

Alverno College: Marks 50th anniversary of abilities-based curriculum with new data reinforcing positive impacts on education and career outcomes

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Milwaukee, (August 30, 2023) – As the 2023-2024 academic year starts today, [Alverno College](#) welcomes both a new president, Christy L. Brown, J.D., and celebrates the 50th anniversary of its ground-breaking abilities-based curriculum and performance-based assessment. To mark the milestone, Alverno released the findings of a new alumni survey that reinforces the positive impacts of Alverno's [8 Abilities](#) on both their education and career experiences.

“Alverno’s 8 Abilities have never been more relevant delivering career-ready graduates with the skills most in demand by today’s employers, and providing an equitable educational experience that positions all students to succeed based on their individual needs, background and growth,” said Alverno President Christy Brown. “The Abilities are foundational to our mission to prepare women for lives of personal and professional distinction and meaningful engagement with the world.”

With Alverno’s abilities-based curriculum and performance-based assessment, nearly all (95%) of the more than 300 survey respondents who graduated from Alverno between 1976 and 2019 felt “very well” or “well” prepared to find a job or pursue graduate school. Nearly all (94%) also felt “very well” or “well” prepared for the demands and expectations of their careers, and to receive feedback from supervisors and colleagues.

“For 50 years, Alverno’s faculty and leaders have asked the same question, ‘What does every student need to be a successful person in the world whether at work or in their personal lives?’” said Alverno’s Jodi R.B. Eastberg, PhD, Interim Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of the School of Professional and Graduate Studies. “The Abilities were born in response to change and need. As needs evolve, so do our Abilities.”

Countless educators worldwide have studied and adopted Alverno’s innovative model of teaching and learning. Following Alverno’s lead, well-respected institutions including Stanford and Yale Law Schools, Reed University, Brown University, and Sarah Lawrence University have eliminated letter grade assessments.

When compared to traditional letter-grading systems, almost all Alverno alumni respondents felt Alverno’s abilities-based curriculum and performance-based assessment was a more immersive, rigorous, and motivating educational experience that held students more accountable. More than half (53%) felt it was “much more” rigorous while 78% felt they were held “much more” accountable. More than half (55%) also felt they were “extremely” motivated by Alverno’s curriculum and 70% said it provided a “very” immersive learning experience.

Thinking about present day, nearly all respondents reported they frequently (60%) or moderately (26%) use Alverno’s 8 Abilities at work, home, or their communities. Most alumni respondents (82%) also noted that if all things were equal and they were interviewing two job candidates, they would “much more” (46%) or “more” (36%) likely prefer the candidate that graduated from an abilities-based curriculum like Alverno’s.

“Simply put, Alverno’s 8 Abilities are what set our students and alums apart,” Eastberg said. “We’ve given our students and graduates the framework and tools to unleash their excellence and make a lasting impact. That’s the power of an Alverno education.”

The Alverno Alumni Abilities survey was an online, multiple-choice survey conducted in Spring 2023. The survey’s 303 respondents graduated from Alverno College with their first degree between 2019 and 1976. Learn more about the survey and Alverno’s 8 Abilities at <https://www.alverno.edu/8-Abilities>.