

Blackburn College Welcomes New Provost, Dr. Karla McCain

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CARLINVILLE - Following an intensive national search, Dr. Karla McCain has been named the new Provost for Blackburn College.

As the institution's leading academic officer, McCain will be a key member of the President's leadership team and provide administrative oversight for the college's Academic Divisions, Technology Services, the Registrar, Institutional Research, as well as Lumpkin Learning Commons and the Student Success Center. She will also assist in the development of Blackburn's strategic plan and priorities.

McCain joins Blackburn after nearly 20 years at Austin College in Sherman, TX. Most recently, she served as Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs and Professor of Chemistry. In her administrative role, she developed a model to predict the risk of semester-to-semester student attrition, providing insights about targeted interventions for students with different levels of risk. During her time at Austin College, she also served as the Associate Dean of Institutional Effectiveness and Director of Accreditation and Assessment.

McCain explained that she was excited to be working at an institution dedicated to transforming the lives of students. "The mission and values of Blackburn, its commitment to lifting up families and communities by ensuring a life-changing college education is within reach, truly resonate with me."

"Our country and world are increasingly in need of thoughtful, civic-minded people who share a commitment to leadership and service," McCain continued. "Blackburn College has long embodied this balance through their commitment to a strong liberal arts curriculum, tremendous faculty and staff, and its extraordinary student-led work program. I am honored to serve Blackburn and help guide the next chapter of its successful academic legacy."

Dr. McCain earned her B.A. in Chemistry at Ohio Wesleyan University, her Ph.D. from the University of Utah in Physical/Analytical Chemistry and she achieved her first faculty appointment in 2003. She has co-authored eight publications and has regularly presented to national audiences.

"Dr. McCain brings extensive scholarship, and a strong background in assessment and faculty and student support to Blackburn College," President Mark L. Biermann said. "As Provost, she will be instrumental in growing and strengthening the college's traditional and innovative educational programs. Dr. McCain also has a wealth of experience leveraging data to better inform complex decision-making, and she uses that perspective and understanding to improve outcomes and student success."

Biermann added, “We are very pleased to welcome Dr. McCain to Blackburn and look forward to benefiting from her insights, wisdom, and contributions as we continue to provide the powerful teaching, development, and learning environment that makes Blackburn College so special.”

McCain began her new role at Blackburn on August 2.

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 ten 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, all 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.