

YOUR 2019–20

IMPACT REPORT

Innovation. Perseverance. Resilience.



ALVERNO COLLEGE



“Impossible is a word I do not know.”

Spoken by Mother Alexia Hoell, Alverno's founder and first president, these inspiring words ring as true today as they did more than 100 years ago.

The deeply engrained belief that, with an innovative mindset and a lot of hard work, anything is possible was put to the test as Alverno maneuvered the challenges of a global pandemic. From quickly adapting our highly personal undergraduate curriculum to an online format to ensuring our students had the technology and resources they needed while also introducing new programs to meet future needs, the Alverno community showed once again its innovation, perseverance and resilience.

You were with us every step of the way. You believed in our faculty, staff and students. Your support made this year's achievements possible.

For the
10th time,
U.S. News & World
Report ranked
Alverno College as
one of the
**Midwest's top
universities**
for its
**strong
commitment
to teaching.**



Received a **platinum seal** from
the ALL IN Campus Democracy
Challenge for achieving a
student voting rate above 50%.

72%

of incoming
undergraduates became
the **FIRST** in their family
to attend college.



480

Alverno
graduates earned
degrees in
2019–20 and
set out to
make a

DIFFERENCE.



Earned designation as a **Hispanic-Serving
Institution** for the third straight year.

INNOVATION IN ACTION



A Doctorate Designed to Stretch You



An educator at heart her entire life, **Ronett Jacobs '98** knew Alverno would be the perfect place to pursue her doctorate in education. When the College launched the first cohort of its online EdD program in January, Jacobs was one of 13 educators who wanted a unique doctoral program.

"Alverno is seeking out people who are strong and courageous, who

are willing to approach the dissertation work in unique and different ways. It's not a canned product," Jacobs says.

Designed for working professionals who already hold a master's degree, the EdD focuses on leadership and combines online coursework and dissertation support with two in-person residencies. Though taught entirely online, Jacobs says the group quickly found a sense of community in which people exchange and challenge one another's ideas in the pursuit of growth.

"It's very Alverno. It's designed to stretch you," she says. "That's what I really enjoy."

Last spring, Jacobs partnered with classmate and alumna **Heather Sattler '96** to offer restorative Circlework to help educators face the challenge of switching to online schooling during the global pandemic. Read more about their work at alvernomagazine.com/circles.

"The Alverno way of thinking and doing things, the idea of connectedness and global perspective, doesn't happen in other places."

– Ronett Jacobs '98

Nurses Prepared for Today and Tomorrow

From students working as CNAs on the front lines of the pandemic to a faculty member co-directing one of Milwaukee's emergency medical facilities, Alverno nurses are stepping up and leading with their unique set of skills and caring.

While these nurses are using their 8 Abilities today, Alverno's growing nursing programs are getting health care providers ready for tomorrow. Earlier this year, Alverno launched two new tracks for its master of science in nursing program: a neonatal nurse practitioner track and a dual adult-gerontology primary and acute care nurse practitioner track. Both are the first of their kind in Wisconsin.

The new direct entry MSN also launched in January with 21 students. Designed for those who hold a bachelor's degree in any field, enrolled students earn a bachelor of science and a master of science in nursing in as few as 18 months of full-time study.

"We are concretely addressing gaps in health care delivery for the people of Wisconsin, especially the most vulnerable among us. This is essential work," says Patricia Varga, PhD, RN, CNE, dean of the Alverno College JoAnn McGrath School of Nursing and Health Professions.

Read more about nursing students and alumnae at alverno.edu/magazine.



Leveling up Leadership Skills



Bridget Robinson says **Alverno's new Pivot Your Skills Pathway program** has inspired her to connect the dots when it comes to strong leadership.

She and a number of her colleagues at the nonprofit Safe & Sound are in the first cohort for the nonprofit management track, which launched in April along with a track in managing operations and leveraging the power of data. To meet emerging

workforce needs, Alverno partnered with industry professionals to design and deliver specialized learning paths that lead to professional certification within nine months.

Robinson, whose previous experience focused on human resources and program management, says Pivot helped her understand aspects of marketing, fund development, relationship building, branding and financial analysis. And, she has already put that knowledge to use.

During her coursework, she was appointed interim executive director for Safe & Sound and most recently was promoted to senior director of operations and administration.

"I feel better positioned to grow in my career as a non-profit leader as a result of this course," Robinson says. "From board management to strategic planning to fund development — I feel as though I have leveled up my skills as I enter into new opportunities."

Learn more at alverno.edu/pivot.



Programs and Partnerships to Meet Emerging Needs

As part of Alverno College's strategic plan, we launched numerous additional degree and certificate programs in 2019–20 to serve our students, Milwaukee and beyond. A number of strategic partnerships moved ahead as well. Here are more highlights.

Alverno announced a new degree program for working adults, which is enrolling its first students this fall. Called **Alverno Accelerate**, the program for working adults will offer an affordable and flexible pathway to earning a bachelor's degree in three or fewer years.



The **Montessori Institute of Milwaukee** relocated to Alverno's campus in September, and last fall, a cohort of paraprofessionals in the Milwaukee Public Schools' Montessori schools began a dual program to earn their licensure in elementary Montessori education and bachelor's degree in education from Alverno.

As part of the Alverno-Ascension Wisconsin strategic alliance, the two institutions spent the past fiscal year completing due diligence that led to the combining of Alverno's JoAnn McGrath School of Nursing and Health Professions and the **Columbia College of Nursing (CCON)** on July 1, 2020.

Alverno became a founding program partner of the **Educator Preparation Laboratory**, a new initiative to help educator preparation programs ensure that new teachers and leaders enter the classroom able to provide K-12 students with the kind of education that helps them develop deeper learning skills.



PERSEVERANCE IN ACTION



Profiles of Perseverance

"Nevertheless, she persisted" describes many Alverno graduates who defy naysayers and life's obstacles to successfully pursue their education, achieve their dreams and grow into the women they aspire to be.

We're proud to share the stories of just a few of the many Alverno alumnae who persevered to graduation last year:

- For **Sahra Mohamud '19**, the journey to become a nurse began with a promise to her dying father.
- **Feige Bates '19** wouldn't let others tear her down, and she also works to build others up.
- **Brianna Walker '19** defied the odds to achieve her dreams.

Read their full stories at alvernomagazine.com/persevere.

From Athlete to Alum

The Alverno Inferno athletics season may have been cut short, but that didn't stop six athletes from earning a new title: Alverno Alum! The roster included honors graduate **Michelle Alexander '20**, who was selected as this year's Athlete of the Year following a four-year tennis career. Alexander also earned Faculty Scholar-Athlete accolades and was recognized with her third consecutive team most valuable player honor.



Bridging the Gap

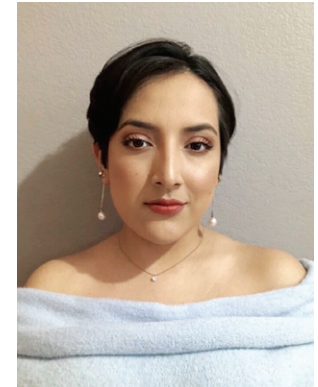
As **Haydee Cruz '20** neared the end of a two-year battle with lymphoma this spring, her medical bills were piling up. She looked forward to her final chemotherapy infusion in May 2020 and her graduation from Alverno shortly thereafter.

Then, the COVID-19 pandemic struck. She lost her job, and, with a compromised immune system, couldn't safely begin a new one. Cruz worried she wouldn't be able to graduate. Then she received the first Alverno Strong Bridge Fund scholarship, which would cover her final tuition.

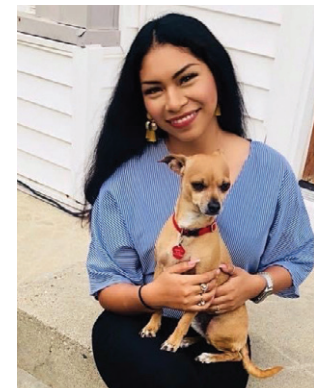
"I'm the first in my family to graduate from college. It's a dream come true," she says.

Alma Marcial '20 also received emergency funds and says the added support gave her a significant sense of relief and unity.

"Throughout my years at Alverno, I have constantly felt the support of its close-knit community and now is no exception. I feel truly blessed to have been one of the first recipients of the Bridge Fund," she says. "Thank you to Alverno and all donors who have made this possible for me and many others."



Haydee Cruz



Alma Marcial

RESILIENCE IN ACTION



The Transition from In-Person to Online

In fewer than two weeks last March, Alverno faculty and staff completed the behemoth task of turning the intimate classroom experience into an online community.

While students took an extended spring break, all courses were evaluated and moved online. In addition, surveys were sent to determine the need for technology loans and other online resources so that all students could transition to online learning.

When students commenced classes, they embarked on virtual ways to enhance their learning and maintain their connections. Health education and nursing students participated in a virtual health fair. Art students and faculty created an art experience packet for clients of Meta House, a Milwaukee nonprofit that breaks the cycle of addiction by healing women and strengthening families. And all of them embraced technology.

The technology we relied upon to work from home was also put to use by Alverno students, providing a valuable introduction to what will be waiting for them in the workforce, not to mention the life skills that get them ready for success no matter their careers.

"During this online learning experience, I have been able to gain a better understanding of other forms of online communication that could be used in any workplace, like Zoom," says Naomi Saldana, media design major. "I have also gained a lot of practice with becoming self-sufficient, and I have become better at prioritizing."

Read more about these endeavors at alvernomagazine.com/discover.

Getting Food to Those in Need

Opened in March 2019 to help students facing food insecurity, the Alverno food pantry became an important resource during the pandemic. Staff quickly jumped into action to meet an anticipated increase in demand.

To implement contactless pickup, an online order form was created so students could place orders and pick them up at a designated time. The pantry also went from being open four days a month to three days a week.

During the course of three months, 79 students placed 147 orders, with the average order being about \$40.

"Alverno's food pantry has been a blessing to me during this pandemic time. At first, I was skeptical to contact the food pantry because of pride. The volunteers involved have made the process discreet and pleasant for me."

– Alverno Student

Generous financial donations from faculty, staff and alumnae made it possible to meet the increased demand. To continue meeting student needs, the food pantry is open two days a week throughout the summer.



COVID-19 RESPONSE TIMELINE



JANUARY 27

Alverno welcomes students for spring semester



MARCH 11

World Health Organization declares COVID-19 a global pandemic

Spring break extended by one week while faculty rework curriculum



MARCH 19

Alverno creates the Alverno Strong Bridge Fund to provide student emergency relief



MARCH 23

Classes resume in online format

Food pantry opens for weekly pickups



MARCH 28

Girls Summit pivots to completely online event



APRIL 1

Alverno News goes weekly to provide information and resources to alums



APRIL 6

Alum Teach and Learn Weekend transitions to a month-long virtual event; 264 alums participate in eight webinars led by faculty and staff



APRIL 28

Alverno Giving Challenge kicks off, raising more than \$100,000 to support students in need



MAY 23

More than 270 students participate in first virtual conferral of degrees

Your gift to Alverno College helps others become Alverno Strong.

Nearly 100% of eligible students received financial assistance for the 2019–20 academic year, totaling more than \$10 million.

Giving to Alverno goes beyond scholarships, too. Donations to Alverno support a wide range of activities, programs and resources that make an Alverno education truly unique.

First-Generation Students

Student Research

Student Activities Diverse Student Body

Abilities-Based Education

Center for Academic Excellence Peer Mentors

Faculty and Student Research Stipends

Student Leadership Career Center

Athletics Research Center for Women and Girls

Self-Assessment Girls Summit Travelships

Franciscan Values Counseling Services

Student Support Services

Library Services Women in STEM

Internships Scholarships

Campus Ministry



Fiscal year 2021 is already underway. To renew your commitment to changing lives, give today at alverno.edu/give2021.



ALVERNO COLLEGE
ESTABLISHED 1887