

Miriam Wali-Uddein Receives MLK Student Leadership award At Blackburn College

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CARLINVILLE, IL - Miriam (Mim) Wali-Uddin, a senior Justice Administration major from Jacksonville, IL, is the recipient of Blackburn College's 2023 Martin Luther King (MLK) Student Leadership Award. Presented annually, this award honors students who have demonstrated outstanding commitment and service to the ideals of diversity,

equity, and inclusion at the College. Wali-Uddin was announced as the award recipient during Blackburn's annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Convocation this month.

Wali-Uddin was surprised but honored to be recognized for her leadership on campus. "I am grateful for this award," she said. "I do what I do on this campus because I want everyone to feel welcome at Blackburn and a valuable member of this community. While I don't do this for recognition, I'm so happy to know that I'm making a difference."

On campus, Wali-Uddin serves as president of the Student Senate, advocating and elevating the voices of students from all backgrounds. As a department manager in Blackburn's unique Work Program, Wali-Uddin oversees students working in academic support, including the library, writing lab, and success center services. She is an active member of the Black Student Union and Spectrum student organizations and played a significant role in the planning, execution, and success of a 2022 festival that served as a fundraiser for several Carlinville-area charities.

"Mim's approach to life seems to be openness," Dr. Nicole Lawrence, Professor of English & Communications, shared. "She was an active advocate and moving force behind setting up Safe Zone training for the students in her Work Program department, who come into contact with a large percentage of the Blackburn population. Her drive to ensure her workers were trained in this area is just one example of the ways she advocates to increase respect and belonging at Blackburn."

Lawrence continued, "She's a powerhouse and deserves to be recognized."

"Mim has always strived to push herself to be the best that she can, not only for herself but for her department, clubs, and the school as a whole," said Kate Baskin, a junior Biology major and fellow student Work Program manager from Wood River, IL. "She is studying for the LSAT and plans to pursue a law degree to fight for justice in the areas that individuals typically do not. She is one of the most selfless, determined, smart, and professional women I know. I cannot think of anyone who deserves this award more."

The MLK Student Leadership Award was first presented in 2014 to celebrate the exceptional community-based work Blackburn students undertake. To be eligible, a student must meet one or more pieces of criteria, including exhibiting leadership that has significantly impacted the Blackburn community, exhibiting extraordinary commitment and dedication to service, volunteerism, and social justice, or having persevered to overcome challenges. The nomination process is coordinated by Dr. Margaret Lawler, Blackburn's Executive Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and Chief Diversity Officer, and reviewed by a selection committee of faculty and staff.

“Mim is well deserving of this award and recognition,” Dr. Lawler said. “She is a leader and a role model on this campus, with an incredible personal drive as well as a deep commitment to the well-being and success of our community.”

As the 2023 award recipient, Wali-Uddin received a certificate stating her achievement, a \$100 prize, and will have her photo displayed with past recipients on the MLK Legacy Wall in the Demuzio Campus Center. The entire Blackburn College community congratulates Wali-Uddin on this achievement.

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 twice ranked Blackburn as the best baccalaureate college in Illinois.