



# **Blackburn College Announces Partnership With Cristo Rey Network**

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CARLINVILLE - Blackburn College has announced a new partnership with the Cristo Rey Network - a system of 37 career-focused high schools across the United States. As a National University Partner, Blackburn will share Cristo Rey's long-standing commitment to ensuring that all Cristo Rey Network graduates have access to the academic, social, and financial support they need to complete a college degree.

With similar education models and missions, the partnership between Blackburn and Cristo Rey is a tremendous fit. Serving more than 12,000 students with limited financial resources nationwide, Cristo Rey provides college preparatory academics with four years of professional work experience. The Network partners with educators to enable students to fulfill their aspirations for a lifetime of success. As the nation's only college with a student-led work program, Blackburn has made higher education affordable to thousands of first-generation students and working-class families. The College balances exceptional academics with hands-on, experiential learning allowing students to gain tangible experience and develop critical skills by contributing to their community, all while building a resume and earning a four-year degree.

Dr. Mark Biermann, President of Blackburn College stated, "All of us at Blackburn College are so excited by the opportunity to work with the schools of the Cristo Rey Network. The alignment between essential, foundational values at the Cristo Rey Network and at Blackburn College is outstanding. Our shared commitments to opportunity, equity, work, and excellence are a strong basis for our common work. We see great power in the opportunity to help students through our distinctive work programs."

Stephanie Arias, Director of College Initiatives at the Cristo Rey Network stated, "Cristo Rey Network graduates have successful careers just waiting to be uncovered. We are confident that Blackburn College will provide them with the academic rigor and workplace opportunities to sharpen their professional skills and be career-ready."

Blackburn is the 65th university to partner with this network.