

Blackburn College Names Sarah Koplinski Vice President For Institutional Advancement

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CARLINVILLE - Blackburn College has named Sarah Koplinski Vice President for Institutional Advancement. In this senior leadership role, Koplinski will provide strategic, high-level direction for the College's fundraising, alumni engagement, and community outreach efforts to support the institutional growth, sustainability, and capacity to deliver exceptional educational experiences to current and future students. She will manage a talented and motivated philanthropy team and serve as a member of the President's leadership team.

A Carlinville native, Koplinski steps into the role with nearly 17 years in Blackburn's Office of Institutional Advancement. First, she spent time working in this campus area as a student in Blackburn's unique Work Program, where she gained hands-on and impactful professional experience. After taking a position with Junior Achievement in Indianapolis immediately following graduation, Koplinski soon returned to Carlinville and spent three years as Blackburn's Director of Development. She eventually moved on, gaining experience serving in director-level fundraising and management positions at the American Cancer Society and St. Vincent Home for Children, before once again joining Blackburn's advancement and development team. Since returning to the College in 2013, Koplinski has held positions of increasing responsibility, from Development Officer to Senior Director of Development & Foundation Relations. She has twice served as Interim Vice President for Institutional Advancement during her tenure, including holding that position since December 2022.

"I understand the profound impact Blackburn has, and I've seen firsthand how this small but mighty institution transforms students' and families' lives and empowers them to achieve greatness," Koplinski said. "I'm thrilled to take on this new challenge, and I'm eager to work alongside our dedicated community to strengthen the bonds that tie this College and our community together and ensure that the generations benefit from the same exceptional education and life-changing experiences I did."

"Institutional Advancement propels Blackburn forward - ensuring financial sustainability, elevating student experiences, preserving cherished traditions, and promoting the College's distinctive mission and values," said Dr. Gregory J. Meyer, President of Blackburn College. "We appreciate Sarah's years of dedicated commitment and service to Blackburn in this essential area. Her knowledge and deep understanding of what makes Blackburn special will enhance our efforts to secure a bright future for the College, building on the strong foundation and generosity of our alumni and Carlinville community."

Koplinski earned her Bachelor's in Public Administration/Political Science in 1995. She received her Certified Fund Raising Executive (CFRE) certification in 2021, demonstrating her commitment to professional excellence in the field of fundraising. Blackburn's Board of Trustees officially approved her appointment as an officer of the College in October.

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 2024. Blackburn also earned a top-ten ranking for social mobility. Blackburn has been listed as a top performer for social mobility each year the list has been published. The Washington Monthly ranked Blackburn first in Illinois for performance by students receiving Pell Grants in 2022 and 2023. The publication has twice ranked Blackburn as the best baccalaureate college in Illinois.