

I want to begin these formal remarks by congratulating our May 2023 graduates across all programs and level. The commencement ceremonies this weekend were filled with enthusiastic energy, and I was so proud to congratulate our students on their many successes and wish them all the best in their journeys ahead. To say that I was inspired by our students was an understatement. And so, a word of thanks to everyone who helped make graduation weekend such a success. You made everyone – especially our graduates – feel welcome, celebrated, and special.

As we close the chapter on the spring semester, many programs have already turned the page the start of summer classes, and everyone is gearing up for exciting changes this summer. Alverno will be welcoming a new, outstanding president, and the campus community will prepare for celebrating 50 years of abilities-based learning. We prepare to welcome another new class, which will include students coming to us under teach out and transfer agreements signed with Cardinal Stritch, and new programs will be launching this fall.

Concomitantly, there are changes that I know bring a sense of nervousness and anxiousness. We are emerging into the post-pandemic era into a reality in which the

market remains uncertain and chaotic, with costs in several areas rapidly increasing. Likewise, many important social and political safety nets, like the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (or HEERF), are going away, which means students and institutions are now having to go without these needed resources. While we are seeing numerous positive signs that we are heading in the right direction when it comes to enrollment, retention, fundraising and grant support, the announcement of the closure Cardinal Stritch has everyone in our area and across higher education nervously assessing the future.

This is a time of significant change, which can be both exhilarating and scary. But as Winston Churchill once said, “To improve is to change; to be perfect is to change often.” If there is wisdom in that, we find that Alverno is perfectly changing and constantly working toward improvement and the betterment of the whole.

The Alverno approach to education reminds us of the importance of self assessment and assessment in relationship to clearly articulated goals or outcomes. This is an important part of the change process. It is easy to get caught up in responding to the day-to-day of operations and lose sight of the larger picture. That is

why we worked to articulate clear goals for the coming year back in August, and why I revisit those now; to assess progress and to recalibrate where course corrections might have been needed.

At Institute in August, I shared with you the “Key Goals” for 2022-2023. Those goals were:

- Achieve core mission
- Offer appropriate mix of high quality, student-centered programs
- Meet enrollment and retention goals and enhance student experience
- Enhance visibility and reputational strength
- Strategically align resources to strategy

While each of these domains of work will always require ongoing and continuous improvement, in this year of transition I want to highlight the progress we have made over the past year in relation to each of those goals. I want this update to be thorough, but it cannot be exhaustive. Inevitably, I will through necessity or negligence, unintentionally leave out important work and individuals who deserve our recognition and thanks. I will offer apologies in advance and ask for help. If there are individuals or work that I leave out that should be

recognized, either privately or in public, send me a note and I will follow-up on that. You all deserve praise and thanks and recognition. Thank you.

Before I get into a reflection on progress in each of the areas identified, what wasn't readily obvious to us when developing these goals were the numerous emergencies and financial surprises that we have experienced throughout the year.

I started the year by providing a sailing analogy related to navigating by the stars. And, in many ways, this past year felt like "the perfect storm." We missed our enrollment targets contributing to a net tuition deficit. We experienced numerous waterline and flooding issues that put unanticipated strains on resources. We saw service fees on a number of long-term vendor contracts increase significantly, and experienced challenges with our payroll processing in the transition to ADP. Alverno underwent an extensive program review and audit by the Federal Department of Education that hasn't happened in two decades, and we received unexpected news from our FY22 audit forcing us to count our over \$4M PPP loan as a liability rather than as an asset even though it had been previously forgiven, and we experienced turnover in many key offices and departments.

Likewise, as I will say more than once in these updates, the federal and state dollars that helped support students and helped to offset operational losses due to losses in tuition and auxiliaries over the past three years have gone away. Finally, we discovered a number of licenses and agreements that had been signed onto by former employees that were not properly budgeted for or accounted for previously.

Therefore, while the cost saving efforts I articulated back in November at the town hall resulted in almost \$3.2 M in projected savings, which is the result of a lot of hard work and people carrying heavier loads and having to make really challenging decisions, we are still projecting a significant shortfall for the year. As things continue to evolve, which causes projections to change on a near daily basis, I am unable to give a definitive projection at this time as to how much of a gap we are likely to close out this fiscal year. However, I can say that we are looking at a multi-million-dollar shortfall that will require significant attention and focus.

In the immediate, we continue to practice very judicious position control efforts when it comes to hiring. Several weeks ago I also issued an “essential spend only” memo

for budget managers to help try and make-up even more ground before the end of the fiscal year. We are working on net asset release processes with finance and advancement offices to see where we might offset expenses, and Bruce Meyers from the Board of Trustees has given a significant number of hours to provide pro bono support in helping to get us closer to completion with the building of a clean data warehouse to help with program costs analysis. These steps are helping, but ongoing effort is required.

Let me be clear, the financial situation we are in is not catastrophic or existential. It is serious enough, however, that we must take steps now and in the near future to reposition for strength and resource viability. Already we have been working with departments and programs to restructure in order to more efficiently meet outcomes that are identified as essential. We are also holding back on hiring where possible to capture savings or pilot efforts for future savings.

Over the course of this year:

- We eliminated the Vice President and Chief of Staff position following the departure of Jill Desmond.

- There has been restructuring that has led to the dissolution of Assessment and Outreach as a department. We are integrating educational and institutional research, thereby moving Denise Sanders and Kathy Minik, into Institutional Effectiveness and Sponsored Programs under the direction of Marlene Neises. Likewise, the work of assessment overseen by Raechel Bowersox will be incorporated into Instructional Services where Raechel will now report. Finally, Julie Borgealt and our outreach programs will move into the structure of the School for Adult Learning and New Initiatives and Academic Affairs to promote greater synergy with public outreach that produce revenue through continuing education and other programming. These moves enable us to save on temporary admin support and efficiencies through office integration.
- On April 5, Heidi sent out a memo detailing changes and restructuring in Student Development and Success and Instructional Services that capitalized on departures and vacancies to reimagine work and operations that yielded savings through consolidating open positions.

- Several offices, including advising, alumni and advancement, admissions, financial aid, the business office, facilities, student accounts, athletics, career studio and more have held off on needed hiring, and are holding back on a number of requests in order to capture ongoing savings. Likewise, a number of academic programs have pulled back on hiring requests, and we have funds coming in through significant federal grants to help offset needed hiring for certain programs. We also have faculty who have taken voluntary reductions in teaching loads and phased retirement options, which contributes back positively to the bottom line.
- We continue to benefit from the leadership of Religious Studies faculty member Steven Dunn heading up Campus Ministry with the support of Music and Liturgy director and faculty member Steve Janco, which has created significant savings while elevating the engagement and delivering beautiful services for the spiritual health and growth of our community.

All of these efforts were necessary, and all have been done with forethought, reflection, and in a collaborative

and supportive manner. We recognize that we cannot just ask people to do more with less and assume that is sustainable. Our world has changed, and Alverno must change, too.

I want to also be forthright in saying that we anticipate additional changes, which will almost certainly mean additional restructuring and work to rearticulate and reduce priorities in order to reimagine our work and reposition the institution for strength in the future. Vice Presidents will almost certainly be communicating very difficult reductions in proposed spending in FY24 budgets once finalized in the budget approval process. I will continue to work with the Cabinet and Administrative Council, the Board of Trustees, programs and departments, and appropriate governance structures, as well as with President-Elect Christy Brown, to help support these efforts. I know we cannot wait to act even as we plan for the future.

The draft FY24 budget was built on very conservative enrollment assumptions so as not to repeat the mistakes of the past in setting enrollment targets beyond aspirational to levels that were not reasonably attainable. Unrealistic assumptions have led to the challenges of managing budget shortfalls. So even while

our admissions team is having a great year, which I will get to in a moment, and while we are anticipating a lift from students enrolling from Cardinal Stritch, we are taking what we know are needed steps to change for future prosperity.

Part of the reason why the FY24 budget remains in question is the fact that we are awaiting the report from Terra Firma consulting, which will also be factored into future planning. We assume that there will need to be additional adjustments based on their recommendations before the final budget would be approved for the coming fiscal year. For now, I applaud the excellent work everyone has done across the community to meet the needs of the time. Thank you.

The future will not be without challenges or difficult decision-making. Change is happening and it is needed. But I know you have what it takes to navigate each tomorrow and that Alverno will thrive. I believe that because, in spite of all of these challenges, we have had a very successful year in making progress toward our stated goals. So I turn now to an assessment of progress toward those goals beginning with Goal 1.

Achieve Core Mission

Above all, Alverno remains committed to its core mission and is delivering on that with excellence.

Commencement this past weekend was a visible sign of that. Two hundred eighty graduates walked across the stage on Saturday, including 3 associate degree recipients, 132 bachelor degree recipients (11 with Honors), and 145 graduate and advanced degree recipients that included 57 graduates from the Direct Entry Master of Science in Nursing program and 14 newly hooded doctors in the EdD program! With a focus on women's leadership and our commitment to diversity and equity, Alverno's transformational Mission is seen in the graduates we send out to lead in the world. It is clear from their speeches, their contributions, and their successes that we are meeting that core Mission.

Alverno continues to be a leader in the promotion of women's excellence throughout Milwaukee and the region. The publication of "The Alverno Report 2020-2022: Women in Public Life – Elected Officials" by the Research Center for Women and Girls, under the direction of Lindsey Harness, and its subsequent impact has been profound.

Alverno staff, faculty and students have been recognized for excellence in ways that reflect our commitment to women's leadership. In fact, one of our outstanding students, Celestina Hertz, who many of you know through her work to promote civic engagement and voter registration, as well as her leadership as a Thea Bowman Scholar, was selected as a 2023-2024 Newman Civic Fellow. This is a prestigious and highly competitive fellowship that will provide Celestina with access to a variety of learning opportunities throughout the year, as well as participation in the national conference, to help further her personal, professional and civic growth.

Third, woven into our Mission and Franciscan charism is a commitment to access, belonging, inclusion, diversity and equity; this has been articulated clearly in the work to build our ABIDE framework. This work has been led by three outstanding leaders -- Alexis Outlaw, Elena Hernandez Burke and Ronett Jacobs – with input and important contributions from many throughout the campus community (including, I believe, Kris Vasquez who first organized the various domains that frame this work into the ABIDE acronym). As part of our ABIDE efforts, we have benefitted considerably from leadership and work by Jac Sinclair and Sebastian Black in the library who have helped advance work and conversations

around neurodiversity along with a committee of faculty and staff. This work is ongoing, living work. It forms the heart of efforts being undertaken related to student success. It undergirds our ethical obligations to students and the community as a Hispanic Serving Institution. It integrates with the work of the abilities, shifting us from 21st Century Skills to thinking about skills in a 22nd Century context of care, connection, culture and community, and must be woven throughout our pedagogical and andragogical practices. And it gives life to new work to advance equity in the continued work to create a formal structure for staff governance, which has been brought forward by several leaders from within the staff for consideration and action.

While the institution is looking to the next phase of leadership in DEI work, we thank those who have carried us this far. This work calls to mind the powerful call and response from the graduate student speaker at last week's commencement, Dr. Clarence McFerren, II: "If it is meant to be, then it is up to me!" We all have a role in promoting accessibility, belonging, inclusion, diversity and equity. This is our Mission and it is part of all of our work.

Offer Appropriate Mix of High Quality, Student-Centered Programs

Our work to provide a full cost analysis of programs and offerings to help inform our academic portfolio optimization efforts continues to present some challenges when it comes to data collection. A program cost model that reflects accurately revenues and expenses was built and vetted. However, the data needed significant clean-up work in our systems so we can successfully populate the models. Folks in the Registrar's Office, Academic Affairs, Finance, and IT have been working closely with Bruce Meyers from the Board who is donating his time and expertise to help. We are getting very close, and this data is much needed and long overdue.

As we await the completion of that critical work for future conversations and planning, innovation and inclusive excellence have been thriving within our academic programs and the work folks are doing to both build new curriculum and to enhance the quality and continued relevance of offerings. New programs like our innovative 3-year undergraduate business degree and continuing programs like our paraprofessional to teacher

licensure program continue to develop to meet the complex needs of today's student and workforce. Recently City Forward Collective updated an agreement with Alverno that will provide \$100,000 of sponsorship by Spring of 2024 for paraprofessionals in Milwaukee charter and private schools to attend Alverno's paraprofessional to teacher licensure program. This summer members of Alverno's Accelerate team will work with faculty in the paraprofessional program to identify future pathways to support teacher licensure in creative, student-centered ways supported by Alverno's Title III grant.

After a full program review, the Program Accreditation Board at the National Association of School Psychologists, the Educational Specialist in School Psychology program received full accreditation. NASP officials noted that "the reviewers and the Board were impressed by your program's commitment to providing excellent training for future School Psychologists." On the heels of the \$2.9 million grant awarded to the program for multicultural and bilingual school psychology and school-based mental health programs, this powerful testament highlights the strength of the program, and

commitment to excellence by the faculty. They have already filled all fully funded scholarships for the program for the fall with bilingual students and students from diverse backgrounds who will go on to serve in schools who desperately need their excellence.

The Master of Social Work degree program, which will launch this coming fall with a strong inaugural cohort of students already enrolling, officially received pre-candidacy status from Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). This power and purpose of this program is being recognized nationally as an exemplar for going beyond a curriculum that is inclusive to one that is truly abolitionist in its design and framework. On Thursday, our community will have the opportunity to learn about abolitionist approaches to education from external and internal experts. I want to thank the faculty who have worked so hard on building this important and transformative program.

Finally, on February 6-8, a small team from Milwaukee joined our colleagues in Mesa for a required HLC additional location follow-up site visit. I am pleased to report that we received a very rapid and all positive review with no additional visits or follow-up required apart from our regular assurance work. My thanks to Jodi

Eastberg, Linda Shanta, Anne Elliason, Veronica Vital, Laurie Kunkel-Jordan, Peg Rauschenberger, and Meghan Walsh for their efforts both in-person and remote to secure a successful outcome. Thanks also to Cathy Herman for her remote triaging and support for ongoing tech challenges, and a major debt of gratitude to Lesa Krawczyk our Clinical Simulation Coordinator in Milwaukee who agreed on a moment's notice to fly out and live and work in Arizona for a couple of months following the sudden resignation of the Mesa Sim Coordinator and while we fill that critical position. This was a huge next step, and the rapid growth in the program there has far outpaced projections. Thank you!

Even as we are excited to bring on new programs and new opportunities, we know that changes in offerings are needed. As demographics, the market, trends and competition are shifting, Alverno will need to judiciously and carefully determine where its competitive advantages rest and what work is needed to revitalize or reduce offerings in furtherance of viability of Mission and operations. That will continue to be critical and challenging work. That is why I am pleased to also share that, in working with President-Elect Christy Brown, it has been determined Acting Vice President for Academic

Affairs Jodi Eastberg will continue on in an interim role for the coming year. Jodi has graciously agreed to this continuation of appointment to provide continuity, institutional knowledge and considerable expertise while Christy gets settled and before a national search will be launched.

Meet Enrollment and Retention Goals and Enhance the Student Experience

When it comes to enrollment and retention efforts, there are many positive signs that we are heading in the right direction.

First, we are seeing signs that this coming fall we will see a larger first year class and strong enrollment in graduate programs in psychology, school psychology, and our first class of master of social work students! Likewise, the first time class of students coming directly from high school is up 25% over last year at this time, with the highest number of deposits collected since before the pandemic began! The work of the admissions team in collaboration with financial aid staff, has produced more visits, more contacts, and more family conversations about the costs and benefits of an Alverno education and this new class of Alverno students are excited and ready to get started

in the fall. Additionally, thanks to the work of our dedicated faculty, graduate programs in mental health areas are going to be diverse, engaged, and FULL this fall.

Second, the work across the campus to support and educate students moving from Cardinal Stritch has been incredible, and we are seeing positive results. As of late last week, we had formal inquiries about Alverno from former Stritch students, and 26 students who have confirmed to start at Alverno this summer or fall. That's a 15% conversation rate and unheard of in just a month's worth of work. While a group of graduate education students get underway this week, additional students are still considering starting Accelerate, Weekday College, and graduate programs starting this fall. This positive response to Alverno would not have been possible with the tireless work of a few key people over the past 40 days – leadership from Jodi Eastberg and Kate Lundeen, faculty across campus, especially Teri Marsicek and Randa Suleiman; Admissions staff Katie Kipp, Annie Barrett, and especially Leah Badke who has expertly and effectively lead the efforts with over a hundred applicants to graduate education pathways; and all of our experts in Financial Aid, Student Accounts, and Registrar – most especially April Thomas, Casey Ortega, Gianna Pacioni, Naomi Coe, Austin Haynes,

America Rosete, Katie Grieger, and Yessenia Santamaria. On top of their usual late spring workload, this team has created entirely new approaches in our systems for Cardinal Stritch students that will make it possible for them to attend and graduate from Alverno. We could not be more grateful.

Retention efforts have been equally promising. Many thanks to everyone in Student Development and Success, Advising, and all student support areas for their unwavering dedication to helping students feel that sense of belonging and working to intentionally build greater wrap-around support for students by working across departments and divisions to remind us of how we all can work to increase retention. Our fall to spring retention rates over this past year were 4% higher than previous (87% in AY 2022-2023 vs. 83% for AY 2021-2022).

We are cautiously optimistic about year-over-year retention. It is clear that the efforts in which folks have been engaged are working. However, we no longer have HEERF dollars available to help students close their financial gap so that they can get registered for classes. That may create challenges for our students, especially in this rapidly changing economic market, that could

depress retention numbers. Efforts continue to be made to help increase financial literacy, options and opportunities for students in order to respond to emergency government aid no longer being available. Likewise, the Student Development and Success team has identified key factors (outside of student financial concerns) as retention risks which is allowing us to focus our retention efforts and student support in a different way to help us improve our retention rates.

When students arrive at Alverno, we remain assured that they are having an impactful Student Experience. The Center for Academic Excellence and Career Studio continue to help advance high impact practices like student-faculty research and internships and experiential learning, while also providing support and mentorship that have helped students feel connected and prepared for their next.

Following the Department of Education Program Review, significant changes were made to both enhance processes for compliance and enhancing our ability to support students. With changes to census and enrollment verification, faculty and staff worked quickly to revise policies and practices that will help aid in student retention efforts, increase and improve on-time

graduation efforts, and will also help reduce student debt. This work was complex and on an expedited timeline. Everyone stepped up for our students, for which I could not be more grateful. Thank you.

Our ABIDE work is helping all to become more student-ready and I was pleased at the success of a new standalone cultural program, Asian Rites of Passage, joining Bestowing of the Kente and Latinas con Fuerza in helping our students celebrate their cultural heritage as an important part of their student experience. Many thanks to Brooke Wegner for stepping in to help organize the cultural ceremonies in the absence of a multicultural coordinator, as well as all involved for helping making them so successful.

In addition, and spearheaded under the leadership of Danielle Gioia more efforts have been implemented focusing on the unique experience of our first-generation college students which included the addition of the first annual cording ceremony for first generation college graduates, we have expanded mental health support for student through a new telehealth option that has been supplementing on-campus support services and programming. Thank you to Brooke Wegner, Rachel Haos, Meg Pledl, Jason Pilarski, and Heidi Anderson-

Isaacson for your work in making this a reality for students here and in Mesa.

Finally, Student Development and Success has led the charge on developing a new “Digital Accessibility Policy,” which has been integrated into website work in Marketing and Communication and IT, and was vetted through the Administrative Council. While more on that work is forthcoming, it is a tremendous accomplishment that not only brings us into compliance with federal ADA standards, it reflects our core commitment to making higher education accessible for all as a diverse and inclusive community.

Enhance Visibility and Reputational Strength

When it comes to visibility, and reputational strength, I can sum up this past year with a clear statement: Alverno is back at the table. Just last week, at a gathering of nearly 100 women leaders from Northwestern Mutual and around the Milwaukee Community, the only 4 schools discussed in a 4 hour long summit were UW-Madison, UWM, Marquette, and Alverno, with many shout outs for Alverno. We are getting noticed again for being more than Milwaukee’s “best kept secret.” At the Carmen high school signing days, the 18 girls who will be

attending Alverno in the fall were recognized again and again for academic, service, and leadership throughout high school. The best of the best of Carmen are coming to Alverno next year. And, at Milwaukee Academy of Excellence, all 7 of the incoming Alverno scholars stayed with Assistant Director Alexis Outlaw to discuss not just financial aid and financial literacy, but becoming Alverno women and stepping into the next version of their best selves. That was just last week, which also happened to be commencement week!

Throughout the year, our Athletic teams under the leadership of Katari Key and the many coaches and staff that support our students, have put up an increasing number of “Ws” on the board and increased competitiveness within the conference while also greatly increasing our enrollment efforts through their recruitment across the country and beyond US borders. Three Alverno strong leaders, Angela Frey, Peg Rauschenberger, and Jodi Eastberg have been honored for their excellence as Notable Leaders in higher education and STEM by BizTimes Media.

Our students and talented Chair of Creative and Performing Arts, Tom Reed, were recently honored with the award for Best Horror at this year’s Top Shorts film

festival, which will be screened again for the community at 12:15 on Wednesday, May 24 in Kellogg A (room FO 460).

Faculty members in the Humanities, Trish Lewis, John Savagian, Carole Barrowman, and professor emeritus Amy Shapiro published a chapter on their innovative new Alverno Accelerate program in an edited collection that was selected for the 2023 Frandson Award for Literature. And one of the first graduates of the Alverno Accelerate program, Jean Northway, was just recognized with a 2022 Unity Award given by Milwaukee Magazine for her and her husband's work for her non-profit, Courage Milwaukee.

And, of course, we had a successful search process that resulted in the election of Christy L. Brown who will serve as Alverno's next president. A powerful advocate for, and outstanding exemplar of, the excellence of women's leadership, Christy comes to us from the Girl Scouts of Wisconsin Southeast where she has served as the Chief Executive Officer since 2012. Christy earned her BA in Psychology at Stanford, and MA in Humanities and JD at Duke University. Prior to her work with the Girl Scouts, Christy served as the Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administrative Affairs at the University of Wisconsin-

Milwaukee and as interim president at MATC in addition to her role as Executive Vice President and General Council. Christy has also worked as a Vice President for Lutheran Social Services, and as an Associate Attorney at the Law Firm of Michael Best and Friedrich of Milwaukee. In addition to her excellence and experience, President-Elect Brown is well connected in the community, which will help with fundraising and philanthropy and will continue to elevate Alverno's brand and profile. I am excited to see how the campus will thrive and lead into the future under Christy's leadership.

Finally, and to close the assessment on how we have done on enhancing visibility and reputational strength, thanks largely to the work of Jean O'Toole in Marketing and Communication and Cheryl Moore in Career, as well as team members in Advancement and outreach efforts, Alverno has had increased presence in community and corporate spaces. We have heard from Board members and community leaders how nice it is to "see Alverno again." Thank you to everyone for your enthusiasm to bring Alverno to critical spaces of visibility in and throughout Milwaukee and beyond.

Strategically align resources to strategy

Where we have experienced the greatest challenge, as I framed at the outset, is related to alignment of resources to strategy. While the strategy has been working, significant challenges have to be overcome related to our limited resources so we can continue to provide access to excellence for the future leaders of our communities and our world. In addition to the cost savings measures that have been employed to bring down expenses, and the conservative budgeting and significant efforts to bring down spending for next year, as part of the budget process and planning for the future, a generous gift from one of our Board Members has enabled us to contract with Terra Firma consulting services. As was shared at Institute in January, Terra Firma is providing an audit and series of recommendations to help us in planning and implementation in the areas of institutional finance, academic programs to supplement our ongoing optimization efforts, advancement, athletics, facilities, enrollment and marketing.

I had hoped I would be able to deliver an overview of recommendations, but we have not received them. I understand that they are finalizing and hoping to meet to deliver the recommendations to the Executive Committee of the Board next week. And so, we anxiously

await their report and findings. Once received, they will be discussed with the Board along with a proposed FY24 budget in order to determine the next steps in planning and implementing for the future. It is also important that we are keeping Christy in the loop and conferring on critical decisions.

Unfortunately, the timing of all of this is not ideal. While the plan is still to communicate about the Terra Firma recommendations and next steps once we have that information and clarity about next steps, I recognize that many folks who are on 10-month contracts will be off-contract for June and July. I will work closely with Cabinet, the Board and Christy to make sure we are following the appropriate governance processes, and will communicate out as I am able.

We knew the timing was going to be challenging, and we also recognize that the work could not wait or be pushed off to the fall. Please know that we are not intentionally holding off on any communication. We just want to make sure we have a full and accurate picture of everything being proposed so that the next steps are thoughtful and contributing to the long-term vibrancy of the College. I had really hoped that Institute would be an opportunity for us to begin digging into the recommendations as a

community, but I know that time will come and we will be able to go deeper into the repositioning efforts that will help position Alverno to meet the future.

In the meantime, and in addition to enrollment and cost reduction efforts, we have been enhancing our revenue and resource generation through other means and other streams. Folks know about the millions of dollars that have come into Alverno through Title III funding, which supports positions, enhancements, and new program development among other things, the multicultural and bilingual school psychology and school-based mental health programs grant that does the same, and the CCAMPIS grant and other awards that have come in to support access and operations in the Early Learning Center. I am also pleased to report that in mid-April Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences Jeanie Lucy and staff and faculty in NSMT – Eulandria Biddle, Jenna Cross, Jenny Johanson, Rebekah Klingler, Megan Krueger, and Heather Mernitz – worked with IESP to submit a NASA “Launching the Future” Project Grant, as well as an S-STEM grant that was developed by Eulandria Biddle, Angela Frey, Lois Kailhofer, and Joyce Boyland. Likewise, Jeanie has identified grant opportunities for every disciplinary areas within her School and has made that an important priority since she arrived in January, and

Marlene in the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Sponsored Programs continues to meet regularly, along with Angela Frey and Rosland Briggs Gammon, with Hanover Services to further our grants capacity and efforts. This work matters and can mean the difference in our ability to enhance and innovate instead of risking stagnation due to a lack of needed resources. Many thanks to all.

Speaking of needed resources, Advancement has been hard at work. The Alverno Giving Challenge was a success, bringing in 370 donors and just over \$140,000 raised. This event helped cap off a very successful year for fundraising. As of last week, the Advancement team is running almost \$600,000 ahead of funds raised over previous year. They have exceeded the annual, official unrestricted goal by over 6%! The success of our fundraising at Alverno links directly back to our people and the strength of our work and Mission. The Advancement and Alumnae teams have brought exceptional energy, diligence, and authentic connections to their work, and have employed a strategy that is building toward even more success in the future. Congratulations to Interim Vice President for

Advancement Kim Muench, her teams, and all who have been a part of these important efforts.

Final Assessment and Farewell

In conclusion, Alverno continues to sail boldly into the future. I know things are difficult, and I know that lots more change and tough conversations are forthcoming. But if I have learned anything in these past three years it is that resilience is a way of being at Alverno. This community has faced difficult times in the past, and this year we had more than our fair share, but the flame of the Inferno continues to burn brightly to illuminate opportunities for those who will go on to lead into the future.

I will admit, I was hesitant about a recorded, virtual message – especially since this is likely the last opportunity to address the full campus community before some folks go off contract and others enjoy well-deserved opportunities to take time off and away. However, as I recall how my very first messages to folks were with uncut COVID hair that had me looking a bit like Shaggy from Scooby Doo recorded from my basement, perhaps this is the most fitting approach of all. But I want to let you all know, virtually or through occasions in

person from now until my last day on July 10, how much Alverno has meant to me and will continue to mean in the future. I could have never anticipated when I was interviewing in the fall of 2019 that we would undergo COVID nor that I would be offered the privilege to serve as interim president. What I did know was that Alverno is a special community that is doing great things. I will always be grateful for the opportunity to serve here, and while my time was much different and not for nearly as long as I imagined, I will be forever changed through my experiences here and grateful to all of you for all you do and the ways in which you serve. My heart and soul have been indelibly shaped thanks to you.

And so I want to close with one of my favorite Irish blessings:

*May the road rise to meet you,
May the wind be always at your back.
May the sun shine warm upon your face,
The rains fall soft upon your fields.
And until we meet again,
May God hold you in the palm of his hand.*

*May God be with you and bless you;
May you see your children's children.
May you be poor in misfortune,*

*Rich in blessings,
May you know nothing but happiness
From this day forward.*

*May the road rise to meet you
May the wind be always at your back
May the warm rays of sun fall upon your home
And may the hand of a friend always be near.*

*May green be the grass you walk on,
May blue be the skies above you,
May pure be the joys that surround you,
May true be the hearts that love you.*

Until we meet again, may God bless and keep you and may His grace be always upon this beloved Alverno community.

Oh and one more thing... Always find joy in the journey. Take care, and God bless.