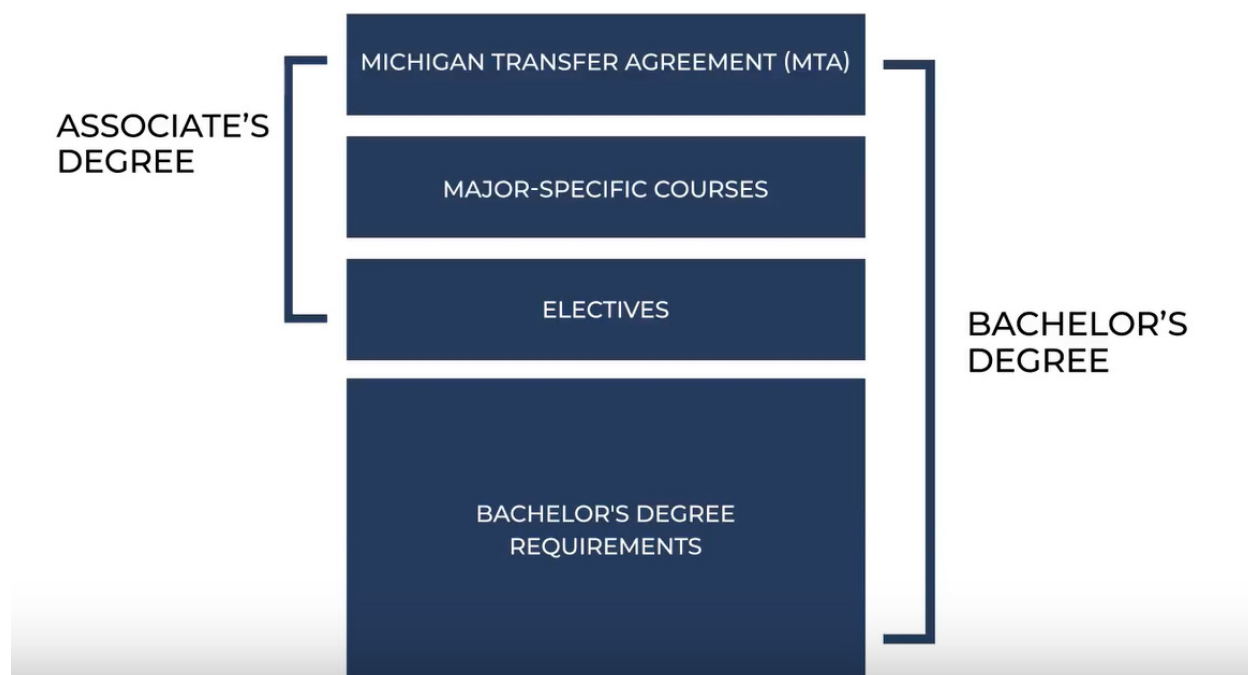
Each institution in Michigan has a customized profile page. Information on this page is provided and maintained by the institution and links directly to information on the college's website. The MTN serves as an aggregator of resources across institutions. These resources contribute to **Point of Pride #1: Equitable Access to Transfer Opportunities**. In addition to providing helpful information to students, these resources have also generated opportunities for community colleges to share ideas. This type of cross-college engagement is described in more detail in **Point of Pride #5: Relationships Between Institutions**.

The MTN provides tremendously valuable information for students, but the leadership who designed the site also saw an opportunity to improve the “backend” of the website. As described in **Point of Pride #6: Data-Informed Decision Making**, the secure area of the website provides administrators and faculty at community colleges with invaluable information to improve the transfer experience for students.

## MiTransfer Pathways

All 28 Michigan community colleges signed the Michigan Transfer Agreement (MTA) in 2014 along with public universities and independent institutions in Michigan. The MTA is Michigan's general education block transfer agreement and it includes 30 credit hours in five distribution areas. Community colleges have been anxious to expand this statewide agreement with the goal of transferring the entire associate degree. To achieve this goal, we created the MiTransfer Pathways which were designed as multi-institutional associate to bachelor's degree transfer agreements including multiple community colleges and multiple universities. Students can complete an associate degree at a participating community college that includes the MTA and selected program specific MiTransfer Pathways courses before transferring to a participating university.

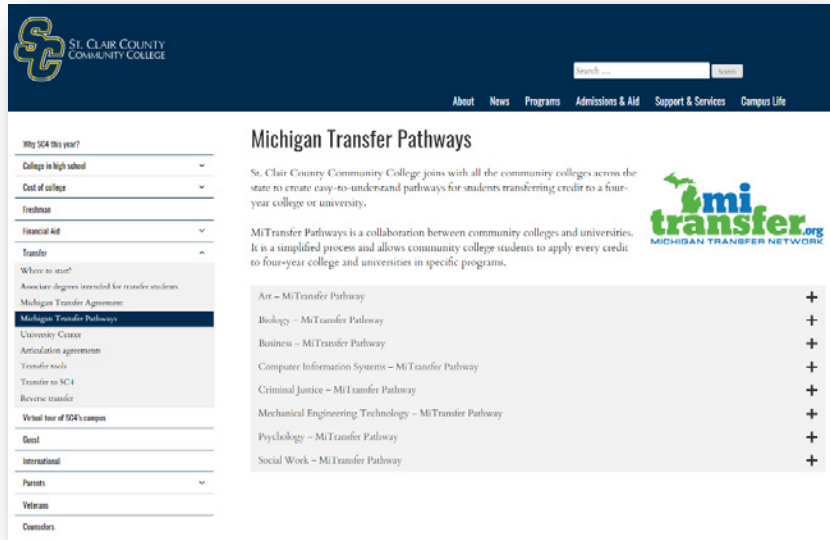
Figure 3 illustrates the conceptual model for the MiTransfer Pathways agreements. With this model, students can complete the MTA, major-specific courses that will transfer and apply to every participating university, and electives/other courses that are required by the community college or some, but not all, participating universities. Once students earn the associate degree, they can transfer to a participating university to complete the remaining bachelor's degree requirements.



**FIGURE 3: MITRANSFER PATHWAYS CONCEPTUAL MODEL**

Engaging in this collective work has significant benefits for participating community colleges and their students. The process simplified course selection because faculty identified courses that were common across the curriculum which is described in more detail in [Point of Pride #2: Simplified Course Selection and “Light the Fire” Courses](#). Faculty also spent time identifying the appropriate mathematics course aligned with their program from the MTA mathematics distribution area. More details about this process are highlighted in [Point of Pride #3: Aligned Mathematics](#). The impact of these convenings are discussed in more detail in [Point of Pride #5: Relationships Between Institutions](#).

Once agreements were signed, community colleges were encouraged to use this information to create web-based or print resources about the MiTransfer Pathways for students and to train advisors and counselors, faculty, admissions officers, and other administrators on the pathways. Figure 4 displays an example of how St. Clair County Community College shares information about the MiTransfer Pathways with students on their website. The



**FIGURE 4: MiTRANSFER PATHWAYS WEBSITE EXAMPLE FROM ST. CLAIR COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

College participates in eight transfer pathways and information about each pathway is available by clicking the + symbol beside each pathway. Students can see what courses are required in the pathways and which universities are participating in the pathway. This information is

available with links to other transfer information such as the Michigan Transfer Agreement, articulation agreements, their University Center, reverse transfer, transferring to SC4, and other helpful resources for students.

## Points of Pride

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While the new Michigan Transfer Network and the ten MiTransfer Pathways agreements are tangible examples of our progress toward improving transfer student outcomes, they don't completely reflect the significant progress Michigan's community colleges have made through this collective work. To understand these intangible outcomes, we are featuring six points of pride. Each point of pride describes one aspect of our transfer work that has had a significant benefit to community colleges in Michigan.

### **Point #1: Equitable Access to Transfer Opportunities**

*With 28 community colleges and 30 universities participating in the MiTransfer Pathways, students have more equitable access to transfer opportunities.*

### **Point #2: Simplified Course Selection and “Light the Fire” Courses**

*The identification of common courses that transfer to all participating universities provides students with simplified course selection and more meaningful experiences in foundational courses.*

### **Point #3: Aligned Mathematics**

*Combined with other mathematics related initiatives, each MiTransfer Pathways selected a recommended mathematics pathway – quantitative reasoning, statistics, or pathway to calculus/college algebra – aligned with the program.*

### **Point #4: Engagement Within the College**

*The MiTransfer project identified gaps in institutional practices and supported enhanced communication between faculty, staff, and administrators at community colleges.*

### **Point #5: Relationships Between Institutions**

*With over 50 institutions involved in the statewide transfer work, community colleges created more meaningful relationships with peers at institutions across the state.*

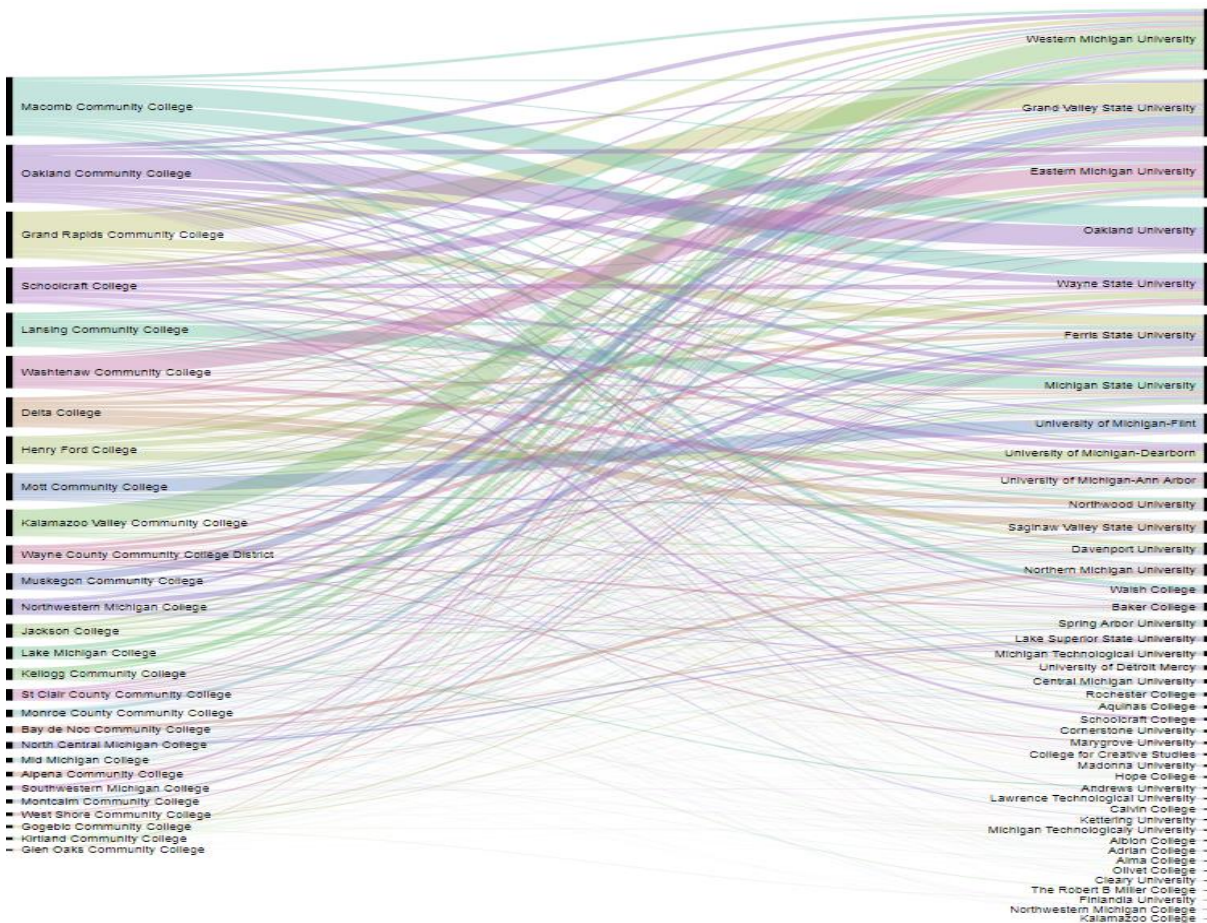
### **Point #6: Data-Informed Decision Making**

*The Michigan Transfer Network provides valuable data analysis tools available to all secure users to make better transfer decisions.*

## Point #1: Equitable Access to Transfer Opportunities

In Michigan, there is not a state agency or executive office for higher education to manage statewide transfer efforts. Michigan does not have a common course numbering system, there are no common learning outcomes across institutions, and there were previously no state level coordinated articulation agreements,

Despite this lack of coordination, transfer students are mobile between and among colleges and universities throughout the state. Figure 5 illustrates the various transfer patterns from Michigan community colleges to public and independent institutions across the state.<sup>1</sup>



**FIGURE 5: TRANSFER PATTERNS FROM COMMUNITY COLLEGES TO UNIVERSITIES IN MICHIGAN**

For instance, Gogebic Community College is located in Michigan's far western Upper Peninsula and has the smallest enrollment in the state (student headcount was 1,188 in 2018-2019). Despite a small student population, students from Gogebic transferred to 9 public universities, 2 independent colleges, several in-state community colleges, and

<sup>1</sup> Figure 5 is from an analysis published in *Postsecondary Transfer and Mobility in Michigan: Exploring Transfer Patterns, Programs, Places, and People* by Jason Taylor, Ph.D. available at <https://www.mcca.org/Reports-and-Publications>.

also to out-of-state institutions in the 2018-19 academic year (Source: [www.mischooldata.org](http://www.mischooldata.org)). As a participant in all 10 MiTransfer Pathways agreements, Gogebic Community College can offer students the same transfer options as community colleges with much larger student populations in closer geographic proximity to transfer partners, creating greater equity in access across the state.

In another example, Wayne County Community College District (WCCCD) located in Detroit, Michigan enrolls about 33% of the total Black and African-American students at community colleges in Michigan (Source: IPEDS). Although WCCCD is located in a densely populated area with many transfer options available to students, the college participated in all 10 MiTransfer Pathways agreements so that their students can maximize transfer opportunities with nearby partners or colleges and universities across the state. WCCCD continues to participate in transfer initiatives to achieve its strategic goal to strengthen partnerships with 4-year colleges and universities. WCCCD's largest transfer partner is Wayne State University (WSU) with nearly 500 students transferring from WCCCD to WSU in 2018-19, yet WCCCD students transfer to all 15 public universities in Michigan, a dozen independent colleges and universities, and several community colleges. Given the high number of transfer destinations of WCCCD students, the MiTransfer Pathways created opportunities for WCCCD to offer more transferrable courses and establish relationships with more transfer partners across the state.

At Kalamazoo Valley Community College (KVCC) located in Kalamazoo, Michigan, nearly 75% of KVCC students transfer to Western Michigan University (WMU), also located in Kalamazoo (Source: [www.mischooldata.org](http://www.mischooldata.org)). But because KVCC participates in eight of the pathways, the college offers students transfer opportunities at institutions across the state and also works actively with WMU's one MiTransfer Pathway in Business.

These are just three examples of the impact of the MiTransfer Pathways on expanding equitable access to transfer opportunities in Michigan. The Transfer Steering Committee selected 12 programs for which to create MiTransfer Pathways agreements. These 12 programs represent some of the largest bachelor's degree programs in the state based on completion data in IPEDS, have strong labor market outcomes or represent programs with the greatest need for more graduates based on information from Michigan's Bureau of Labor Market Information and Strategic Initiatives (Source: <https://bit.ly/2LVBlcu>). We successfully developed 10 MiTransfer Pathways agreements in Art, Biology, Business, Communication, Criminal Justice, Exercise Science, Mechanical Engineering, Psychology, Public Health, and Social Work.<sup>2</sup>

We have enjoyed widespread participation in the MiTransfer Pathways. All 28 community colleges participated in the MiTransfer Pathways initiative and 14 community colleges participate in all 10 pathways agreements. These agreements collectively potentially replace 3,571 individual articulation agreements between one

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<sup>2</sup> We convened faculty in Computer Science and English but were unable to come to consensus on common courses within the time limits of this funded project.

community college and one university. Each pathway included between three and ten courses that are all required by the bachelor's degree granting institution, apply transfer credit toward the major and are documented as direct transfer equivalencies in the Michigan Transfer Network. Figure 6 displays the number of participating institutions in each pathway.

Pathway	Community Colleges	Universities	Total
Art	24	14	48
Biology	28	13	41
Business	28	20	48
Communication	23	18	41
Criminal Justice	28	14	42
Exercise Science	17	11	28
Mechanical Engineering	22	14	36
Psychology	28	20	48
Public Health	16	7	23
Social Work	26	13	39

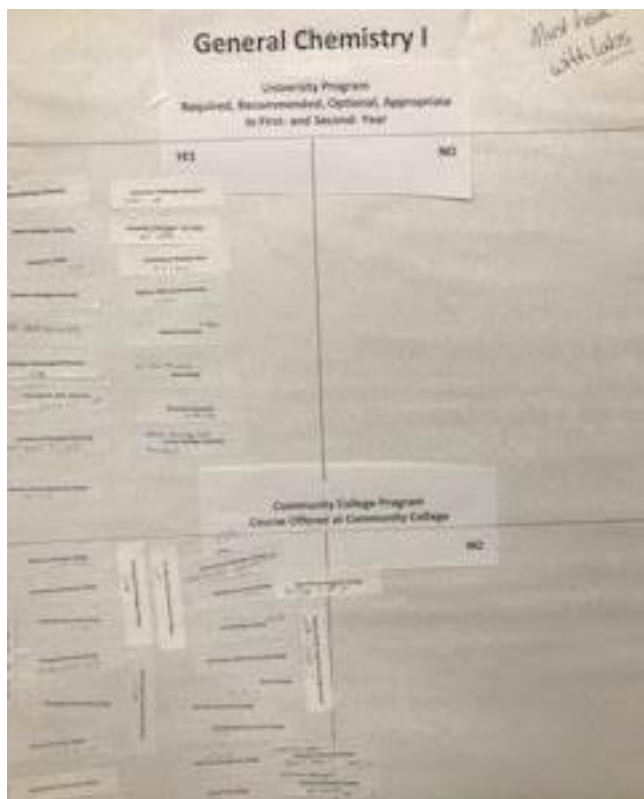
**FIGURE 6: MiTRANSFER PATHWAYS PARTICIPATION**

To be sure, community colleges had relationships with multiple transfer partners prior to the MiTransfer Pathways, but these multi-institutional agreements provided a convenient way to establish partnerships with institutions across the state. While nearby transfer partners will always be important, the expansion of completely online programs due to the Coronavirus pandemic offers students more choices and more flexibility in their transfer destination.

## Point #2: Simplified Course Selection and “Light the Fire” Courses

Students are frequently faced with making high-stakes decisions regarding which courses to take early in their academic career. Too often, students are presented with a complicated matrix of choices which could lead to wasted credits and repeated content, particularly as transfer destinations are often inconsistent in how they take the same community college's coursework.

The MiTransfer Pathways project addressed this issue by engaging faculty in a process of selecting courses that are required, recommended, optional and appropriate for students to complete in the first- and second-year at the community college.



**FIGURE 7: MiTRANSFER PATHWAYS COURSE POSTER EXAMPLE**

Faculty participated in a relatively quick process to identify these courses during statewide convenings. Large easel-pad sheets were placed around the room with common lower division courses identified. Faculty were provided with a sheet of stickers with the name of their institution on the label. University faculty placed their sticker in the “yes” column if the course is required, recommended, optional or appropriate in the first- and second-year of the program. Community college faculty placed a label in the “yes” column if the course is offered at the community college. The example in Figure 7 is an example of the process and shows that General Chemistry I is required, recommended, optional, or appropriate in the Biology programs at every participating university and it is offered at every community college. Faculty engaged in this process for 10-15 courses per pathway. The “sticker” process took

about 15-20 minutes to complete, leaving the faculty time to discuss the common lower division courses in the pathway. Ultimately, each program identified between three and ten courses that should be completed in the first- and second- year at the community college. With only a few exceptions, these common courses will transfer to all of the four-year institutions participating in the MiTransfer Pathways agreements. For example, the Psychology faculty recommended that students complete Introduction to Psychology, Abnormal Psychology, Life Span/ Developmental Psychology, and Social Psychology. These MiTransfer Pathways courses, along with the Michigan Transfer Agreement courses, will transfer and apply in the Psychology program at all 20 participating universities. In addition, participating universities identified other transferrable courses specific to their institution but not universally required or recommended at all participating institutions that could be completed at participating community colleges. The community colleges also identified courses that are required for the associate degree but may not be required for the bachelor’s degree.

Once faculty identified these common courses, institutions began a process to



### **PSYCHOLOGY MITRANSFER PATHWAYS COURSES**

- [Introduction to Psychology](#)
- [Abnormal Psychology](#)
- [Life Span/ Developmental Psychology](#)
- [Social Psychology](#)

ensure that all of the MiTransfer Pathways courses transferred as direct equivalents (i.e. PSY 101 = PSYCH 111) instead of general, departmental, or elective credit (i.e. PSY 101 = PSYCH GEN) and that the equivalent courses were published in the course equivalency database on the Michigan Transfer Network.

These common MiTransfer Pathways courses have several benefits. Counselors and advisors can help students make simplified course selections. It is not necessary to check and double-check that a particular course transfers to the students' transfer destination. In addition, common courses across all participating colleges and universities prevent students from having to make a high-stakes decision about a transfer destination early in their academic program. Since the Michigan Transfer Agreement and the MiTransfer Pathways courses will transfer to participating universities, students can take the first-year, or more, to explore transfer destinations.

There are also benefits to the community college. Along with their peers across the country, community colleges throughout Michigan have been implementing Guided Pathways, an institution-wide reform effort aimed at providing students with clear guidance and integrated supports to improve completion and transfer. The Guided Pathways model encourages colleges to shift course selection from a broad a la-carte model to supporting students in selecting courses aligned with their academic program or strategic exploration of programs. The identification of MiTransfer Pathways courses supports this strategic course selection process by identifying foundational courses and ensuring they will transfer to related bachelor's degree programs.

Community colleges can focus their attention on offering high-quality educational experiences to students in the MiTransfer Pathways courses. Davis Jenkins, Senior Research Scholar at the Community College Research Center at Teachers College, Columbia University notes that community colleges should focus on offering "light the fire" learning experiences to students in the foundational courses in the discipline. The MiTransfer Pathways courses allow colleges to focus attention on foundational program-specific courses and to transform these courses from a basic introduction to the discipline to an engaging learning experience where students are oriented to the discipline, learn how to learn, are provided the opportunity to engage in research or apply and deepen knowledge and skills through projects, internships, co-ops, clinical placements, group projects outside of class, service learning, study abroad and other active learning activities.

### Point #3: Aligned Mathematics

Mathematics is far too often a significant barrier to completion, and Michigan's community colleges have engaged in several projects to improve student success in mathematics. The MCSS convened the Right Math @ the Right Time (RM@RT) Steering Committee to lead much of this work. The RM@RT included mathematics faculty, executive leadership, registrars, and advisors from community colleges and universities.

When Michigan adopted the Michigan Transfer Agreement in 2014, the MTA established three math pathways in Quantitative Reasoning, Statistics, and the Pathway

to Calculus/College Algebra. Michigan was selected to participate in the Charles A. Dana Center's Math Pathways to Completion project which further defined the learning outcomes for each of the MTA mathematics pathways.

Aligning the “right” math pathway with each MiTransfer Pathway program was a priority for community colleges. Too often, student's default into taking a course on the pathway to calculus/college algebra because it is perceived as the most flexible choice among the three math pathways. However, students who have selected a program don't need flexible choices and should, instead, select an MTA mathematics course that is best suited to their program of study.

Through the MiTransfer Pathways project, in addition to asking faculty to select required and recommended courses to complete in the first and second year, we asked faculty to select the appropriate mathematics pathway for their program. During the statewide MiTransfer convenings, a mathematics faculty member joined each of the program faculty groups to discuss the three mathematics options and recommend the best pathway for their programs. In some cases, any MTA mathematics course is sufficient, but the process of identifying specific mathematics courses help students make an appropriate mathematics pathway choice.

Pathway	MTA Mathematics
<b>Art</b>	Quantitative Reasoning
<b>Biology</b>	Pathway to Calculus/ College Algebra
<b>Business<sup>3</sup></b>	Statistics
<b>Communication</b>	Quantitative Reasoning or Statistics
<b>Criminal Justice</b>	Any Pathway
<b>Exercise Science</b>	Pathway to Calculus
<b>Mechanical Engineering</b>	Pathway to Calculus
<b>Psychology</b>	Statistics
<b>Public Health</b>	Statistics
<b>Social Work</b>	Statistics

**Figure 8: MiTransfer Pathways Mathematics Recommendations**

Supporting student success in mathematics continues to be a priority for Michigan community colleges. Following its MiTransfer Pathways work, the MCSS launched the MiStart2Finish initiative which focuses on ensuring that students, even under-prepared students, can complete the MTA mathematics requirement in the first year of enrollment. This project focuses specifically on addressing inequalities by race and ethnicity, age, and college-readiness by helping colleges analyze disaggregated data from the [Voluntary Framework of Accountability](#). As we look toward convening

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<sup>3</sup> Most business programs require an additional mathematics course on the pathway to calculus, but the requirement varies widely by institution. Advisors and counselors are encouraged to review the remaining degree requirements for each participating institution to appropriately advise students.

additional faculty groups in the humanities, liberal arts, and in applied degree programs, we will continue to prioritize the selection of appropriate mathematics pathways. See more details in [Continuing the Investment](#).

## Point #4: Engagement Within the College

The MiTransfer Pathways project centered on engaging faculty, staff, and administrators from across the state to achieve our goal of developing multi-institutional transfer agreements for students. Throughout the implementation of the MiTransfer Pathways, we observed growing engagement from personnel at community colleges including faculty, registrars, transfer specialists, counselors, admissions officers, and executive leadership. Colleges have formed more inclusive teams to make decisions about course requirements, course learning outcomes and content, participation in articulation agreements, and engagement with partner institutions. We observed several themes throughout the project.

First, curriculum committees and academic review boards have become more deliberate about the transferability of courses before new or revised courses are approved. Several colleges require a transfer audit or analysis presented with other curricular documents and courses are not approved unless they meet a certain transferability threshold.

Second, counselors and advisors are focusing more attention on major and career exploration instead of focusing on where a student wants to transfer. When articulation agreements and transfer guidance varied widely by institutions for the same major, students were forced to make high stakes decisions about course selection far too early in their academic career. The MiTransfer Pathways allows counselors the necessary time to focus on career exploration with students.

Third, faculty are much more aware of the transfer mission of the institution and the transferability of courses in their program. In addition, a new document repository available

in the secure area of the Michigan Transfer Network allows faculty to compare syllabi and other course documents across institutions. Figure 9 displays the MTN Document Repository. Community colleges have trained more faculty on how to find course

The screenshot shows the 'Document Repository' page in the Michigan Transfer Network. It includes a navigation bar with 'Home', 'Students', 'Faculty & Staff', and 'Find Colleges & Universities'. Below the navigation bar, there is a 'Dashboard' section with a 'Document Repository' header and a 'MTN User: Erica Orians' profile. A '+ Filter' button and an 'Upload New Document' button are visible. The main content area contains a list of documents with the following columns: Institution, Title/Description, File, Subject, Course, MTA Course Pathway, Date, Uploaded By, and Created. Below the table, there is a caption: 'FIGURE 9: DOCUMENT REPOSITORY IN THE MTN'.

INSTITUTION	TITLE	TITLE/DESCRIPTION	FILE	SUBJECT	COURSE	MTA COURSE PATHWAY	DATE	UPLOADED BY	CREATED
Kalamazoo Valley Community College	Master Course Syllabus/Curriculum Document	Fundamentals of Biology	KVCC BIO 100-Syllabus.pdf	BIO	100	---	1.27.2021 - 11:01 AM	Hubbolt, Sarah	1.27.2021 - 11:01 AM
Kalamazoo Valley Community College	Master Course Syllabus/Curriculum Document	The Family	KVCC SOC 200-Syllabus.pdf	SOC	200	---	1.27.2021 - 11:01 AM	Hubbolt, Sarah	1.27.2021 - 11:01 AM
Kalamazoo Valley Community College	Master Course Syllabus/Curriculum Document	Cont. Social Problems	KVCC SOC 103-Syllabus.pdf	SOC	103	---	1.27.2021 - 11:00 AM	Hubbolt, Sarah	1.27.2021 - 11:00 AM
Kalamazoo Valley Community College	Master Course Syllabus/Curriculum Document	Two-Year Experience	KVCC TRY 104-Syllabus.pdf	TRY	104	---	1.27.2021 - 10:58 AM	Hubbolt, Sarah	1.27.2021 - 10:58 AM
Kalamazoo Valley Community College	Master Course Syllabus/Curriculum Document	Applied Behavioral Analysis	KVCC PSY 240-Syllabus.pdf	PSY	240	---	1.27.2021 - 10:55 AM	Hubbolt, Sarah	1.27.2021 - 10:55 AM

FIGURE 9: DOCUMENT REPOSITORY IN THE MTN

equivalencies in the Michigan Transfer Network and are using new secure reporting features to help their academic affairs personnel assess and analyze transferability of their courses and program requirements.

Finally, the transfer liaisons served as the primary point of contact for the MiTransfer Pathways project. The transfer liaisons are typically subject-matter experts in transfer and are responsible for a number of project-related activities. The transfer liaisons helped facilitate communication between faculty, project staff, executive leadership at the college, and other administrators who play a critical role in transfer. It was impossible for the MCSS to identify every person involved in transfer at a community college and the transfer liaison served as the important single point of contact for the project. Second, the transfer liaisons played a vital role in translating the *lingua franca* of transfer for the faculty. Concepts such as articulation agreements, equivalencies, direct equivalencies, general credit, transcript notations, and other industry-specific terms were foreign to many participating faculty members. This led to the development of a [Glossary of Transfer Terms](#) available on the Michigan Transfer Network. The transfer liaisons supported faculty as they expanded their knowledge of the administrative aspects of transfer.

## Point #5: Relationships Between Institutions

The MiTransfer Pathways project engaged over 800 faculty, administrators, transfer specialists, advisors and counselors, and executive leaders from over 50 community colleges, public universities, and independent colleges and universities in Michigan.

To build the MiTransfer Pathways, we invited faculty from all public and independent institutions in Michigan to attend two full-day summits focused on building the MiTransfer Pathways. Feedback from faculty who attended the summits was overwhelmingly positive. While some disciplines host statewide faculty meetings, for many faculty the MiTransfer Pathways summits were the only opportunities to meet with a large group of faculty within their discipline or program outside of their institution. Conversations were invigorating and inspired the faculty to be engaged in understanding more about how their courses transfer to other institutions. Although the primary purpose of the summits focused on identifying commonly recommended courses, faculty conversations also focused on learning outcomes, pedagogy, and innovative teaching practices. The MCSS is continuing to facilitate relationships between institutions through our ongoing work described in [Continuing Our Progress](#).

While faculty were discussing program requirements, the transfer liaisons also developed strategies to build stronger relationships between administrators including registrars, counselors and advisors, and transfer specialists. Community colleges collaborated on effective ways to communicate transfer requirements to students on their college's website and through advising and student supports.

The Michigan Transfer Network has implemented several new reports to facilitate communication between institutions. The equivalency change report provides the sending institutions with information about equivalency changes at receiving institutions. The Equivalency Change Report in Figure 10 displays equivalency changes between Grand Rapids Community College (GRCC) and Montcalm Community College (MCC). The report shows that Montcalm Community College (MCC) added three new equivalencies. HU 273 at GRCC is equivalent to ARTS 265 and ENGL 265 at

Michigan Transfer Network - Equivalency Changes  
**Montcalm Community College**  
 Report Date: February 15, 2021

**Added**  
 These equivalencies were Added by the receiving institution.

Status	Rec. Subject	Course	Rec. Course Title	Credits/G/W	Send Institution	Subject	Course	Credits/G/W
(14) New	ARTS	265	Introduction to Film	3.00 / - / -	Grand Rapids Community	HU	273	3.00 / - / -
(15) New	ENGL	265	Introduction to Film	3.00 / - / -	Grand Rapids Community	HU	273	3.00 / - / -
(16) New	PSYC	235	Lifespan Development	3.00 / - / -	Grand Rapids Community	PY	232	3.00 / - / -

**Removed**  
 These equivalencies were Removed by the receiving institution.

Status	Rec. Subject	Course	Rec. Course Title	Credits/G/W	Send Institution	Subject	Course	Credits/G/W
(25) Old	ENGL	265	Introduction to Film	3.00 / - / -	Grand Rapids Community	HS	273	3.00 / - / -

**FIGURE 10: EQUIVALENCY CHANGE REPORT EXAMPLE**

MCC. PY 232 at GRCC is equivalent to PSYC 235 at MCC. MCC also removed an equivalency from the database. This technology-facilitated communication is essential to maintaining relationships between key personnel at institutions in Michigan. Community colleges can request equivalency change reports immediately after an equivalency has been updated in the database or on a regular schedule (daily, weekly, or monthly) and help community colleges stay up-to-date on equivalency changes impacting their college. While the MiTransfer Pathways project focused on transferring from community colleges to public universities and independent institutions, community colleges also established equivalencies from community college to community college.

## Point #6: Data-Informed Decision Making

Community colleges are too often data rich and analysis poor, but in the case of transfer information, Michigan community colleges were eager to do the analysis, but lacked access to adequate data. We saw this as an opportunity to develop a menu of reports in the secure area of the website. After extensive input from community colleges, we identified several reports that will enhance community colleges' understanding about transfer equivalencies.

Like other transfer equivalency databases, the receiving institution (the institution where students plan to transfer credits) uploads all equivalencies to the database. The MTN had no mechanism to communicate to the sending institution (the institution where the student will transfer from) that an equivalency was added, edited, or deleted from the database. The new Equivalency Change Report notifies college personnel when an equivalency has changed. The report is completely customizable and can be sent (by email) immediately, weekly, or monthly. Michigan community colleges had no way of knowing what and when equivalencies changed and this report provides this information immediately. While the report shouldn't replace communication between sending and receiving institutions, it is intended to supplement that communication.

Another popular report is the Course Equivalency Matrix. The course equivalency matrix is easy to set up and users can view how courses transfer to or from institutions across the state. Affectionately referred to as “the green boxes” this report allows users to see how courses transfer to multiple institutions. In Figure 11, we see how Introduction to Psychology transfers from Alpena Community College, Bay de Noc Community College, Delta College, Glen Oaks Community College, and Gogebic Community

Introduction to Psychology By Receiving Institution	Grand Rapids Community College	Kalamazoo Valley Community College	Kellogg Community College	Kirtland Community College	Lake Michigan College
© Matrix Legend	PY 201	PSY 150	PSYC 201	PSY 10100	PSYC 201
<b>Community College</b>					
Alpena Community College	PSY 101 PSY 101	PSY 101 PSY 225	PSY 225 PSY 101	PSY 101	PSY 101 PSY 225
Bay de Noc Community College	PSYC 201 PSYC 201 PY 201	PY 201 PSYC 201 PSYC 201 PSYC 201	PY 201 PSYC 201	PSYC 201	PSYC 201
Delta College	PSY 211C PSY 211H PSY 211 PSY 211 PSY 211CW PSY 211HW PSY 211W	PSY 211 PSY 211 PSY 211 PSY 211	PSY 211 PSY 101	PSY 211	PSY 211
Glen Oaks Community College	PSY 101 PSY 101	PSY 101 SSP 101	SSP 101 PSY 101	PSY 101	PSY 101 SSP 101 SSP 201
Gogebic Community College	PSY 101 PSY 101	PSY 101	PSY 101	PSY 101	PSY 101

**FIGURE 11: SAMPLE COURSE EQUIVALENCY MATRIX**

College transfer to Grand Rapids Community Colleges, Kalamazoo Valley Community College, Kellogg Community College, Kirtland Community College, and Lake Michigan College. The report takes just a few minutes to create and the results are updated with live data. Colleges regularly use this report to monitor equivalencies, review how courses transfer within a program, or compare how other college's courses are accepted by peer institutions.

Three other reports allow sending and receiving institutions to download all equivalencies in the database. Colleges can download these large reports and use statistical software or a business intelligence (BI) tool to analyze the data. These reports can be helpful as colleges are considering updates to courses, modifications to the curriculum, or adding programs to the catalog.

Colleges can also compare the credit hours earned at the sending institution with how many credits are awarded at the receiving institution. This report is helpful when colleges are deciding to change credits awarded based on credit awards at transfer institutions.

Community colleges have significant experience analyzing student-level data, but the data available on the Michigan Transfer Network increases the capacity for colleges to understand more about transfer. In some cases, each transferrable course represents hundreds of students registered for that class who intend to transfer. Having course equivalency data available has the potential to impact outcomes for hundreds of students.

## Continuing our Progress

Building the Michigan Transfer Network and MiTransfer Pathways have been catalyzing experiences for community colleges in Michigan. Although we have collectively made significant progress on improving transfer opportunities, the projects revealed that there is much more work that needs to be done to improve associate to bachelor's degree completion. The MCSS continues to work with Michigan's community colleges to identify priorities to improve transfer student outcomes.

### Data Use

The Michigan Transfer Network offers an incredible opportunity to expand the use of data at Michigan's community colleges and we continue to support colleges in their efforts to use equivalency data to improve transfer student outcomes. Community colleges have discovered valuable ways to use these data and are especially interested in extending the use of data to strengthen programs across the curriculum.

### Pathway Development

We were able to develop multi-institutional transfer agreements in 10 of the most popular programs in Michigan, but there are opportunities to develop more transfer pathways by leveraging the model created for this project. Community colleges are specifically interested in partnering with universities interested in building pathways in applied degree programs and additional liberal arts and humanities disciplines.

### Faculty Engagement

The faculty who participated in developing the MiTransfer Pathways were energized by these conversations and reported that they would like to continue to engage with their peers across the state. Although the faculty engagement through the MiTransfer Pathways primarily focused on ensuring that courses will transfer, faculty are also interested in discussing pedagogy, learning outcomes, assessment, and emerging opportunities to develop "light the fire" learning experiences with their peers.

### Advising Resources

Advisors, counselors, admissions officers, formal or informal faculty advisors, front desk staff, and a host of other staff at community colleges are officially or unofficially responsible for advising students on major and course selection. MCSS is facilitating opportunities for Michigan's community colleges to work together to develop resources that community colleges can adopt or adapt to meet their needs.

### Equity

We know that there are deeply inequitable outcomes based on race and ethnicity, age, socio-economic status, and college-readiness across all of our postsecondary institutions in Michigan. Research from our national partners shows that improving transfer can be a powerful tool to increase equity and ensure a better future for all students. As we engage in our ongoing work, we will continue to center equity in all of our projects as well as work with our partners from the public universities and private institutions to increase equitable transfer opportunities.

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