



POSITION PROFILE

DEAN, SCHOOL OF LIBERAL ARTS & PROFESSIONAL STUDIES

Alverno College
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

THE OPPORTUNITY

The Alverno College community seeks a Dean of the School of Liberal Arts & Professional Studies (LAPS) who is an innovative, collaborative, and student-focused servant leader. Working in close partnership with Vice President for Academic Affairs Gina Rossetti, the academic leadership team, and the LAPS community, the Dean will lead the School to its next level of academic excellence, student success, and faculty support and engagement. In addition, the Dean will be a visible leader in the community, championing Alverno's mission to be an "inclusive community that engages students in active and collaborative learning and fosters academic excellence."

ABOUT ALVERNO COLLEGE

Founded in 1887, Alverno College is a four-year independent Catholic liberal arts college for women sponsored by the School Sisters of St. Francis, and Wisconsin's first Hispanic-Serving Institution. The College also offers a robust array of graduate and degree completion programs for women and men.

For more than 130 years, Alverno has been transforming lives with a powerful combination of liberal arts education and career readiness, with an innovative and empowering education model of non-graded assessment and an abilities-based approach that has been studied and emulated by others around the world.

With more than 18,000 alumnae/i worldwide, Alverno prepares its students for lives of personal and professional distinction and meaningful engagement with the world. Alverno creates an inclusive community that engages students in active and collaborative learning and fosters academic excellence.

Moreover, Alverno's mission and vision create an organization that attracts talented and ambitious students, faculty, staff, and other professionals. Alverno enrolls approximately 525 undergraduates and 530 graduate students in its 30 majors and 19 graduate programs. Alverno has 152 full-time employees (41 full-time faculty and 111 full-time staff) plus 48 part-time/temporary staff, over 200 adjunct faculty members, and 82 student employees. The College has approximately \$35 million in total revenues and \$81 million in total assets.

During the summer of 2024, Alverno declared financial exigency as a proactive measure to restore financial stability and secure its financial future. As a result of the exigency declaration, Alverno underwent a substantial restructuring plan, which included reducing its undergraduate majors and graduate programs plus reducing full-time faculty and staff positions.



MISSION STATEMENT

Alverno College prepares women for lives of personal and professional distinction and meaningful engagement with the world. Alverno extends this mission by offering graduate and adult programs to women and men. Inspired by its Catholic, Franciscan, and liberal arts heritage, the College intentionally creates an inclusive community that engages students in active and collaborative learning and fosters academic excellence.



Today, Alverno is demonstrating its promise to sustain its growth and success in the years ahead. Funding to support the mission of Alverno was bolstered in August 2024 with a \$10 million gift from John and Tashia Morgridge through the TOSA Foundation. These contributions, combined with a recent six-year \$1.9 million grant from the National Science Foundation, signal positive momentum for the College.

Most recently, Alverno unlocked and exceeded a \$1.5 million matching gift from a group of anonymous donors who believe in the mission of the College, ultimately bringing in gifts from more than 470 donors and resulting in over \$3 million in funds raised. The College secured the funds to fulfill the match two months ahead of schedule, and donors continue to contribute gifts inspired by the match. Most recently, Alverno received a \$1.1 million legacy gift that will be used to fund scholarships for first-generation undergraduate students.

THE SCHOOL OF LIBERAL ARTS & PROFESSIONAL STUDIES (LAPS)

Overview

The **School of Liberal Arts and Professional Studies** (LAPS) at Alverno College is the institution's largest and most academically diverse school, bringing together programs across the humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, and professional disciplines.

LAPS encompasses five primary academic areas:

- Business & Communication
- Education
- Multidisciplinary Studies
- Natural Sciences
- Psychology & Social Work

The school reflects Alverno's distinctive commitment to abilities-based education, where students demonstrate competencies in communication, critical thinking, leadership, and problem solving through applied learning experiences. LAPS serves as a central hub for interdisciplinary collaboration and community engagement, preparing students to become adaptable professionals and thoughtful global citizens. LAPS offers a wide array of undergraduate majors and professional programs.

Academic offerings range from business administration, digital marketing, and organizational communication to biology, chemistry, kinesiology, psychology, social work, and public health, as well as creative and interdisciplinary fields such as art therapy, music therapy, global studies, and religious studies. Education programs prepare teachers across multiple grade levels and specialties, reflecting Alverno's long-standing strength in preparing educators and community leaders.

Through its breadth of programs and commitment to experiential learning, the School of Liberal Arts and Professional Studies plays a critical role in advancing Alverno College's mission of educating students — particularly women and historically underrepresented learners — to lead, serve, and succeed in diverse professional environments. The School provides flexible academic pathways, including general studies and exploratory options for undecided students, while emphasizing career preparation, interdisciplinary inquiry, and partnerships with community organizations.





The Dean of LAPS

The opportunity to serve as Dean of LAPS comes at a moment of significant possibility for Alverno College. The next Dean will join a mission-driven institution known nationally for its innovative abilities-based approach to teaching and learning, a model that has influenced higher education far beyond the College's Milwaukee campus.

One of Higher Education's Most Distinctive Institutions

Alverno's commitment to student-centered learning, continuous assessment, and the development of real-world abilities makes it one of the most distinctive educational environments in the country. The Dean will have the opportunity to champion and further develop this powerful model while helping ensure it remains relevant for the next generation of students.

An Ideal Platform for the Future of Liberal Arts Education

At a time when colleges and universities across the country are reconsidering the role of the liberal arts, Alverno offers a unique platform to demonstrate how liberal learning and professional preparation can be meaningfully integrated. The Dean will play a central role in shaping this vision and translating it into compelling academic programs.

A Mission-Driven Community Dedicated to Student Success

Alverno faculty and staff share a deep commitment to the success of students, many of whom are first-generation college students, adult learners, or students from historically underserved communities. The Dean will work alongside colleagues who are passionate about teaching, mentorship, and transformative education.

An Environment for Academic Innovation and Program Development

The School of Liberal Arts and Professional Studies offers a strong foundation of programs that prepare students for meaningful careers and civic engagement. The Dean will have the opportunity to build upon this foundation by exploring new programs, interdisciplinary collaborations, and flexible learning pathways.



Deep Community Connections in Milwaukee

Alverno's location in Milwaukee provides extensive opportunities for partnerships with employers, schools, nonprofit organizations, and community leaders. The Dean will expand these relationships to enhance experiential learning opportunities and strengthen career pathways for students.

Leadership at a Moment of Institutional Evolution

Higher education is experiencing profound change, and Alverno is thoughtfully navigating this moment while remaining true to its mission. The next Dean will help guide the School through this evolving landscape, bringing strategic insight, creativity, and collaborative leadership.

The Opportunity for Meaningful Impact

For a leader who is passionate about innovative pedagogy, mission-driven education, and the transformative power of learning, this role offers the chance to make a lasting impact on students, faculty, and the broader community.

STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITIES

Champion and Advance Alverno's Abilities-Based Curriculum

- Serve as a visible advocate for Alverno's nationally recognized abilities-based and competency-informed approach to teaching, learning, and assessment.
- Ensure that this distinctive model continues to evolve to meet contemporary educational and workforce needs.

Strengthen Enrollment, Retention, and Student Success

- Work closely with enrollment and student success teams to grow undergraduate, graduate, and adult-learner enrollment.
- Improve retention and completion through strong advising, clear pathways, and student-centered academic practices.

Reimagine the Role of the Liberal Arts in a Changing Higher Education Landscape

- Lead thoughtful conversations about the future of liberal arts education at Alverno and how it integrates with professional and career-focused programs.
- Develop interdisciplinary and innovative academic offerings that reflect student demand and societal needs.

Expand Academic Programs and Delivery Models

- Explore new program opportunities, certificates, micro-credentials, and flexible delivery formats that attract new student populations, including adult learners and those with prior credits.

Build External Partnerships and Community Engagement

- Strengthen relationships with Milwaukee employers, school systems, community organizations, and other higher education partners.
- Expand experiential learning opportunities and workforce partnerships that benefit students and the region.

Support and Engage Faculty in a Time of Institutional Transition

- Foster a culture of collaboration, transparency, and trust following recent organizational changes.
- Encourage faculty innovation while ensuring alignment with institutional priorities.



Strengthen Operational Effectiveness and Academic Infrastructure

- Identify opportunities to streamline processes, leverage technology, and improve academic operations.
- Work with colleagues to modernize systems and practices that support faculty and student success.

Serve as a Passionate Advocate and Storyteller for LAPS and Alverno

- Clearly articulate the impact of Alverno's educational model to prospective students, families, partners, and the broader community.
- Elevate the School's reputation and strengthen its role within the College and the region.

QUALIFICATIONS

The successful candidate will bring a deep commitment to student success, inclusive education, and mission-driven leadership. Other key qualifications include:

- Demonstrated dedication to supporting diverse learners, including first-generation, adult, and nontraditional students.
- Appreciation for experiential, abilities-based, and competency-informed approaches to learning and assessment.
- Successful leadership experience as a dean, associate dean, or comparable academic administrator within a highly tuition-driven college or university setting.
- Exceptional ability to communicate across constituencies and build trust with faculty, staff, students, senior leadership, and external audiences.
- Commitment to shared governance and faculty engagement while maintaining the ability to make timely decisions when necessary.
- Experience launching, growing, or redesigning academic programs that respond to student demand and workforce needs.
- Demonstrated ability to build productive relationships with community organizations, employers, and educational partners.
- An earned doctorate or terminal degree in a relevant discipline (required), with qualifications consistent with appointment at the rank of full professor preferred.



ATTRIBUTES & QUALITIES

The successful candidate should possess:

- A passion for the value and opportunities inherent in higher education focused on a transformational educational experience along with an unwavering commitment to Alverno's Catholic, Franciscan mission and values;
- The ability to passionately articulate the relevance of that mission and those values to the faculty, staff, students, alumnae/i, and external community;
- A highly collaborative, communicative, and transparent leadership style that fosters team building and demonstrates a commitment to the importance of community;
- A proven track record as an accomplished problem-solver and decision-maker who is skilled at gathering input and building consensus through open, respectful, and empathetic discourse with the goal of identifying the opportunities that will best serve Alverno's students;
- A transformational, inclusive, and equitable approach to leadership that is inspiring to others;
- A passion for student success with demonstrated outcomes in leading student-centered initiatives that enhance the entirety of the student experience;
- A personable, approachable and accessible style with staff, faculty, and students;
- A high level of enthusiasm and energy for the work of higher education; and
- A record of exhibiting transparency and personal integrity, with a sense of humility and a sense of humor.



WHY ALVERNO?

The 8 Abilities

Alverno's [ability-based curriculum](#) goes beyond traditional education. Students learn through a unique approach that focuses on developing their skills, knowledge, and personal confidence to excel. Alverno graduates acquire not just a degree, but also the highly sought-after skills that employers value for leadership and making a difference. Alverno's innovative and empowering education model of non-graded assessment and feedback provides opportunities for academic exploration and achievement that put its students on a path towards professional distinction and engagement with the world. This "know it and show it" approach is deeply embedded in the Alverno community.

A Diverse and Welcoming Community

As a Minority-Serving Institution with the [Hispanic-Serving Institution \(HSI\)](#) designation, the Alverno community celebrates diversity and, through its commitment to its Franciscan values, fosters an inclusive environment where every member — students, faculty, and staff — feels valued and supported. It is a community rich with perspectives from different backgrounds that creates a vibrant and dynamic learning experience.

A Commitment to Women's Education

As a college dedicated to women's education, Alverno empowers women to lead and succeed in a wide array of careers. The College was recently named one of Newsweek's America's Best Colleges for Women 2026, ranking fifth in the country. The recognition evaluates institutions nationwide on how effectively they support women students, faculty and leaders, highlighting colleges that foster leadership, opportunity and success. The Alverno community is highly focused on student success, with support services including academic advising, internship placement, career counseling, and mental health resources.

Mission-Focused Programs of Study

Alverno's 30 undergraduate programs reflect majors, minors, and adult degree completion programs. They are contained within two academic divisions: Liberal Arts and Professional Studies, and the JoAnn McGrath School of Nursing and Health Professions. Within the Liberal Arts and Professional Studies division are the departments of: Business & Communication; Education; Multidisciplinary Studies; Natural Sciences; and Psychology & Social Work. Its undergraduate Social Work program was recently approved by the Council on Social Work Education to be offered fully online.

Alverno offers certificate programs, digital badges, and graduate programs for women and men. Graduate degree programs include Educational Specialist in School Psychology; Master of Arts in Education; Master of Science in Nursing with multiple advanced practice specialty tracks; Direct Entry Master of Science in Nursing offered at both the Milwaukee campus and Mesa, Arizona location; Master of Science in Community Psychology; Doctor of Nursing Practice; and online Doctorate in Education program.

A Student-Centered Faculty

Alverno has 41 full-time faculty members, 78% of whom have the highest degree in their field. Alverno faculty are recognized nationally for their teaching expertise. *U.S. News & World Report* ranked Alverno College highest in the state in its "Strong Commitment to Teaching" category, the only Wisconsin college ranked in this category 16 years in a row.



Career Preparation

Nearly 90% of Alverno graduates are employed in areas related to their major and career goals. Beyond the classroom, Alverno students intern for at least one semester. These internships lead to networking opportunities and in many cases employment directly out of college. Alverno's **Career Studio**, which is connected to more than 2,000 partner sites, assists students in their career goals. In addition, *U.S. News & World Report* has recognized Alverno for its ability to impact the social mobility of its graduates.



Alverno = Milwaukee

Alverno serves undergraduate women whose academic and professional success are critical to their families' futures and the Milwaukee region's many businesses and organizations. Seventy percent of Alverno's incoming undergraduate students are first-generation college students. Almost all full-time students receive scholarships or other forms of financial aid. For example, 62% of Alverno's incoming undergraduate students are Pell Grant eligible (compared to the national average of 34%). Nearly 60% of students represent racially or ethnically diverse groups. As of late 2023, more than 1,100 Alverno graduates were employed by Milwaukee's top companies, and 61% of Alverno alumnae/i live and work in Wisconsin.

Milwaukee = Alverno

Milwaukee is a vibrant city on the western shore of Lake Michigan, about a 90-minute drive from Chicago. It is the largest city in Wisconsin, with a metropolitan population of approximately 1.8 million with nearly 200 distinct neighborhoods. Aside from the shore of Lake Michigan, Milwaukee's location is at the confluence of three rivers. The Milwaukee RiverWalk District, along the Milwaukee River, was developed in the 1990s and today is a shining example of bringing life to a downtown neighborhood through commercial, residential, and entertainment accessibility. Milwaukee has earned the nickname "City of Festivals" and hosts celebrations including cultural and holiday events, music and film, and all things Milwaukee.

Abundant experiences in nature are available with over 150 state and county parks, 1,500 acres of beaches, and over 150 miles of bike trails. The opportunities to experience city life are endless with 30 museums, 11 major colleges and universities, more than 200 locally owned restaurants, and eight professional sports teams, including the Milwaukee Bucks and the Milwaukee Brewers.



APPLICATION & NOMINATION PROCESS

The Dean of the School of Liberal Arts & Professional Studies Search Committee will begin the review of applications immediately and continue work until an appointment is made. To assure full consideration, applications should be received by **Friday, April 17, 2026** and must include:

- A letter of interest addressing the strategic objectives and qualifications identified in this profile;
- A current curriculum vitae; and
- The contact information (email and phone) for five professional references, including their relationship to the candidate. *References will not be contacted without prior authorization from the candidate.*

Alverno College is being assisted by AGB Search. Application materials should be in PDF format and submitted through the AGB Search portal system here: [Alverno College - Dean School of Liberal Arts and Professional Studies](#).

Please direct nominations and expressions of interest or any questions regarding the application process to Alverno-Dean@agbsearch.com or:

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AGB SEARCH

Advancing Higher Education Leadership

Alverno College Employment Policy

Alverno College does not discriminate against any employee, applicant for employment, student, or applicant for admission on the basis of actual or perceived inclusion in a protected class or group.

Alverno College seeks to comply with all federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and ordinances prohibiting discrimination in private post-secondary education institutions.

This Policy applies to, covers, and requires nondiscrimination in both employment and access to educational opportunities. Therefore, any member of the Alverno community whose acts deny, deprive, unreasonably interfere with, or limit the education or employment, residential, social access, benefits, or opportunities of any member of the Alverno community, guest, or visitor on the basis of that person's actual or perceived protected characteristic(s), is in violation of this Policy.

