

# Blackburn College Student Miriam Wali-Uddin Recognized As Lincoln Laureate

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CARLINVILLE - Miriam (Mim) Wali-Uddin, a senior Justice Administration major from Jacksonville, Illinois, has been selected to represent Blackburn College in the 48th Annual Lincoln Academy Laureates. Each year an outstanding senior from each of the four-year degree-granting institutions of higher learning in Illinois is awarded the Abraham Lincoln Civic Engagement Award and thereby becomes a Student Laureate of The Lincoln Academy of Illinois. Students are recognized for demonstrating strong

leadership aptitude, exhibiting a desire to make a difference in the world through civic engagement, and displaying the characteristics of Abraham Lincoln that made him someone who inspired and transformed the world for generations.

Wali-Uddin said she was honored and surprised to receive this award. “I did not expect to be recognized for my involvement at Blackburn. I want to help others fall in love with Blackburn the way I have, and to better the overall campus experience in any way I can.” She said growing up in the Land of Lincoln taught her that no matter where a person comes from, if they have the power and determination, they can overcome anything and reach the level of success they strive for. “This award has shown me that helping others and doing what I felt is right, has proven beneficial for my community and is noteworthy,” she stated.

Wali-Uddin was nominated by faculty and staff at Blackburn. They were asked to consider a deserving student “who demonstrates strong leadership aptitude, with the characteristics of Abraham Lincoln that made him someone who inspired and transformed the world for generations: integrity, courage, honesty and empathy.”

Dr. Laura Wiedlocher, Professor of Leadership, Law, and Public Service at Blackburn College, stated that Wali-Uddin was an outstanding choice for this particular honor. “Mim is a key student leader at Blackburn. She embodies the characteristics of the Student Laureate through her hard work, dedication to academics, and being a member of Blackburn’s new women’s golf program.”

Wali-Uddin has provided exceptional leadership within her responsibilities at the college including her role in the college’s unique student-led Work Program. As one of the nation’s 10 work colleges, Blackburn’s Work Program provides students with tuition credit as well as hands-on work, service, and leadership learning opportunities preparing them for a successful transition to life, work, and career after college. There are 12 work departments on campus and each one is managed by a student, guiding and mentoring their peers as they help facilitate day-to-day operations on campus.

Of Wali-Uddin’s time leading in the Work Program, Wiedlocher said, “Mim stepped up when two work departments merged into one. She worked as a tutor in the Writer’s Block and is now the student manager of the combined Student Success Center and Technology Services department.” She added that Wali-Uddin was recently elected as president of the Student Senate and serves the campus by making sure the concerns of the student body are heard and brought to the attention of other constituent groups on campus.

Jody Sturgeon, Dean of Work at Blackburn, coaches and mentors student leaders as they manage their departments. “Mim presents herself as a natural leader, however, her

leadership abilities are matched by her hard work and dedication,” Sturgeon said. “She strives to always set the bar high and encourages her team to do the same.”

Kelsey Busler, Blackburn’s Student Success Center Coordinator, who works with Wali-Uddin said, “Mim is an excellent student, and she pursues co-curricular activities that embody her leadership skills. She was chosen to be a writing assistant on campus and also holds writing workshops for students. Her work ethic and empathetic personality make her strive to be successful at whatever endeavor she sets her mind to.”

Jeremy McAninch, Head Librarian at Blackburn, also works with Wali-Uddin on a daily basis. He shared, “Mim’s dedication can be seen through participation in various pursuits. Her choice of activities illustrates her commitment to helping others through civic engagement. She wants to practice law so that she can ultimately help defend and support those who otherwise might not get a fair shake in the legal system. Her goal professionally is to help people. Mim is a very empathetic person who is fully committed to equity and equality for all people, and she hopes to help make a difference in this regard as a lawyer.”

He continued, “Mim is an asset at Blackburn, and will surely be an asset to any institution or organization that she pursues.”

### ***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. U.S. News & World Report has recognized Blackburn College as one of the best colleges in the midwest region for 2023. Blackburn has also been named a Top Performer for Social Mobility in their Best Colleges guide for 2020, 2021, 2022, and 2023. The Washington Monthly ranked Blackburn first in Illinois for performance by students receiving Pell Grants in 2023 and twice previously named Blackburn as the best baccalaureate college in Illinois.*