

## **Botswana Blackburn**

Associate Teaching Professor, Health Sciences, School of Health Professions  
MU faculty member since 2008

Before she took on the roles of University of Missouri student and professor, Botswana Blackburn stepped on campus as a participant in the Missouri Scholars Academy, a program that invites 330 of Missouri's most gifted incoming high school juniors for a chance to experience Mizzou.

During her time as an undergraduate student in the Missouri School of Journalism, Blackburn realized the importance of teachers, role-models and mentors. Since then, she has taken on all three roles for any student who needs her.

Blackburn believes that her job as a professor includes far more than the course curriculum and that the key to providing students with a quality education is understanding their experiences outside of the classroom. An involved and well-respected faculty member, she has touched the lives of students, not only in the School of Health Professions, but across the entire MU campus.

Kristofer Hagglund, dean of the School of Health Professions, said Blackburn is more than just a professor — she provides students with a lifetime worth of guidance and mentorship.

“In addition to being an excellent teacher, Dr. Blackburn also is a life coach and tireless advocate of her students, including the students enrolled in her courses; those studying health sciences; all of those who reach out to her; and those who need counsel, praise or support,” Hagglund said.

She has worked tirelessly for various student groups on campus as the campus advisor for Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., Alpha Eta National Honor Society and the MU chapter of UNICEF. She also serves as a leader with the Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life, the Health Professions Freshman Interest Group and the Bachelor of Health Sciences Program. In addition to her involvement on campus, she also volunteers regularly with the Boys & Girls Club in Columbia and is a member of Links Unlimited, a mentorship program for African-American youth.

Speaking to Blackburn's impact beyond the classroom, Jeff Zeilenga, dean of students, said that Blackburn embodies what it means to be “Mizzou Made.”

“She inspires our students to exemplify the university's core values on a daily basis,” Zeilenga said.

Blackburn's former student, Miranda Schloman, highlighted Blackburn's dedication to Mizzou students in her nomination letter.

“I witnessed Dr. Blackburn open her office and herself up to students who were at a personal crossroads over the course of four years,” Schloman said. “She truly cares about and dedicates herself to her students both inside and outside of the classroom.”

Blackburn teaches many of the core courses within the health sciences program, including Healthcare Organization and Leadership, Health Care in the U.S., Public Health Principles and Practice, and Social and Behavioral Sciences in Public Health.

“I love this teacher and coming to class,” one student said on a course evaluation. “Everything was so relevant and gaining a new perspective on health care will be useful in my future. Very happy this class is a requirement, and Dr. Blackburn is exceptional.”

As recognition for her hard work, Blackburn was honored with the 2016 Health Sciences Faculty of the Year award as well as the School of Health Professions Excellence in Education–Early Career award.

Blackburn earned her bachelor’s degrees in journalism and political science and a master’s in health education and promotion from the University of Missouri. She earned her doctorate in education from the University of Missouri–Kansas City.