



# **Blackburn College Names Jody Sturgeon As New Dean Of Work**

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CARLINVILLE - Blackburn College has named Jody Sturgeon as the Marguerite Steffey Snyder Endowed Dean of Work. One of ten federally-recognized Work Colleges, Blackburn has the only program managed by a team of student leaders. In her role as the Dean of Work, Sturgeon will coach and mentor the Student Work Committee managing their peers and classmates while maintaining operations across 12 work departments. She will also serve as a key member and advisor on the President's leadership team.

For more than a century, Blackburn's Work Program has added an incredible dimension to the traditional college experience. Established in 1913, the program began as a means to help reduce tuition costs and make higher education more affordable. Today, Blackburn students help plan and manage day-to-day operations on campus, fully recognizing that their success and the College's success go hand-in-hand. In turn, Blackburn also offers tangible benefits, like four years of resume-building professional development and offsetting tuition costs at one of the lowest cost private four-year colleges in Illinois.

"Blackburn College has always been a community for students who are innovative and forward-looking, and our Work Program is a significant part of that reality," Blackburn President Mark Biermann explained. "It allows our graduates to develop and hone in-demand skills, and to build resumes full of marketable work experience, all while earning a four-year degree rooted in the liberal arts."

He continued, "As the Dean of Work, Jody Sturgeon will play an essential role in providing coaching and mentorship to students who are gaining invaluable leadership and management experience. Her guidance will help ensure the continued growth and success of the Work Program and of Blackburn College as a whole."

Sturgeon's background includes extensive experience in the area of student employment. At Pepperdine University, she served for 11 years in the Student Employment Office, rising to the level of Director. Before Pepperdine, Sturgeon held various positions for AT&T, the Jackson County (MS) Civic Action Agency, the Peoples Bank, and as a franchise owner for Once Upon a Child.

"During my tenure at Pepperdine University, I witnessed the impact that a campus focused on student employment as a high impact practice could have on student learning," Sturgeon said. "I am excited to have another opportunity to work at an institution focused on fostering an environment that educates the whole person. I believe that my experience and passion for this work will be an asset to the Work Program at Blackburn College as well as to the student experience and campus community."

Sturgeon earned her degree in Accounting from Arkansas State University. She has held a professional affiliation with the National Student Employment Association, serving as Vice President of Marketing and Membership on the Executive Board. Sturgeon began her duties as Dean of Work on January 4th.

## About Blackburn College

Founded in 1837, Blackburn College is a four-year, Presbyterian-related, co-educational liberal arts college located in Carlinville, IL. Balancing academic rigor and experiential learning, Blackburn is the only federally-recognized Work Program managed by students. Each student at gains tangible experience and develops critical skills by contributing to their community, all while building a career-boosting resume and earning their degree. U.S. News & World Report recognized Blackburn College as one of the top Liberal Arts Colleges in the Nation for Social Mobility in 2020, 2021, and 2022. 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.