

studentsuccess

Mapping out my next moves

MCC alumnus is living his dream at U of M

By Lexie Barnwell

Caleb Walden had always dreamed of attending University of Michigan, but he didn't meet the admission requirements when he graduated from high school.

Instead, he enrolled at Montcalm Community College, and that decision changed his life and helped make his U of M dreams come true.

Walden began taking MCC classes through the college's dual enrollment program while still in high school. After graduating from Fulton High School in 2017, he continued at MCC to complete another year of general education courses while he decided where he would transfer to.

"I really didn't want to attend MCC after high school. I wanted to go away to a four-year institution to experience college life like my friends," he said.

However, he said after talking with his parents, he realized continuing at MCC was the right choice for him.

"I'm so glad I chose to go back to MCC because it changed my life," he said.

During that year, Walden kept up his grades and realized that his community college GPA would qualify him for entry to U of M as a transfer student. He applied and was admitted with a scholarship to the Penny Stamps School of Art and Design.

The Penny Stamps program curriculum allows students to focus on a medium of art they are most interested in, and this solidified Walden's decision to pursue graphic design.

Walden's portfolio from MCC and U of M helped him acquire a paid internship with U of M's athletic department working as a graphic designer.

"My internship with the athletic department has been like a dream come true. Every day I get up excited to go to work. I get to interact with coaches and SIDs (Sports Information Directors) and other creatives on a daily basis," Walden said.



Caleb Walden works on a design as an intern with U of M's athletic department.

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– Caleb Walden

As Walden thinks about his future career goals, he hopes to be doing exactly what he's doing now for a long time to come – sports and graphic design are his two biggest passions in life.

"I'd love to be a creative director at some point down the line, but for now I'm just focused on being a bit of a sponge and soaking up everything I get to experience with my internship," he said.

Looking back at his time at MCC, Walden has many fond memories. He is grateful for the small class sizes, the dedicated instructors, easily transferable credits, and the abundance of resources that focus on student success.

"My time there was really a time of mapping out my next moves and it was the best bridge for me to figure out my next steps while continuing my education. I was able to set up my classes in a way that no matter where I went, I'd have a ton of transferable credits ready to go and I'd have a running start at whatever four-year I went to. I never would have been able to go to Michigan had it not been for MCC and I'll always be grateful for the opportunities it afforded me." ■