

## FINANCIAL AID APPEAL STATEMENTS

**Question 4:** I started at UM-Flint in 1999 with high hopes, but quickly ran into trouble. Even though I enjoyed my classes, I had trouble focusing and keeping up with my work. In some classes, like creative writing, the work came easily to me, and I got good grades. In other classes I had a report with the teacher and I was able to ask for help when I got in trouble. But in the vast majority of my classes, when I fell behind, I was too embarrassed to ask for help or didn't even realize how far behind I was until it was too late so I just stopped attending class and hoped everything would go away.

Sometimes I would pass classes, other times I would get an I and then manage to pull together the work to bring it up to a good grade, but a lot of times I just failed the class and then a semester or two later I would optimistically try the class again with the same result. I collected a lot of credits and a lot of Is and Ws and Es while aiming for a degree, but always falling short.

This continued until I was put on academic probation. I was given one last chance and went with a smaller course load and did pretty good, but by the next semester my brain was conspiring against me again and I was back to failing most of my classes because the static in my brain was too loud to get anything done, my hypersensitivity to sounds and emotions and stress exhausted me to the point where I could barely get out of bed, and my executive function skills were nonexistent. In 2002 I gave up and quit school and found a full-time job. Every once in a while I would apply again and even register for classes before I would get overwhelmed by it all and flash back to my last time at the university and decide not to go through with it.

Fast forward to 2022 and I was finally diagnosed with ADHD and everything made a lot more sense. I was able to get on medicine that calmed the noises in my head and restored my energy and focus. The next year, I started thinking I was finally ready to try school one more time and that's when I found the AODC program and the Bachelors of Independent Studies. I applied and was accepted to the program and changed my major.

My first semester in Summer 2023 was a success and I completed both classes. The next two sessions in Fall 2023 were mixed. I failed my digital marketing class because even though I communicated with the instructor about falling behind on some work, he didn't communicate very well at all, and I misunderstood what was happening. I also got an incomplete in my ENG 338 class for missing work. This was probably not the ideal semester to be in school because I was still working with my doctor to find the right dose and right medication so I would get very sick at times and several times the medicine would just stop working and I'll fall back into my old ways. Also, I was having a breakdown in my personal life finding out my wife had been having an affair, which compounded my already messed up brain.

**Question 5:** The good news is I've found a dose and medication that works and I'm seeing a therapist to help me develop the coping skills to be successful even through medication and life ups and downs. I'm working with my ENG 338 professor to complete the last paper needed to change my I to a completed grade and I'll be retaking my digital marketing class in Summer 2024 knowing the professor's poor communication style better and how to still be successful in the class. The accelerated timeline of the AODC classes also works much better for the way I learn and the way my brain works than the traditional class timeline. This will also set me up for success. The final step to making this degree a reality is to have my financial aid reinstated so I can pay for my classes.

Thank you for taking the time to hear my story and evaluate my case.

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