

# STUDENT PROFILES

## An Aspiring Artist Connects Coursework to Career

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**R**achel enrolled at Holyoke Community College (HCC) when she was 19 years old through the Massachusetts Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment Initiative (MAICEI) Program from an out-of-district transition placement, where she received little vocational training and was not on track to attend college. During her initial person-centered planning meeting, she shared her goals: to pass the MCAS (the Commonwealth's statewide standards-based assessment program), become a matriculated student at HCC, and pursue a career as a children's book illustrator. Her mom, along with her sending district, Westfield Public Schools, enthusiastically supported her in these goals.

From the beginning of her time at HCC, Rachel took most of her courses for credit. Her only non-credit course was an MCAS prep evening class. She attended class independently and used public transit between campus and her home.

### GOALS

1. Pass the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System
2. Become a matriculated student at Holyoke Community College
3. Pursue a career as an illustrator

### PLAN

Rachel met regularly with her college advisor to discuss her program of study. She was eager to complete online research on O\*Net and the HCC website to learn more about becoming a visual arts major and the program requirements. She followed the required coursework when choosing classes each semester.

During her third semester, Rachel passed the MCAS and began conversations about enrolling as a matriculated student.

### LEARN

Over the course of 5 semesters, Rachel completed 5 art courses, 4 electives, and 2 non-credit classes with the support of her transition team. She joined the Japanese Anime Art Club, participated in 2 HCC student art shows, and was selected to be a peer mentor for the MAICEI Program because of her positive spirit, willingness to help others, and knowledge of the HCC campus.

The Think College Transition (TCT) project is an inclusive dual-enrollment transition model designed to improve post-school outcomes for students aged 18 to 21 years who have intellectual disability and autism. The key feature of this model is assisting students to be involved with college classes, work experiences, and social networking opportunities on a college campus with their same-age peers, rather than having typical transition services in a high school.

### SUPPORT

During Rachel's first year, she received support from an educational coach during class, with homework assignments and with scheduling. In her second year, educational coach support began to fade as Rachel used natural supports on campus, including the CAPS Learning Center, peers, and scheduling apps, in preparation for becoming a matriculated student. Rachel formed a strong relationship with one of her art professors, and approached her about becoming her new academic advisor.

### WORK

Rachel participated in 3 employment opportunities related to her career goals while attending HCC as a dual-enrollment student. She used her visual arts skills in her first job as a merchandiser at a local card shop in her hometown. As a



docent at a local art gallery, Rachel interacted with customers, kept track of merchandise inventory, and assisted with sales. As an intern with the Amelia Park Children's Museum, she taught art classes to pre-school children.

During Rachel's final semester in the MAICEI Program, she was invited by Massachusetts Advocates for Children to present at the Massachusetts State House in legislative testimonial representing students with autism in inclusive higher education.

## OUTCOMES

Today, Rachel continues to take art classes at HCC, is developing an art portfolio, has completed a related certificate program in cosmetology, and is employed through New England Business Associates. She enjoys the companionship of her boyfriend, whom she met at college.

Rachel's positive transition experiences were the result of collaborative planning and supports between Holyoke Community College, Westfield Public Schools, and the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission. Her strong self-determination skills enabled her to successfully navigate HCC and apply her new skills in community-based work experiences.



## RACHEL'S COURSE OF STUDY

	PLAN	LEARN	WORK	SUPPORT
<b>Pre-College</b>	Initial person-centered plan developed with Rachel, family, sending district, and college staff.			
<b>Spring 1</b>	Rachel met regularly with her college advisor and transition staff to review her academic, career and personal goals.	1. Professional Etiquette 2. Topics in Dance 3. MCAS Prep	Truly Mine Card & Gift Shop	Rachel received 1:1 educational coach support in class. Her employment coach faded as the semester progressed and she acclimated to the new position.
<b>Summer 1</b>			Truly Mine Card & Gift Shop	Periodic visits were made by her employment coach throughout the summer.
<b>Fall 1</b>	Rachel began reviewing HCC's visual arts curriculum to determine choice of classes.	1. Basic Design 1 2. MCAS Prep	Truly Mine Card & Gift Shop	Educational coach support in class began to fade. She continued to have periodic visits from her employment coach.
<b>Spring 2</b>	Rachel worked with her district transition specialist to seek a new employment opportunity.	1. Commercial Art & Design	Tea Pot Art Gallery	Educational coach support continued to fade in class. Her employment coach faded as the semester progressed and she acclimated to the new position.
<b>Summer 2</b>			Amelia Park Children's Museum	Rachel received initial daily support from her employment coach in the new position. This support faded as summer progressed and she acclimated to the new position.
<b>Fall 2</b>	Rachel's advising appointments began to focus on preparing her to become a matriculated student and use the natural supports on campus.	1. Basic Drawing 2. Basic Math	Amelia Park Children's Museum	Rachel no longer had an educational coach in class. She checked in weekly with her coach outside of class and used the academic learning center for tutoring. She continued to have periodic visits from her employment coach.
<b>Spring 3</b>	Rachel was introduced to the advisor in disability services she would be working with as a matriculated student. She and her family had several meetings throughout the semester with her MAICEI advisor, new disability services advisor, financial aid staff, and district transition staff in preparation for matriculation.	1. Intro to Illustration 2. Printmaking 3. Basic Math	HCC Peer Mentor	Rachel continued to have weekly check-ins with her educational coach and used the academic learning center for tutoring. She was supported in her new role as a peer mentor by college staff, as she did not need the support of an employment coach.
<b>Fall 3</b>	Rachel transitioned to a new advisor in disability services and began working with a division advisor in the visual arts program.	Matriculated student, HCC Visual Arts Program		Rachel continued to connect with disability services and the academic learning center for supports.