

Blackburn College's Institutional Accreditation Reaffirmed By Higher Learning Commission

May 24 2021 10:28 AM



CARLINVILLE - Blackburn College has received official communication from the Higher Learning Commission that the College has successfully been granted reaccreditation. The decision follows a comprehensive evaluation of Blackburn's work in its mission, ethical conduct, academic programs, and institutional effectiveness. The campus-wide, multi-year process culminated with an intensive peer-review visit in March of this year. Blackburn's next, regular accreditation review is scheduled for the 2030-2031 academic year.

“This positive outcome speaks not only to the dedicated and thoughtful work completed each and every day by our community, but also to how Blackburn College strives to continuously improve the exceptional educational experience we provide our students,” said President Mark Biermann.

The Higher Learning Commission (HLC), one of six regional accreditors recognized by the Department of Education, is an independent organization that monitors the quality of degree-granting colleges and universities in a 19-state region. As an accredited institution, students, parents, employers, and community members can be assured that Blackburn offers high-quality academic programs and valuable learning experiences.

Accreditation is also necessary for institutions to receive and administer federal funds for financial aid. With a deep commitment to serving first-generation and working-class families, Blackburn has ensured access to a transformational education is accessible and affordable. During the most recently reported academic year, 99% of students attending Blackburn received some form of merit-based or need-based financial assistance, including the Macoupin Promise - a program that offers qualified students in Macoupin County four years of free tuition.

All institutions accredited by the HLC must undergo a full review in the fourth year of a 10-year accreditation cycle. An area of strength specifically noted by the HLC peer-review team was in regard to assessment. The peer-review team noted that the strength of Blackburn’s assessment activities removed the need for any follow up reporting or monitoring with respect to assessment, which Biermann called “a rare and outstanding achievement.”

Biermann also stated, “The preparation for this rigorous assessment involved so many on our campus, but I want to acknowledge the work of Provost John McClusky, Dr. Angie Morenz, Dr. Kristi Nelms, and Dr. Shelly Pfeffer. This core team worked countless hours to ensure a strong outcome for Blackburn College and I thank them for their wonderful work.”

Blackburn first earned accreditation from HLC in 1931 and last received a 10-year reaffirmation of accreditation during the 2010-2011 academic year.

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 by contributing to their community while building a resume and 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.