End Notes

[1] Organizational restructuring is an essential component of transformation, but not the only one. Structures are not necessarily physical (new office, building). They include reorganizing time, roles, and responsibilities which can lead to revised criteria for institutional effectiveness.

Preface

How institutional transformation works and becomes visible will differ for institutions, faculty, students, staff, and trustees. A college that is in the midst of a crisis (for example, enrollment, finances) may experience the dynamic of transformation very differently from one that has more generic ideas about why it should change. One that has a broad set of responsibilities for graduate and professional schools will "transform" quite differently from one that has more focused teaching and learning goals for students, and so is more learning-centered overall. At Alverno College, the dynamic of placing student learning outcomes at the "center" was a major influence in our own transformation.

9. Connecting the academic curriculum and the on- and off-campus cocurriculum led to restructuring student affairs and academic services departments to expand their involvement as "Partners in Learning" on behalf of students, with revised criteria for staff self assessment and promotion;

10. Embedding planning within and across all the structures of the college led to ensuring that the new departments and the funds required for continuous educational transformation (for example, Educational Research and Evaluation office; Center for Instructional Communication; summer fellowships for faculty) were integrated into the budget.

11. New ways of thinking about education led to initiating and maintaining a public dialogue with educators and other professionals throughout the country. We do this through publications and campus conferences in order to benefit from criticism and to share successes and failures through both informal and formal relationships.

community agencies, and with national, and international learning opportunities. The nature of each partnership extends and connects the college culture to that of others. Partnerships became a transformative component for faculty and students who work in a global society.

5. Expecting all students to learn and perform the required abilities for graduation led to restructuring (a) an advising program that included professional academic advisors and student peer advisors; (b) introductory seminars and courses for first-year students, and also for transfer students and older adults who could move more quickly through the beginning ability levels; and structuring (c) a weekend time frame where learners could complete a degree in four years.

6. New teaching and assessment methods led to creating and staffing audio-visual studios for use by all faculty and students for preparation of teaching/learning materials.

7. The faculty's evolving definition of the scholarship of teaching led to revised guidelines and expectations for faculty development and criteria for promotion.

8. Developing shared learning and leadership led to organizational learning and continuous improvement.

Alverno Experience In Institutional Transformation

In 1973, after five years of intensive planning and eighty-five years of historical preparation, Alverno College implemented a major restructuring of its educational program.[1] The dynamic inherent in any extensive institutional transformation is evident in that it *takes place over a period of time* and is *ongoing*, that it is based on and continues to create *cooperation and self reflection and self assessment throughout the institution*, and that, informing all those, it is *guided by a clearly articulated mission. A*t Alverno, the education of women unceasingly presses the college to deeper understandings of the meaning and purpose of education for a particular group who still do not experience full equality in many domains of their lives (for example, salary inequities, limits on promotability, expectations for women who are members of minority groups).

Like most events, the creation of Alverno's outcome-oriented, ability- and performance-based curriculum happened because its history gave it the potential to happen and because a combination of events precipitated it. The college's dedication to teaching and longstanding experience in curricular improvement provided the potential. The precipitating events came in 1968 with the inauguration of a new Board of Trustees and a new president. In the late 1960s many questions being raised

nationally about education directly affected Alverno—for example, the relevance of traditional approaches to teaching and learning and the viability of colleges for women. Questions raised locally about Milwaukee institutions—for example, the necessity for the number of private colleges, many indistinguishable from one another—also contributed to the deliberations of the board, president, faculty, and staff as the college made the decision to affirm its mission to educate women.

This decision and the ferment within the college and in the higher education community prompted the president and the faculty to embark on a series of explorations regarding the definition of education for women in late 20th century America. The president posed questions for faculty deliberation centered on major questions each discipline considered worth probing in both general education and major programs of study and what was so important that "students cannot afford to pass up courses in your department." Faculty met regularly in their departments to probe the distinctive contributions of their discipline to student learning and then in 1970–71 engaged in biweekly meetings to listen to and discuss each other's conclusions.

Throughout the year it became evident that there were many commonalities across disciplines regarding what students needed to learn and be able to do as educated persons: communicate effectively, think critically, make decisions based on value considerations. Encouraged by their com-

departments and interdisciplinary ability-based departments—each set responsible to improve the quality of an integrated content and ability-based curriculum.

2. Connecting emerging faculty roles and responsibilities implied creating periods of time for extended discussions, workshops, and evaluations of progress, and that led to restructuring the academic schedule for faculty and students.

3. Defining learning outcomes as abilities that are developmental and integrated in performance and in the person led to establishing a Council on Student Assessment and developing an Assessment Center that recruited hundreds of external assessors from the greater metropolitan community to be trained by faculty and to work with them as co-assessors in specified areas. This framework of learning outcomes also led to establishing a Research and Evaluation Committee and an Educational Research and Evaluation office that conducted research on teaching, learning, and assessment issues, including longitudinal studies on student learning outcomes. Shared learning led to connecting student, program, and institutional assessment structures and to building processes to define and develop collaborative inquiry and funding it with faculty fellowships.

4. Establishing experiential learning via internships on and off campus led to connecting with

bed processes for continual transformation into the institution, so that transformation continues.

They are currently involved in planning efforts regarding the design and use of technology in improving the teaching, learning, and assessment process on behalf of all students. They have designed and implemented a Master of Arts degree based on principles similar to those that undergird the baccalaureate degree. The faculty are also engaged in a number of efforts related to interdisciplinary designs for undergraduate education. Through our various experiences and achievements we have learned that *embedding planning within the structures of the college* is one of the most fruitful and exhilarating ways to constantly improve undergraduate education. We have found these guidelines as essential to our education program:

- *focusing on student learning and what good practice would imply for it.*
- *providing time and space for cross-institution conversation.*
- *creating context and structures to make it work as a system.*
- *thoughtful attention to doing what we say we do, continuously.*

In sum:
1. Connecting student learning outcomes across disciplines led to designing a parallel academic administrative structure with both discipline

mon findings and their growing ability to discuss educational issues in interdisciplinary settings, faculty developed a sense of urgency regarding curricular redesign that culminated in an extensive series of workshops in May, 1971, on the outcomes of a liberal education.

For the next two years, within a structure of committees and a four-person task force charged with designing a framework for the eight educational outcomes formulated by the faculty, the academic community debated, experimented, revised, and eventually reached agreement on an ability-based, performance-assessment curriculum that they would implement. During this extensive period, the president was an active supporter and very visible in faculty deliberations.

As the 1973 date for implementation approached, some faculty requested that the president postpone it for a year or two. Since the faculty had learned so much during their five-year experience as curriculum designers, they believed that with a bit more time they could get it "just right." This decision point is illustrative of many during this initial period and in the twenty-five years since then. *Dealing with paradoxes, and the resulting conflicts, ambiguities, and frustrations involved in the process of change has become a regular feature of the college's collaborative style.* Faculty and administrators have learned how to deal with these potential barriers to change by learning to distin-

guish between the substantive and the peripheral, by being willing to take a breather to get a new perspective, and especially by recalling for one another that the design is under the faculty's direction and can be revised in a timely fashion when mistakes are made.

In reference to the issue of postponement above, some of these factors were evident. After discussing the question with a number of faculty, the president decided to have the faculty begin the implementation as planned. She was persuaded by their argument that since there were few, if any, educational experts in this area and that the faculty had to rely on their own professional experience as educators, the curriculum design was the best the faculty could do at the time. What was now needed was the experience of working with the new program and learning from its strengths and weaknesses—just as they had designed it based on their evaluations of the strengths and weaknesses of the current program. In other words, faculty had come to the edge of their experience as teachers of an effective but traditional program and needed to create new experience from which to continue learning. Not only was this a compelling argument for this important decision, it has become a principle of learning of the college's academic community: *The educational program is in a continual process of revision and refinement based upon faculty and staff practice and theory.*

Over the past twenty years, as their reflection, ex-

nator, and an administrative assistant. Although faculty and administrators have willingly taken on new roles and responsibilities to serve their colleagues across the country, we know we must develop new approaches to respond to increasing requests for collaboration. We are, frankly, wrestling with this significant new challenge: how to meet the increased internal and external demand for partnerships while at the same time continuing to enhance the education of our own students. Colleagues argue that a great deal of the work that benefits other educators derives from the collaborative work of the faculty and staff as they reflect on and research what constitutes student learning and how educational institutions might improve to ensure that learning. These partnerships have become a
primary stimulus for our institutional transformation in the last decade.

Concluding Observations

As members of the college community review the past two decades, they recognize that most of these changes were not able to be anticipated. The shift in focus—requiring students to demonstrate ability to deal effectively with information and experience as well as demonstrate mastery of information—was the major curricular decision from which all others flowed. As with most important decisions, over time faculty and staff perceive more clearly the complexities and the possibilities resulting from the original decision and the necessity to em-

tional identity, faculty and staff have assumed additional responsibilities and made changes in administrative areas. How all this evolved goes back a couple of decades. Just two years after we developed our new curriculum, we began receiving requests for information from colleges and universities interested in our approach to outcomes, teaching, and assessment. In the 1980's, these requests expanded to include professional schools, for example, schools of medicine and pharmacy. A few years ago, we found ourselves caught up in a new surge of demand from K–12 public schools. We are now deeply engaged in partnerships in school reform and the related reform of teacher education.

Faculty engage new colleagues via week-long summer workshops on campus, one-and two-day workshops in schools and on other campuses throughout the country, and in ongoing consultation with schools, districts, and colleges and universities. There is widespread and growing interest not only in our educational program, and in the organizational structure and offices supporting student learning on campus, but we are continually seeking partnerships for our own learning. Faculty publish books and materials to assist other educators, are continually asked to produce more print and audiovisual materials, and eagerly seek such materials from others.

To coordinate the partnerships with other institutions, we have had to establish the Alverno College Institute, an office within the academic affairs area that is staffed by a director, an office coordi-

perience, and research guided them, faculty and administrators made decisions to strengthen the educational program and to enable responsible committees and departments to spot areas of weakness. Some examples of these restructuring decisions are:

- designed a parallel academic administrative structure that included discipline departments and interdisciplinary ability-based departments, each responsible to improve the quality of an integrated content and ability-based curriculum;
- created periods of time for extended discussions, workshops, evaluations by redesigning the instructional schedule (faculty meet every Friday afternoon and in week-long Institutes every August, January and May);
- established an Educational Research and Evaluation office to conduct research on teaching, learning, and assessment issues, including longitudinal studies of student learning outcomes;
- began a Council for Student Assessment to ensure the quality and continuing development of student assessment;
- revised guidelines and expectations for faculty development and promotion based on the faculty's evolving definition of the scholarship of teaching;
- designed an advising program that included professional academic advisors, student peer advisors, and specially designed introductory seminars and courses for first-year students, and for transfer students and older adults who could

move more quickly through the beginning ability levels;

- developed an assessment center and recruited and trained hundreds of external assessors from the greater Milwaukee community to work with faculty as co-assessors in specified areas;
- created and staffed audio-visual studios for use by all faculty and students for preparation of teaching/learning materials;
- initiated and maintained a public dialogue, through publications and campus conferences, with educators and other professionals throughout the country in order to benefit from criticism and to share successes and failures; and
- ensured that the new departments and the funds required for continuous educational transformation (for example, Educational Research and Evaluation office; Center for Instructional Communication; summer fellowships for faculty) were integrated into the budget.

Organizational Restructuring

Although it may seem that Alverno's educational program is definitively in place, this is an illusion created by the requirements of the printed page. *Our educational program is in process.* This is best illustrated by considering one of the major implications flowing from the initial revision of our baccalaureate program. When we started our venture twenty-five years ago, faculty soon realized that they were responsible—individually and collectively—for educating themselves on the

for each dimension of institutional transformation. Strong interpersonal leaders may start a group problem solving process; those who are effective at project management may then take up the task. Throughout, the leadership responsibilities are identified in relation to what role is needed. Such leadership calls for a mix of individuals who take on leadership not only because of current strengths, but also because they are willing to learn new ways of doing things. Each person in a shared leadership frame can assist in direction, guidance, instruction, and feedback. The kind of leadership, then, matches the kind of change in which groups are involved.

Restructuring Partnerships with Professional Colleagues

One reason for our optimism, guarded though it may be, regarding the readiness of educational institutions to consider major change is our growing experience in interacting around our work with other educators. It may seem unusual that we include partnerships with professional colleagues in this section on organizational restructuring. But it makes very good sense to us because of what we have learned during the past twenty-five years. In a much more profound way, Alverno faculty and staff now identify with fellow educators—from kindergarten through professional school—as colleagues engaged in the work of assisting student learning, development, and performance. Because of this expanded sense of individual and institu-

cess to information via technology. Not only must faculty remain abreast of their discipline and practice, they must also integrate them. Only then will they be able to design pedagogical approaches to assure entry as well as increasing mastery of the disciplinary practice for learners of less academic development than in the past. From our informal surveys of faculty at other institutions, it seems clear that this is a universal phenomenon.

Restructuring for Shared Leadership

We believe that different kinds of leadership both emerge and evolve given the dimensions that make up institutional transformation, especially when that means making changes systemic. The changes described above needed new kinds of leadership where the role of leaders and leadership expands and is developed through shared responsibility. The implications were enormous, given the way many organizations are structured—hierarchical and with isolated departments—and given the expectations of the individuals who work in them. For example, shared responsibility for student learning may mean identifying barriers to interdepartmental work or adapting to budget reductions by working across departments to free funds for college transition programs. Sharing collective accountability may mean taking on new problems, or changing one's usual work assignments.

The point here is that shared leadership often means identifying the kinds of leadership needed

meaning, purposes, and developmental stages of student learning and on how to create effective teaching and assessment designs and strategies. Their own graduate education had not prepared them for this work. Nor did extant educational research address these issues at the level of adult education in ways that were helpful for teachers. Faculty realized that they would have to learn from each other through reflection on their practice and ongoing refinement and revision of their work; there were few, if any, helpful external sources or resources.

The necessity of establishing such a collegial enterprise, therefore, encouraged us to design an organizational structure as innovative as the educational program itself. Thus was inaugurated an evolving definition of Alverno College as an educational institution that holds itself responsible for its primary purpose—student learning—by creating an organization with a strong reflective practice and educational research base to ensure the accomplishment of that central purpose. Through that very process, incidentally, the college has expanded its sense of responsibility to the profession of education and shares the results of its work with education colleagues in this country and abroad.

The evolution of this organizational structure enabled faculty and staff to collaborate effectively and has transformed our way of thinking about education and the institutions responsible for it. Out of this experience of searching for meaning from experience, we identified, first, a series of connections central to Alverno transformation and,

second, what now appears to be a consequent restructuring that flowed from our organizing for learning that lasts.

Connecting Student Learning Outcomes Across Disciplines

Our experience of integrating curriculum abilities across the disciplines begged for a more adequate arrangement of departments so faculty could study these abilities in depth, just as they did their disciplines. There are other issues as well—no less central to our educational enterprise—that demand further reflection and response. One of the abilities all Alverno students must develop, for example, is "Developing a Global Perspective." And one of the assumptions that undergirds our educational program is that each of our eight abilities "must be carefully identified in relation to what contemporary life requires." The need constantly to update careful definitions of all eight abilities is what leads us to say that our educational program is a work in process requiring time, energy, intellect, and institutional support. Technology has significantly altered not only the definition of "global" or "international," but also expectations stemming from such expanded definitions. The impact on the professions, whether in health care, business, or education is profound.

Restructuring to Create Dual Academic Departments

educational philosophy and professional work habits of its faculty and staff, accounts for a good deal of the dynamism of Alverno's educational program.

For some time, however, we have been aware of a very real paradox. For years, in addition to scholarly work in their disciplines, Alverno faculty have kept abreast of the research and practice in areas like critical thinking and problem solving because of our focus on the development of abilities. While this was possible five or ten years ago, it is no longer possible today. Technology has simply expanded the information base beyond the time available for faculty to review, evaluate, and synthesize information for the purpose of improving teaching and learning. But what is the seeming paradox in this situation? At the very time that faculty must become masters of an ever-expanding information base, they are confronted with learners increasingly less prepared academically to master that information base, much less to use it effectively. There are many additional issues before us stemming both from what we have described above as well as from the profound changes our society is undergoing.

For an institution that believes in both continuity and change, these issues present interesting challenges. We have already described one that is at the heart of any collegial enterprise—faculty whose very disciplines and field of practice are being profoundly impacted by the increasing ac-

campuses. Generally, higher education does not have a tradition of research on actual teaching-learning-assessment work designed and conducted collaboratively by educators and researchers. Such an approach would require a major rethinking of both the educational institution itself and the educational research and assessment enterprise—its purpose, definition, theory, methodology, and relationships.

Connecting Organizational Learning and Continuous Improvement

In discussing Alverno's educational and organizational reconceptualization and restructuring, we have referenced the source of that change, its reflective core. By reflective core we mean the continuous, creative, collaborative work of the faculty and academic staff. Through this collaboration, faculty are able to raise penetrating questions about the learning enterprise and to design workshops and other learning experiences on a regular basis to teach each other. They have produced books on ability-based education, performance assessment, valuing, social interaction and analysis and communication. All of these publications have sparked ongoing interest among our own faculty and thousands of other educators. Faculty study their rapidly changing disciplines, probe the questions being raised by professionals in other fields regarding the skills needed for life in the 21st century, and research the effectiveness of their own work with a constantly changing student body. The college's highly reflective core, grounded in the

In institutions of higher education, the most common academic structure consists of departments based on discipline and professional areas. Faculty are responsible for the academic quality of the courses in their respective areas and for the coherence and quality of the major and minor sequences in the area. When Alverno College instituted its ability-based curriculum in 1973 it had a similar academic structure. In the years prior to 1973, all faculty had been involved in planning the new curriculum; but we realized that the definitions, developmental frameworks, and assessment designs for the abilities that all students were required to master would necessitate ongoing refinement, revision, and evaluation. We, therefore, reorganized our academic structure.

Now, faculty are members of two academic departments. On the basis of their academic qualifications, they are appointed to discipline or professional departments. On the basis of interest, special expertise, or a desire to learn a new area, faculty members are simultaneously members of a second, ability-based department. All ability-based departments are, therefore, interdisciplinary. Both sets of departments are responsible for the quality of teaching and assessment in their respective areas and for the continual improvement of faculty understanding and practice of integrated knowledge and ability-based education. They have similar organizational structures (chairs and coordinators) and responsibilities (membership on policy committees) and through these working relation-

ships assure that the teaching-learning-assessment processes continue to evolve and improve.

Such a major structural change also required the creation or refocusing of the following departments: advising office, assessment center, career development office, center for instructional communication, and internships. Over the past 20 years these departments have continued to evolve for a variety of reasons, noticeably because of changes within the curriculum or because of changes stemming from the demographics of the student body. It is our considered judgment that this transformation will continue in part because it is currently being impacted by new technologies.

These changes—dual membership in academic departments and the creation of new offices and centers—have assisted faculty to expand and deepen their individual and collegial identification as educators responsible for a coherent learning experience for all Alverno students, not just the students they personally work with in courses.

Connecting Faculty Roles and Responsibilities

This deepening of faculty identity and responsibility is a major force in the consistent questioning of our current theory and practice and how these might be improved.

How roles and responsibilities are related to institutional

ated in 1985. It incorporates collaboration between faculty and staff and connections between institutional, program, and student assessment. The functions of the Committee include ensuring implementation of research findings; eliciting feedback from faculty on data interpretation; and reviewing, refining, and communicating guidelines for college research and evaluation.

There are two conclusions we have drawn from our experience of having established an Educational Research and Evaluation office that is now dedicated to (a) assessing the effectiveness of Alverno's educational program, (b) working closely with the Council for Student Assessment to draw from and contribute to assessment at the national level, (c) with the Council for Student Assessment assisting the college to continue to improve its teaching-learning-assessment processes, and (d) researching learning that lasts. First, after creating the Educational Research and Evaluation office, we now realize it is both possible and extremely helpful to hold ourselves accountable for the learning, development, and performance of our students in college and beyond. We realize more than ever that responsible institutions must be willing to restructure themselves and provide the resources necessary to evaluate the quality of their work and then use the information to improve the institution.

That brings us to our second conclusion. It is our considered judgment after twenty years of experience that some variation of this kind of academic research office would be of great assistance on more

academic educational research and evaluation that reported to the faculty on student learning outcomes. In contrast, an office of institutional research usually reports to the administrative side of the college regarding, for example, planning, enrollment, retention, budgeting, and performance indicators.

The educational research office's purpose, goals, structure, function, staffing, and budget emerged over a ten-year period and is still ongoing. The Educational Research and Evaluation office works with faculty and staff to conduct research on the effectiveness of the institution's educational program and Alverno uses the findings to improve the program. Specifically, the purpose of the office is to research and evaluate the value, impact, validity, and effectiveness of the educational program including its assessment system and to research student learning outcomes to obtain a better understanding of how students learn, develop, and perform in college—and afterwards. The office coordinates faculty and staff involvement, elicits information on what should be researched, and consults faculty and staff from various disciplines and departments to aid in the interpretation of findings. Faculty review research findings to generate implications and learning and action principles, to improve curricula, and to chart future research and assessment goals.

To serve in an advisory capacity to the Educational Research and Evaluation office, the interdisciplinary Research and Evaluation Committee was cre-

mission is a current debate in higher education. Rethinking faculty work and reviewing performance expectations and criteria for promotion both play a role in institutional transformation. We noted that our own faculty roles and responsibilities became more clear as we developed our commitments as an institution to students achieving certain learning outcomes. Making these changes is a much more specific way of getting at results. For example, faculty could not only "take teaching more seriously," but practice teaching in more effective ways.

Restructuring the Academic Schedule for Faculty and Students

In addition to the need for a new academic administrative structure to ensure quality and collaboration across the college, we recognized that we would have to build time into the academic calendar for faculty and staff to work together. We had a college tradition of meeting for a few days at the beginning and end of the academic year (August and May), so it was not too difficult to add an additional period in January before the beginning of the second semester. These week-long sessions in August, January and May were then transformed and expanded to enable staff and faculty to be involved in all-college issues of planning, finance, and development and for academic staff and faculty to participate in workshops designed and conducted by their colleagues on issues related to learning (for example, new definitions of teaching, the changing student body, new approaches in

pedagogy and performance assessment).

As a result of expanding these conference periods and focusing them on explorations and improvements in our educational theory and practice, we realized that we needed to schedule regular time periods during the academic year for faculty to meet. We arranged a schedule with no classes on Friday afternoons. This time is used for meetings of discipline or ability-based departments on alternate Fridays. Once or twice a semester faculty conduct workshops for the entire faculty, for example, on an ability area that has been revised.

This schedule makes possible and symbolizes the importance of faculty collaboration in creating and enhancing the learning environment for students and themselves. By taking responsibility for using their time wisely and productively and using their ingenuity to redesign the college structure and schedule, faculty and staff have created significant new processes to improve their work.

Many colleagues in the education profession are beginning to realize that they must transform the organizational and procedural systems that have long characterized educational institutions, but that are no longer effective in the education of today's students. The academic schedule was no longer effective for students either. In 1977, we restructured our time frames so adult learners could complete a baccalaureate in four years by attending on-campus learning experiences as a full-time student,

processes to assure continuing improvement—for example, criteria for instruments or suggested procedures for assessment design. This responsibility includes maintaining general consistency of development throughout the system in all components including self assessment and feedback. It is the charge of the Council to synthesize, articulate, and see to the publication of our developing theory of student assessment.

Structuring an Educational Research and Evaluation Office and a Research and Evaluation Committee

After the faculty had designed and begun implementing the ability-based curriculum, they received many questions not only about what it was, but also about how effective it was. It became clear to us that when you are doing what everyone else is doing, you usually do not have to justify it or evaluate it. But when we decided to transform our educational program and, therefore, our teaching and assessment practices, we were being required by colleagues in-house and elsewhere to explain how and why this approach was "better." The questions really focused on whether the results in student learning were "worth all the work."

Although we did not know how to respond at that point, we took the questions seriously and established an academic, educational research "office" in 1976. To our knowledge it was at that time, the only such office in a four-year college established for

assessments should require students to synthesize and apply their learning from multiple courses, that some would occur outside of courses and provide connections between academic and post-graduation expectations, and that data on student performances should be collected systematically and used to monitor broader patterns of student learning and performance. These understandings led to the Assessment Center.

The Center was developed to assist faculty by administering the outside-class assessments designed by faculty. The Center was to have the major role of managing the extensive time, space, and resource requirements for the assessments, as well as recruiting and training assessors from campus and from the business and professional communities.

Realizing the need for ensuring the quality and the continuing development of the processes and instruments involved, we formed the Council for Student Assessment. The Council with representation from ability and discipline departments, educational research and evaluation, and the Assessment Center, is charged with overseeing the ongoing development of the student assessment system. The Council serves as a policy board for the Center.

Meeting weekly, the Council regularly reviews the overall picture of student assessment across disciplines and abilities. Supplementing the review are the design and implementation of guidelines and

Friday evening, Saturday all day and evening, and Sunday until late afternoon every other weekend. This change led to even more shifts in scheduling and administrative support.

Connecting the Academic Curriculum and the On- and Off-Campus Cocurriculum

Cocurricular campus activities are a significant dimension of student reflection in their academic studies. A cocurriculum for many of our adult students exists in their family and workplace. Our academic framework contains aspects of what other institutions historically define as extra effort. For example, service learning is so considered. Rather than creating a department of service learning to help develop citizenship skills, we have opted to build this into the academic curriculum to ensure integration with the workplace and civic life.

Creating links to outside organizations (for example: businesses, schools, community agencies, and hospitals for internships) was an important step in transformation. It is the nature of each partnership that extends and connects the college culture to that of others—an important transformative component for students who work in a global society.

Restructuring Student and Academic Affairs and Services as Partners in Learning

Student affairs and academic affairs and services consider themselves as "Partners in Learning." Each considers their department as involved in the learning process as the faculty. Each takes seriously the learning outcomes of the students and works to clarify and implement the role members play in the students achieving them. For example, how purposes and structures of student affairs and academic affairs are connected and mutually supporting is a topic of conversation and evaluated in practice. Advisors of students who come to Alverno direct from high school are currently considering extending their role through transitions to the major field.

If we turn for a moment from curricular change to the learner we see the changing demographics of students extending well into the future. But we are already experiencing the impact of that change. As a result of their reflective practice, Alverno faculty and staff estimate that one-fifth of second-year students evidence a pattern of difficulty in intermediate courses—usually taken in the first or second semester of the sophomore year. Like their peers, these students have successfully completed the entry assessments and introductory courses. Yet they are distinguished from their peers by the problems they experience as they attempt more complex, integrating skills (for example, applying analytic frameworks, meeting higher communication expectations). The learning difficulties show up in many ways and in multiple courses.

For example, in 1992, faculty formed the Intermediate Student Study Committee to more clearly articulate the principal problems experienced by students in mid-level courses and to consider interventions in these contexts. The Committee identified a number of problems that occurred among these students in all disciplines. For example: (a) failure to recognize connections between prior and present learning; (b) difficulty transferring abilities between one context and another; (c) failure to grasp significant connections between and among concepts; and (d) difficulty understanding what constitutes an adequate explanation, as distinct from description or assertion.

Connecting Student, Program, and Institutional Assessment

Student assessment-as-learning became a central, integrating element of the curriculum, one essential for individual student learning that lasts. For organizational learning that lasts, what is more commonly called "institutional and program assessment" became a necessary organizing aspect as well.

Structuring an Assessment Center and Student Assessment Council

As we elaborated the idea of student assessment and its contributions to learning, we were also identifying structural features for an assessment system. For example, we determined that some