

Mark Biermann Begins Role as President at Blackburn College

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Dr. Mark Biermann became president at Blackburn College in mid-August.

ACI member [Blackburn College](#), Carlinville, Illinois, welcomed Dr. Mark Biermann to his new role as college president earlier this month. The Blackburn College Board of Trustees appointed Biermann earlier this summer, according to a college news release. He succeeded Dr. John McClusky, provost, who served as interim president since December 2019 after Dr. Julie Murray-Jensen resigned as president.

Biermann most recently was provost and executive vice president for academic affairs at Valparaiso University in Indiana, responsible for all academic programs, student affairs, retention and student success, diversity and inclusion, innovation and institutional effectiveness. Biermann also worked closely with Valparaiso's leadership to develop and implement a financial model that strengthens Valparaiso University, including a \$250 million comprehensive campaign.

"I believe that Blackburn is a national leader in what is probably the single most important area for a college or university: social mobility," Biermann said. "Blackburn not only aspires to but is clearly succeeding in providing a distinctive and innovative model for higher education in America."

Mike Smiley, chair of the Blackburn College board, cited Biermann's exceptional administrative and academic background as well as his enthusiasm for Blackburn's unique student-managed Work Program among the reasons he emerged as the best possible candidate. "Dr. Biermann's proven leadership and educational experience is the perfect fit for Blackburn," said Smiley.

Prior to Valpo, Biermann worked in faculty positions at Whitworth College, Spokane, Washington, Buena Vista University, Storm Lake, Iowa, Houghton College in New York, and the U.S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland. Biermann was chair of the Department of Physics and Astronomy at Eastern Kentucky University, Richmond, and the inaugural dean of the School of Natural and Applied Sciences at Taylor University, Upland, Indiana. He was dean of the faculty and vice president for academic affairs at Wartburg College in Iowa.

Biermann earned a bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees in optics from the University of Rochester in New York. He and his wife, Lois, are parents to two daughters.