

STUDENT PROFILES

Growing Self-Determination While Fading Supports

by Ty Hanson, Sherry Elander, Amy Galaska, and Penny Redfern

Morgan is an outgoing and enthusiastic young woman with strong ties to her family and friends. She was eager to enroll in the Massachusetts Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment Initiative (MAICEI) program at Holyoke Community College (HCC) when she was 18 years old after receiving a certificate of attainment from Westfield Public Schools.

During her initial person-centered planning meeting, Morgan expressed interest in exploring both college and potential careers. Her family enthusiastically supported Morgan in making her own decisions and encouraged her to take risks. Her transition team supported this opportunity, and recognized that for Morgan this was a chance to further develop her communication skills, independence, self-determination, and interpersonal strengths.

GOALS

1. Enroll at Holyoke Community College
2. Explore a variety of careers through internships and competitive employment
3. Develop and use self-determination skills to self-direct the transition experience
4. Possibly transfer to Westfield State University after a few years

PLAN

From the beginning of her college experience, Morgan took the initiative to schedule regular meetings with her college advisor, school transition specialist, and educational coach to review her short- and long-term goals and to plan her weekly schedule with her coach. She quickly became proficient at using a calendar app on her smartphone to keep track of her appointments and assignment deadlines. As a result, she had a system to manage her time, stay organized, and gradually increase her independence at college.

SUPPORT

Morgan shared with her transition team how excited she was to develop her independence at college, which was achieved by establishing a partnership with her coach, using technology, and meeting with a peer mentor. Each semester,

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.

she completed a student-educational coach agreement. This tool enabled Morgan and her coach to form a working partnership that clearly defined her responsibilities and the role of her coach, and that focused on having supports that were flexible and adaptable over time. As Morgan became more familiar with her college routines, her partnership changed with her coach as she assumed more responsibility for herself.

Using technology was a great way for Morgan to gain independence and for coaching support to fade. She mastered the use of her smartphone to communicate with her team, arrange public transportation, and organize her schedule. She also used the assistive technology lab on campus to complete homework assignments and to check her college email account. These technologies enabled her to stay connected with her team and to maintain a large circle of friends via texting and social media.

Morgan developed a strong relationship with her peer mentor while at WSU. They enjoyed participating in social events on campus, and also met up for academic tutoring. This relationship provided an opportunity for her coach to step back during Morgan's last year in college.



LEARN

Priority registration was a favorite time during the semester for Morgan. She came prepared to her advising appointments with an extensive wish list of classes she was interested in taking that matched her personal and career interests. After her 2nd semester at HCC, Morgan communicated to her transition team wanting more academic challenge. She increased her course load from 3 to 6 credits while continuing to balance her employment commitments.

During her 2nd year at HCC, Morgan expressed an interest in transferring to Westfield State University (WSU) where she could receive flexible supports from their MAICEI Program. To ensure a smooth transfer, she worked closely with her advisor at HCC, as well as a new advisor at WSU. She visited the new campus, and attended events including new student orientation before starting in the fall.

WORK

Morgan's family values employment, and hired her at the age of 14 at their family restaurant, Wings Over Springfield. Her job responsibilities progressed from stocking, cleaning, and serving to food preparation, order taking, and deliveries.

During her time at HCC, Morgan expressed an interest in exploring other careers. She interned at a local hospital, working in the materials management department, and had a second internship with preschool students on the HCC campus. Later, Morgan interned at a local country club, setting up events, and then at a retail candle shop, working in the production and distribution departments.

OUTCOMES

Today, Morgan continues to be a strong self-advocate who is taking charge of her future. She enjoys working at both a local fitness center and her family restaurant, is an active member of her community by participating on sports teams and attending local events, and maintains strong relationships with her friends from high school and college.

Morgan's positive transition experiences were the result of collaborative planning and supports between HCC, WSU, Westfield Public Schools, the Massachusetts Department of Developmental Services, and her family. Each stakeholder was committed to supporting Morgan's vision. As a result, she developed strong self-determination skills that enabled her to have a successful college experience.

MORGAN'S COURSE OF STUDY

	PLAN	LEARN	WORK	SUPPORT
Pre-College	Initial person-centered plan developed with Morgan, family, sending district, and college staff.		Wings Over Springfield	
Fall 1	Morgan met regularly with her college advisor and transition team to review her academic, career and personal goals.	Fundamentals of Acting	Wings Over Springfield Noble Hospital	Morgan received 1:1 educational coach support in class and with assignments. She also received support from her peers in acting class.
Spring 1	Morgan worked with her transition team to seek a new employment opportunity working with children for the following semester on campus.	Ceramics 1	Wings Over Springfield Noble Hospital	Morgan continued to receive 1:1 support for class and assignments but attended club activities independently, with check-ins with her coach.
Summer 1	Morgan continued to increase her responsibilities working at her family's restaurant.		Wings Over Springfield	
Fall 2	Morgan's advising appointments began to focus on preparing her to become a transfer student at WSU.	Painting 1 Public Speaking	Wings Over Springfield Kids Place	Morgan met with tutors at the academic learning center for her public speaking assignments.
Spring 2	Morgan toured WSU and met with the MAICEI program coordinator.	Basic Still Photography Career Planning Job Search Strategies	Wings Over Springfield	Morgan continued to receive 1:1 support in class and with assignments and successfully navigated the campus independently.
Summer 2	Morgan attended new student orientation at WSU.		Wings Over Springfield	
Fall 3	Morgan was introduced to peer mentors at WSU.	3D Design	Wings Over Springfield Shaker Farms Country Club	1:1 support began to fade as Morgan's relationship with her peer mentor developed.
Spring 3	Morgan and her family worked closely with the transition team to align supports and services for employment, transportation, and community inclusion to ensure a successful transition to adult living.	Adventure Education	Wings Over Springfield Pilgrim Candle	Morgan led her final IEP meeting.