

Blackburn College On Fontbonne University And Students Impacted By Closure Announcement

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CARLINVILLE, Ill. — Blackburn College is saddened to learn that Fontbonne University's Board has made the difficult decision to cease operations.

“The announced closure of Fontbonne University and its 100-year legacy is a profound loss to the region, within the St. Louis Intercollegiate Athletic Conference, and to the higher education community as a whole,” said Dr. Gregory J. Meyer, President of Blackburn College.

“I extend heartfelt sympathy to the students affected. We are dedicated to individually supporting each Fontbonne student through this transition, ensuring they can still achieve their educational goals on time. Our doors are open, offering not just assistance but a community that understands and cares deeply about their journey forward.”

In a collaborative initiative to empower students navigating the impact of Fontbonne’s closure, Blackburn College is actively working with the University and the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) to become a designated teach-out institution.

This strategic partnership will ensure a seamless pathway to graduation for all Fontbonne students in good academic and social standing. Blackburn College prioritizes robust academic support and affordability along with opportunities for meaningful and professional work experiences that result in a competitive edge upon graduation,” said Dr. Laura Wiedlocher, Interim Provost of Blackburn College.

“Our goal is a seamless transition, minimizing disruption for students facing this unforeseen challenge during this pivotal time. We are committed to facilitating a smooth transfer process and will work with each affected student to ensure an uninterrupted education that allows students to graduate on time and achieve extraordinary things.”

Blackburn College will also match existing financial aid awards for Fontbonne students.

“At Blackburn, we prioritize efficiency and affordability, offering a range of financial aid options tailored to each student's needs, so students can thrive financially and academically during this transition,” said Justin Norwood, Vice President for Inclusive Enrollment.

The financial aid offerings will include merit scholarships, need-based grants, other aid opportunities based on eligibility, and Blackburn College’s one-of-its-kind Work Program.

Norwood continued, “Blackburn has always helped the next generation of leaders, problem solvers, and creative thinkers make the most of their college experience. Our Work Program offers the opportunity to develop in-demand skills and a resume full of

professional experience and includes a \$5,000 tuition credit each year students participate. This thoughtful combination of academic and professional preparation is a key reason our graduates enter the workplace at full speed, ready to rise and shine."

Fontbonne University plans to hold a special transfer and teach-out event on Monday, April 15. Representatives from Blackburn's Academics, Admissions, and Athletics offices will be available in person to provide helpful information and unofficial transcript evaluations for Fontbonne students.

Fontbonne students interested in the financial aid and academic transfer plans offered by Blackburn College can learn more, schedule a visit, or submit their free application for admission at blackburn.edu/fontbonne. Individuals with other questions regarding this process also may contact Justin Norwood, Blackburn College's Vice President for Inclusive Enrollment, at justin.norwood@blackburn.edu.

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.