



PRESIDENTIAL PROSPECTUS

COLLEGE
Blackburn

Blackburn College was founded with the notion that the ideal Blackburn student would be “intelligent, forward-thinking, and forward-looking.” For almost 200 years, Blackburn has been a place where students can excel academically and also excel in preparation for real-world career success.

But Blackburn is more than just another four-year institution. Founded in 1837 in Carlinville, IL, Blackburn offers students all the benefits of a traditional liberal arts college experience, plus so much more.

One of only ten federally-recognized Work Colleges, Blackburn’s carefully curated program is the only one of its kind that is student-led, fostering leadership skills that students can’t get from a traditional college experience. What began as the “self-help” plan in 1913, Blackburn’s model has made the dream of a college education affordable for thousands of first-generation and underserved students by keeping the cost of our private liberal arts education within their reach.

ABOUT US

Balancing academic rigor and experiential learning, each student at Blackburn gains tangible experience and develops critical skills by contributing to their community. Over the years, our students have built Blackburn – literally brick by brick. In fact, Blackburn enjoys the distinction of being the only college campus in the United States to have been largely built by its students.

This common bond, this shared sense of ownership in the institution, contributes to a profound sense of community and belonging and adds incredible dimension to the traditional college experience. Students embrace an institution that is fully invested in them. And they are fully invested in every aspect of their college experience: in one another, in the classroom, on the job, and in the college itself.

Today, Blackburn College is moving forward, implementing a new strategic plan while remaining firmly rooted in a century-old legacy. Graduates have in-demand skills, a full resume, and marketable work experience; fully prepared to enter the job market. A four-year head start—starts at Blackburn.

Blackburn College helps the next generation of leaders, problem solvers and creative thinkers make the most of their college education. We provide Blackburn students with an extraordinary head start, preparing them to seize every opportunity, overcome every obstacle, maximize every moment, and rise to meet their purpose.

BLACKBURN COLLEGE. WHERE LEADERS RISE.



VISION STATEMENT

Blackburn College aspires to provide a distinctive and innovative model of American higher education, grounded in scholarship and student leadership, and cultivated through a community of integrated work, learning, and service.

MISSION STATEMENT

Blackburn College links a rigorous and affordable liberal arts education with a unique student-managed Work Program preparing graduates for careers, community engagement, and lifelong learning.

VALUES STATEMENT

The Blackburn community values critical and independent thinking, leadership development, diversity and inclusion, service, shared governance, and moral responsibility.



Blackburn was the perfect place to complete my degree. Not only was I able to play basketball at the highest level and win conference championships, but I gained incredible leadership experience as a manager in the Work Program.

JAVON STOVALL '22

COMMUNICATIONS MAJOR, DINING &
HOSPITALITY DEPARTMENT MANAGER

FACTS ABOUT BLACKBURN

- The College is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission, completed the most recent accreditation review in 2021, and is preparing for its next visit in 2024. The College also holds institutional memberships in the Council of Independent Colleges, the College Entrance Examination Board, the Federation of Independent Illinois Colleges and Universities, the Associated Colleges of Illinois, the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges, and the Association of Presbyterian Colleges and Universities.
- The College offers the Bachelor of Arts degree with over 30 majors in 15 different disciplinary areas spanning traditional liberal arts and sciences and select professional fields. The faculty has begun a revision of the General Education requirements. In 2021, the Music major was reimagined and revived. The College has also started new online academic programs in Teacher Licensure and Early Childhood Workforce Education. Additionally, we have established an innovative program - Blackburn & Beyond - for neurodiverse students on campus and are one of three schools in the nation to offer a degree pathway.
- The College is a member of the NCAA Division III and offers athletic competition in 15 sports including basketball, baseball, softball, tennis, golf, volleyball, soccer, track and cross country, and wrestling. Blackburn participates in the St. Louis Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (SLIAC) and has enjoyed many championships and outstanding player recognitions. In March, 2023, we broke ground on a new 42,000 square foot indoor athletics practice facility. Completion is expected in summer 2024.
- For 2023--24, tuition is \$26,758 and room and board costs \$9,120 for the typical Blackburn student. All students in the Work Program receive a tuition credit of \$5,000, yielding a total cost of attendance of \$30,878 annually, making Blackburn one of the most affordable, private, four-year residential colleges in Illinois.

BLACKBURN COLLEGE



PRESIDENTIAL PROSPECTUS



■ The operating budget for the College is approximately \$16 million. The financial aid discount for students is approximately 40%; additionally, the Work Program is largely underwritten by operational funds, federal support, and endowment income.

■ 81% of students come from Illinois and over a third are first generation students; 54% are classified as low income (i.e. Pell-eligible).

■ Blackburn enjoys the distinction of being the only college campus in the United States to have been largely built by its students. Blackburn students have built ten campus buildings and alumni express pride in the buildings they helped construct as part of the Work Program.

■ The Board of Trustees has twenty members and has guided the College as an independent board since its founding. The trustees are committed and support the College exceptionally well.

■ The College is committed to sustainability; its newest initiative in this area is its two-megawatt solar array that sits on 8 acres north of campus. The \$3 million array was energized in December 2019 and provides over 80% of the campus' electricity needs, while allowing the College to receive solar renewable energy credits from the state as the largest private college renewable energy initiative in Illinois. Carlinville is the first "Bee City" in Illinois, and Blackburn is identified as a Bee Campus by the Xerces Society. The College has also earned Tree Campus Higher Education® recognition from the Arbor Day Foundation.



Blackburn has truly been life-changing for me, and I will never forget all of the awesome experiences, people, and events I have encountered along the way. It is forever a part of my identity and it has shaped me as an individual in many positive ways. I love it and will always be grateful for what it has given me!

EMILY FLECK '22

**PSYCHOLOGY MAJOR, VALEDICTORIAN,
ALPHA CHI FELLOWSHIP RECIPIENT**

ONLY AT BLACKBURN

54%

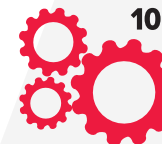
ARE PELL-GRANT
ELIGIBLE

96%

OF BLACKBURN GRADS
ARE EMPLOYED OR
IN GRAD SCHOOL
(2017-2021)

34%

ARE FIRST-GENERATION



10 WORK COLLEGES IN THE US

ONLY 1

IS STUDENT MANAGED



**ONLY COLLEGE CAMPUS IN THE US
LARGELY BUILT BY ITS STUDENTS**

ONLY COLLEGE IN DOWNSTATE
TO BE CERTIFIED AS
**BEE CAMPUS &
TREE CAMPUS**



80 SUSTAINABLE ACRES INCLUDES
8 ACRE SOLAR ARRAY
MORE THAN **10,000** WALNUT TREES AND
STUDENT-LED POLLINATOR PROGRAM



15 NCAA
DIVISION III TEAMS



**BACK-TO-BACK
SLIAC CONFERENCE
MEN'S BASKETBALL
CHAMPIONS**

STRENGTHS OF BLACKBURN COLLEGE



U.S. News & World Report has recognized Blackburn College as one of the best colleges in the Midwest region for 2024. Blackburn also earned a top-ten ranking for social mobility, and has been recognized as a top performer each year the list has been published. The *Washington Monthly* ranked Blackburn first in Illinois for performance by students receiving Pell Grants in 2022 and 2023. The publication has twice ranked Blackburn as the best baccalaureate college in Illinois.

The College has a strong sense of community based on faculty, staff, and student collaboration in work, academics, and college-wide decision-making; shared governance plays a key role in the campus culture.

A low student/faculty ratio of 11:1 encourages faculty mentoring and research; students participate equally with faculty and staff on major committees.

The faculty members at Blackburn College are dedicated to the liberal arts model and the college mission; are strongly committed to shared governance; and are dedicated to establishing strong mentoring relationships with students.

Currently, 98% of full-time Blackburn College faculty members hold terminal degrees in their discipline with about 9% of courses being taught by adjunct faculty or full-time staff.

Excellence in instruction is the primary criterion for the granting of tenure. Of our current full-time faculty members, 57% are tenured. Faculty members provide advice to students on courses, majors, internships, and career options. Faculty members also encourage and participate in student research through junior and senior seminars, research grant projects, and conference presentations.

STRENGTHS OF BLACKBURN COLLEGE

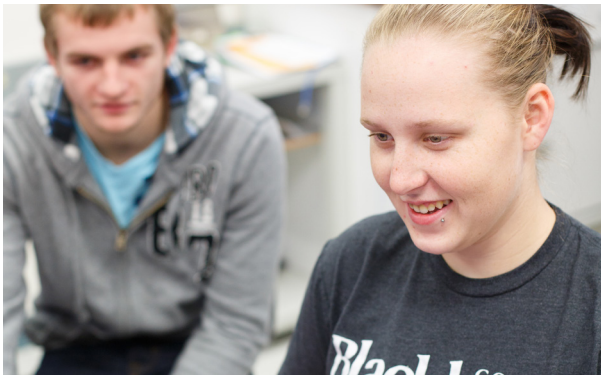
The College's Learning Commons provides free academic support to most 100 and 200 level courses, and offers writing assistance, academic skill development, and student success programs to all students.

Professional staff members are dedicated to the college mission, provide a strong asset of work experience in higher education and business, and work with faculty to strengthen the student educational experience.

Cabinet Officers of the College are a dedicated group of professionals, successful in their areas of responsibility and who work well with one another and the rest of the college community.

Fundraising is strong within the community and a loyal base of over 6,000 alumni.

The Board is committed to fostering a culture of mutual respect, collaboration, innovation, diversity, and productive relationships among its members and with its College Presidents.



CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES AT BLACKBURN COLLEGE

Significantly Raise Resources with Increased Foundation and Donor Funding

Similar to other small liberal arts institutions, Blackburn faces challenges that impact our finances: e.g., smaller college-aged demographics, reduction in philanthropy, and other economic challenges. Blackburn has an active and engaged Alumni base. For example, Beautification Day has become an annual event, raising funds and bringing alumni to campus to “spring clean” the grounds, plant flowers, paint and help to prepare the campus for graduation. The College needs to grow the number of donors, increase the percentage of alumni giving, and most importantly, develop sustaining relationships with donor foundations willing to support that mission.

Enhance Our College and Community Culture Leveraging Our Resiliency

Blackburn has a culture of innovation and resiliency. We have endured several difficult years with COVID negatively impacting both enrollment and finances. The move to remote teaching also strained the College’s sense of community and closeness, which is key to the Blackburn student experience. Over the past years, the College, like other organizations, has had leadership staffing turnover. The next president needs to possess the skills and abilities to rebuild trust and a sense of community across the institution. Success in this area will be the cornerstone for success in all other focus areas.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES AT BLACKBURN COLLEGE

Expand Learner Population

For an enrollment-dependent institution such as Blackburn to ensure sustainability, the College must increase its enrollment size. Blackburn has laid significant groundwork for such an advance in the past few years by strategically making capital improvements, creating new academic programs, and scholarship and recruitment initiatives. Blackburn is a rarity in American higher education - a model that combines long-term financial strength, affordability, high academic quality, and a focus on serving first-generation and low-income students.

Work Program Enhancement

The student-managed Work Program is Blackburn's greatest asset and continues to offer essential operational support for the institution. The incoming president will engage with the Dean of Work, the Program's Student Managers and the greater campus community in developing program revisions to ensure that the program provides a robust and compelling learning experience for all student workers while increasing the "self-help" benefit provided by the Work Program.

Improve Retention

Freshman retention over the past decade has fluctuated, but generally trended upward. However, the current rate (59%) is well below the state average of 72%. Likewise, six-year graduation rates in recent years have been inconsistent, though in line with other schools serving low-income and first-generation students. Significant steps have been taken to address retention recently but given the high cost associated with attrition, improving retention will continue be a significant focus for leaders of the College.

ATTRIBUTES SOUGHT IN THE NEW PRESIDENT

ESSENTIAL TRAITS

An inspirational and entrepreneurial leader, who is innovative; visionary; dedicated to academic integrity, strong work ethic and egalitarian culture; and skilled in working with the institution to identify and implement strategic opportunities to improve the institution's ability to achieve its mission.

Strong dedication to fundraising fostering a culture of philanthropy and relationship building in order to acquire the resources needed for the College's future development and its mission to serve and fully meet the financial needs of low-income and first-generation students.

Deep commitment to the College's student-managed Work Program providing strong support, championing program improvements, and participating effectively in the Work Colleges' Consortium.

Administrative experience and excellent communication skills: conversant with financial issues facing colleges and universities, and able to manage the fiscal affairs of the College in cooperation with the Board of Trustees, the Vice President of Administration and Finance, and other campus constituencies.

A strong commitment to provide an affordable, rigorous education to underserved students.

The good character to collaboratively serve faculty, staff and students as a role model for the highest standards of academic achievement, professional integrity, and commitment to diversity.

ATTRIBUTES SOUGHT IN THE NEW PRESIDENT

THE SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATE ALSO WILL:

- be committed to shared governance and be dedicated to operating with broad campus involvement in planning and implementation of policies and operations.
- possess leadership skills necessary to inspire confidence and support healthy communication in those individuals who help carry out the college's mission.
- be able to lead positive change while respecting the values of the institution.
- be skillful at building agreement and cooperation among many constituencies of the College to advance the institution.
- have appropriate credentials, ideally including scholarship and teaching as part of their background and experience.
- be committed to extensive interaction with students and to be a visible and active presence on campus.
- function as a liaison between the College and governmental agencies or elected officials.
- be committed to strengthening campus diversity and inclusion while eliminating the achievement gap between advantaged and disadvantaged students.



Blackburn College gave me a renaissance education, which was ideal for a young man who had no idea what the hell he was going to do with his life. With Blackburn, you could invent or even reinvent yourself.

CHRIS HORN '84

STUDENT MARSHAL, AWARD-WINNING
INTERNATIONAL PHOTOJOURNALIST

PROCESS OF APPLICATION

To assure full consideration, applications should be received by December 11, 2023, and must include (1) a comprehensive letter of interest that addresses how the candidate meets the Search Committee's preferred qualifications and the institution's opportunities for leadership, as described in the search prospectus, as well as a diversity statement describing what diversity means to you and why it is important; (2) a complete curriculum vitae; and (3) five professional references with e-mail addresses and phone numbers provided. (References will not be contacted without prior permission from the applicant).

Applications should be submitted electronically (MS Word or Adobe PDF) to the chair of the Search Committee, Mr. Paul Tepikian, at presidential.search@blackburn.edu

Employment-based immigration sponsorship is not offered for this position. Phone calls or walk-ins not accepted. EOE.



BLACKBURN COLLEGE



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CONTACT

Nominations, inquiries and expressions of interest should be sent to presidential.search@blackburn.edu

Blackburn seeks to build an inclusive faculty and administration that can engage the interests of a diverse population; underrepresented persons are strongly encouraged to apply. The successful applicant must provide proof of authorization to work in the United States. Blackburn College is an equal opportunity employer and all qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability status, protected veteran status, gender identity, sexual orientation or any other characteristic protected by law.

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