

My personal struggle with alcohol addiction and my journey to sobriety are the most significant reasons why I want to earn a Master's of Social Work. I am registered for classes at Ohio State University and am planning on choosing mental health and substance abuse as my areas of emphasis. I am hoping that my education can help shape me into a successful addiction counselor where I can use my skills of compassion and empathy, as well as my experience, hoping to inspire my clients as they set forth on their own recovery. Upon receiving my Master's of Social Work, I plan on earning my CAADC (Certified Advanced Alcohol and Drug Counselor) so that I may become an expert in the field of substance abuse counseling.

I desire to help teach clients that are suffering from mental illness and addiction how to cope with stress and life's challenges in ways that will help them recover. I want to be able to help clients identify their triggers and formulate healthy coping mechanisms in order to maintain sobriety and prevent relapse. I hope to work with clients in both an individual and group setting.

My journey to sobriety started at a very early age. I began drinking alcohol at the age of 12 and my addiction continually progressed throughout my teens and into my adulthood. In 2003, I received my first DUI and I thought that I had learned my lesson. The next 9 years, I became a functioning alcoholic, who was single and career focused. I received my second DUI in September of 2012. I received my third DUI in January of 2014. Little did I know, there was still much more trauma and turmoil to be had in my journey to sobriety.

Between October of 2014 and December of 2014, I attempted to commit suicide 3 separate times, all by overdosing with prescription medications. I was on life support all 3 times. After being released from the third psychiatric hospital, I realized that I must make a drastic decision and I completely geographically relocated from the Detroit Area to the Mount Pleasant Area. I left my entire social circle and some toxic family members behind. I needed a complete

change if I was going to conquer sobriety and battle my health issues. This required changing my entire environment to one that would promote sobriety.

I came to the small town of Weidman in central Michigan, to live with my parents on the lake. Considering that my father had 30+ years of sobriety under his belt, he could serve as a huge support. We attended AA meetings weekly together for 2 years. I became a consumer of Isabella County's Community Mental Health and started to engage in intense therapy. During my 3 years at CMH, I completed a year-long program of Dialectical Behavior Therapy, a 10 week course on Anger Management, and also 50+ sessions of Integrated Dual Diagnosis Treatment for people with co-occurring disorders. I also attended weekly individual therapy and auricular acupuncture. I then moved to a private psychiatrist and therapist.

I lived with my parents for 2 years and then I moved to my own apartment. In 2019, I began to feel like I was healthy enough to go back to work. I started to look for a job and within 4 months I was hired as a part-time advocate for RISE Advocacy, the domestic violence shelter in Isabella County. I was able to work with a very diverse clientele and I was helping people. In many cases, survivors are coming to us from severe trauma and use substance abuse as a coping mechanism. Being that I am in recovery, I can share my strengths, hopes, and experiences with them to help guide them in their own recovery process. In December of 2021, I was promoted to Shelter Manager of RISE Advocacy.

As the Shelter Manager and a domestic violence advocate, I work with clients to help them achieve their goals and assist them in the process of recovery and becoming independent again. I engage with survivors that are suffering from addiction and encourage them to maintain sobriety, participate in recovery oriented activities, and develop a network of sober supports. I

facilitate art therapy groups once a month where I teach the clients how to pour paint, thus I am able to offer them a healthy coping mechanism as opposed to substance abuse.

As a domestic violence advocate my role is to empower and support shelter clients in their path of healing. I offer advocacy and peer support on a one on one basis in a variety of areas. I assist clients with completing necessary paperwork for life management activities and connect clients with tools, resources, and community programs. In addition, I help survivors identify and access needed resources and recovery supports. I provide coaching and support to clients as challenges arise from everyday activities.

Working in this position allows me to serve as a role model, a mentor, and a motivator to recovering individuals in order to help prevent relapse and promote long term recovery. I am able to actively identify and support linkages to community resources that support the recovering person's goals and interests. I also help support connections to community based, mutual self help groups and link individuals to appropriate professional resources when needed.

Working with individuals who suffer from addiction helps me maintain my own sobriety in that I am able to offer them hope and I am constantly reminded of a time in my life that I desire never to return to. My sobriety allows me to be a consistent and positive peer advocate for the clients with whom I work. Being allowed to work with this population helps me realize my own vulnerabilities and triggers and has enabled me to continue to work through and stay strong in my own recovery. My sobriety has had a positive impact on my life, but also on that of my peers in the community.

May 25, 2023

To Whom it May Concern,

It is with great joy that I write this letter of recommendation on behalf of my manager, Colleen Vandebussche. Ms. Vandebussche has been affiliated with RISE Advocacy for 4 years, with us first meeting a year into her employment. In 2021, Ms. Vandebussche was promoted from Part-Time Shelter Advocate to Full-Time Shelter Manager. Within the 3 years of work we have shared, I have had the opportunity to not only watch her grow into a fine leader, but to also witness her fine-tune herself to navigate many unforeseen challenges in life while true and humble about where she started.

As an advocate, Ms. Vandebussche inspires clients with her compassionate demeanor and nonjudgmental view of their personal struggles. She empathizes with them, using the story of her mental health recovery to humanize herself and build connections with clients that are far stronger than any of her subsequent peers without presenting herself as vulnerable. As a manager, she shows strong leadership skills: strong verbal communication skills when delegating tasks and sharing information with her coworkers, offers quick responses and a flexible schedule that encourages open communication, and is careful with decision-making but prompt with executing important tasks. She has never held herself as higher than anyone at the agency, client or staff member, and models what she expects when promoting a violence-free environment.

In the area of domestic violence, it is not uncommon to see substance dependence within the client population. Ms. Vandebussche has always been eager to assist these individuals, sitting beside them to talk about their personal experiences with addiction and being a beacon of hope for sobriety. Watching her in these situations does not look like she's working at all, but instead having an open, honest discussion with a friend. She has even gone as far as discussing heading an addiction counseling group for the agency. Even after the request was denied, she has not given up on this goal. Her dedication knows no bounds, and is now guiding her education goals.

Ms. Vandebussche is quick to adapt to changing environments and situations, using her past experiences and her ever-growing knowledge base to create innovative solutions for unique challenges. She utilizes her team members' skills in ways that would be overlooked in a typical office environment. She makes everyone feel welcome and valued.

I was ecstatic to hear of her choice to enroll for an education in Social Work, and it is an absolute honor to write this letter of recommendation for Ms. Vandebussche so she can pursue that goal. There is no doubt that her drive and personal involvement will take her far in the field of substance use counseling. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to reach out to me.

Sincerely,  
Cheyenne Brauher  
RISE Advocacy Inc., Full-Time Advocate  
[cbrauher@riseadvocacy.org](mailto:cbrauher@riseadvocacy.org)  
(616)-489-0329

**Fwd: Your Ohio State University Application**

1 message

**Colleen Vandenbussche** <cbussche1979@gmail.com>  
To: cheyenne brauher <cbrauher@riseadvocacy.org>

Fri, Jun 2, 2023 at 6:14 AM

----- Forwarded message -----

From: <gpadmissions@osu.edu>  
Date: Thu, Mar 30, 2023 at 10:43 PM  
Subject: Your Ohio State University Application  
To: <cbussche1979@gmail.com>

[buckeyelink.osu.edu](https://buckeyelink.osu.edu) [osu.edu](https://osu.edu)

Ohio State Username: vandenbussche.2

Dear Colleen:

Congratulations! We are pleased to offer you admission to the Master of Social Work () program at The Ohio State University for the autumn 2023 semester on the Columbus campus. As a graduate student at The Ohio State University, you will have the opportunity to work with outstanding graduate faculty.

*Please be sure to read this email in its entirety and save it for future reference.*

It is important that you log into your [Applicant Center](#) to:

- Accept or decline your offer of admission by clicking the Accept / Decline link on the main page.
- Pay the tuition deposit (if required by the program) when accepting your admission using Visa, MasterCard, Discover, or American Express.
- Verify/update your contact information.

For your security, Ohio State uses two-factor authentication for most online services. If you haven't already done so, you will be prompted to enroll in [BuckeyePass](#) when you accept admission.

Your admission and subsequent registration are subject to fulfillment of university requirements and policies, as well as any provisions or conditions related to your offer of admission. It is important that you accept admission by logging into the website mentioned above. Failure to accept your offer of admission will delay your ability to enroll in classes. If you decide not to accept this offer, please decline online as soon as possible so other applicants may be considered.

**Please note:** As a condition of enrollment, you will be required to answer a question when you accept your offer of admission regarding prior or pending disciplinary actions or felony charges, even if you have disclosed this information previously. An answer of "yes" to this question does not preclude enrollment, but you will be asked to provide additional information. [Learn more about disclosing a prior or pending disciplinary or felony charge.](#)  
**Requirements**

The following requirements are related to your offer of admission:

- **Official Transcript & Degree:** Oakland University. You are being held provisional for an official, final transcript showing a statement of your degree. In order for it to be considered official, it must be either mailed or emailed directly to The Ohio State University from the issuing institution or a verified third-party transcript provider. Please

visit <http://gpadmissions.osu.edu/apply/transcripts.html> for more information about our transcript policy.

### **Autumn Term Arrival**

The Graduate School hosts an orientation for graduate students several days before the autumn term begins. During orientation, representatives from the Graduate School will provide information about graduate student life and responsibilities. You will have access to numerous campus resources and service providers during the event. Please visit the Graduate School [website](#) for up-to-date information.

Again, congratulations! We look forward to your enrollment in the Graduate School and wish you the best in your graduate studies at Ohio State.

Sincerely,

Rachel Nash, Ed.D.  
Interim Executive Director  
Graduate and Professional Admissions  
GBA



Student No.: G00714259

Date of Birth: 04-DEC

Date Issued: 15-FEB-2023  
Ofc Official Transcript

Record of: Colleen M Vandenburg  
3760 S Isabella Rd Apt 207  
Mount Pleasant, MI 48858-7410  
United States of America

Page: 1

Issued To: Colleen Vandenburg  
3760 S Isabella Rd Apt 207  
Mount Pleasant, MI 48858-7410  
United States of America

Course Level: Undergraduate

Current Program  
Bachelor of Arts  
College: College of Arts and Sciences  
Major: Art History

Degrees Awarded Bachelor of Arts 26-APR-2003  
Primary Program

Program: BA Arts and Sciences  
College: College of Arts and Sciences  
Major: Art History  
Minor: Human Resource Development

SUBJ NO.	COURSE TITLE	CRED GRD	PTS R
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INSTITUTION CREDIT:

Fall Semester 1998	Intro To Western Art I	4.00 2.6	10.40
AH 100	Adv French Grammr	4.00 2.0	8.00
FRH 314	Composition I	4.00 2.9	11.60
RHT 150	Ehrs: 12.00 GPA-Hrs: 12.00	30.00 GPA:	2.50

Winter Semester 1999	Intro To Western Art II	4.00 3.2	12.80
AH 101	Fndtns Contemporary Psy	4.00 2.5	10.00
PSY 100	Composition II	4.00 3.3	13.20
RHT 160	Ehrs: 12.00 GPA-Hrs: 12.00	36.00 GPA:	3.00

Fall Semester 1999	Intro Asia/Islamic Art	4.00 3.2	12.80
AH 104	Crit Thinking/Writing In AH	4.00 3.8	15.20
AH 300	Intro to Computer Use	4.00 4.0	16.00
CSE 125	Ehrs: 12.00 GPA-Hrs: 12.00	36.00 GPA:	3.00

SUBJ NO.	COURSE TITLE	CRED GRD	PTS R
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Institution Information continued:	Ehrs: 12.00 GPA-Hrs: 12.00	44.00 GPA:	3.67
Academic Honors			
Winter Semester 2000	Paris to 1900	4.00 3.8	15.20
AH 390	Intro to Environmental Studies	4.00 2.3	9.20
ENV 308	Intro Russia/East Europe	4.00 3.7	14.80
IS 260	Ehrs: 12.00 GPA-Hrs: 12.00	39.20 GPA:	3.27

Spring Session 2000	Intro to Philosophy	4.00 3.5	14.00
PHL 101	Drawing I	4.00 3.4	13.60
SA 206	Ehrs: 8.00 GPA-Hrs: 8.00	27.60 GPA:	3.45

Fall Semester 2000	Native American Art	4.00 3.8	15.20
AH 308	Study of Labor and Work Org	4.00 3.5	14.00
HRD 322	Intro to Org Behavior	3.00 W	0.00
ORG 330	Intro to Women's Studies	4.00 3.2	12.80
WS 200	Ehrs: 12.00 GPA-Hrs: 12.00	42.00 GPA:	3.50

Winter Semester 2001	Art of Ancient Near East	4.00 3.7	14.80
AH 310	English Art	4.00 3.6	14.40
AH 348	Bibliography and Methodology AH	4.00 3.8	15.20
AH 400	Ehrs: 12.00 GPA-Hrs: 12.00	44.40 GPA:	3.70

Fall Semester 2001	Twentieth-Century Art I	4.00 4.0	16.00
AH 361	Principles of Economics	6.00 3.4	20.40
ECN 210	Hist African-American People	4.00 3.3	13.20
HST 292	Ehrs: 14.00 GPA-Hrs: 14.00	49.60 GPA:	3.54

\*\*\*\*\* CONTINUED ON NEXT COLUMN \*\*\*\*\*

\*\*\*\*\* CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 \*\*\*\*\*

Official OU transcripts have a colored background, heat seal, and signature on the front, and a watermark on the reverse side. This official university transcript does not require a raised seal.

*Patricia R. Westergaard*  
Patricia R. Westergaard, Registrar



# KEY TO TRANSCRIPT

Oakland University was founded in 1957 as Michigan State University Oakland. Classes began in September 1959. In 1963, the institutional name was changed to Oakland University (affiliated with Michigan State University). Oakland University became an independent institution in 1970.

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 prohibits the release of this record or disclosure of its contents to any third party without the written consent of the student.

## ACCREDITATION

Oakland University is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission (230 South LaSalle Street, Suite 7-500, Chicago, IL 60604 / (312) 263-0456). The Oakland University William Beaumont School of Medicine has been granted full accreditation by the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME). In addition, many individual programs also are accredited by their respective professions.

## TRANSCRIPT LEVELS

Oakland University issues transcripts at the following levels:

**Continuing Education** – students pursuing non-credit certificates or taking individual courses recorded in continuing education units and not applicable to degree programs

**Doctoral** – students pursuing doctoral and education specialist degrees

**ESL Center** – students enrolled in the Center for English as a Second Language have courses recorded on a separate transcript from other continuing education programs but they are in continuing education units

**Graduate** – students pursuing master's degrees or graduate and post-master certificate programs

**Medical** – students pursuing the Doctor of Medicine degree

**Post-Baccalaureate** – students who hold a bachelor's degree and may be pursuing a second baccalaureate, teacher certification, prerequisites for graduate programs or personal development

**Professional Development** – post-bachelor or post-master students permitted to enroll in a graduate course but not pursuing any graduate credential

**Undergraduate** – non-matriculated students, dual-enrolled high school students and students pursuing their first bachelor's degree

## UNIVERSITY GRADING SYSTEM

Adopted fall 2018, the GPA is computed on a four-point scale:

Grade	Honor Points
A	4.0
A-	3.7
B+	3.3
B	3.0
B-	2.7
C+	2.3
C	2.0
C-	1.7
D+	1.3
D	1.0
F	0.0

Other grades include W, I, I, P, NP, SP, S, U, R and Z, and do not impact GPA.

Through summer 2018, the undergraduate and graduate grading system at Oakland University was a 32-point system of numeric grades with passing grades ranging from 1.0 through 4.0, by tenths, and a no credit grade of 0.0. Where conversion of numeric to letter grades was necessary, the University recommended the following scale: 3.6 - 4.0 = A; 3.0 - 3.5 = B; 2.0 - 2.9 = C; 1.0 - 1.9 = D; 0.0 = F. Non-numeric grades were W, I, I, P, NP, SP, S, U, R and Z.

The Oakland University William Beaumont School of Medicine grading system (MD program only):

HN – Honors	PA – Pass	SP – Satisfactory/Progress	FL – Fall
HP – High Pass	PR – Pass with Remediation	NP – No Progress	I – Incomplete
			W – Withdrawn

The Oakland University William Beaumont School of Medicine does not calculate GPA or class rankings.

For information regarding past grading and course numbering systems, please consult the Oakland University website at [oakland.edu/registrar](http://oakland.edu/registrar).

**OAKLAND  
UNIVERSITY**

347191

Office of the Registrar



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