



# **Blackburn College Names Al Sturgeon Vice President For Diverse & Equitable Student Life And Dean Of Students**

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CARLINVILLE - Blackburn College has named Al Sturgeon Vice President for Diverse and Equitable Student Life and Dean of Students. This new role will provide strategic leadership for the College's student retention planning and implementation, enhance student life programming, and oversee all aspects of residence life, student diversity and inclusion, and campus safety. Sturgeon will also serve as Title IX Coordinator.

Sturgeon joins Blackburn from Lipscomb University where he served as Vice President of Student Life and Dean of Students. Prior to Lipscomb, he served as Dean of Graduate Programs at Pepperdine University School of Law.

As a first-generation college student, Blackburn's commitment to accessibility, inclusivity, and social mobility is incredibly important to Sturgeon.

"Blackburn College has a significant history of profoundly transforming the lives of graduates and their families," Sturgeon said. "As a student life professional, it is a privilege to provide students with support, positive and inclusive engagement, and ample opportunities to find their calling. I am extremely excited to find my own calling with Blackburn and I am thankful for the opportunity to serve."

While diversity and inclusion have always been cornerstones of Blackburn's mission, Blackburn President Mark L. Biermann said this critically important leadership role will ensure it is a major area of emphasis at all stages of a student's college experience.

"Blackburn is absolutely committed to ensuring that every individual that steps foot on our campus is embraced, welcomed, and supported," Biermann said. "With our exceptional academic curriculum paired with the only student-led Work Program in the world, Blackburn is uniquely positioned to address systemic issues of racism, bias, and intolerance in a powerful way."

Biermann added, "Al Sturgeon's experience, energy, compassion, and enthusiasm will play a key role in driving Blackburn College toward an even brighter future."

Sturgeon earned his J.D. from Pepperdine University's Caruso School of Law along with a certificate in dispute resolution from the Straus Institute for Dispute Resolution. He began his duties for Blackburn on March 1st.

## About Blackburn College

Founded in 1837, Blackburn College is a four-year, Presbyterian-related, co-educational liberal arts college located in Carlinville, IL. One of only nine federally-recognized Work Colleges, Blackburn has the only program in the nation fully managed by students. Balancing academic rigor and experiential learning, each student at Blackburn

gains tangible experience and develops critical skills while contributing to their community and building a resume while earning their degree. In their 2020 Best Colleges Rankings, U.S. News & World Report recognized Blackburn College as one of the top 10 best Liberal Arts Colleges in the Nation for Social Mobility. The Center for Education & the Workforce at Georgetown University ranked Blackburn as a top performer for Earnings-Price Return - 209% (#1 in IL, #10 in the U.S.) and Net Price (#1 in IL; #11 in the U.S.). The Washington Monthly twice ranked Blackburn as the best baccalaureate college in Illinois.