

- Section 1: Items to Note and Criteria for Team Award
- Section 2: List of Individual Nominees and Submissions

Section 1: Items to Note and Criteria for I AM COD Awards

Award Amounts

Individual Awards (per semester)	Team Awards (per semester, per individual)
\$500.00	\$50.00

Criteria for I Am COD Individual Award

Nominators choose the criterion that best describes why this person is being nominated: *(multiple criteria may be selected)*
Core Values | Service Excellence | Exceptional Performance

Section 2: List of Individual Nominees

Individual (Nominee)	Nominator(s)
Gabriel Gonzalez (Business & Applied Technology)	Joe Aranki
Omar Gordon (Financial Aid)	Valerie Reniche
Luisa Maka (Registration Services)	Valerie Reniche
Richard Dawkins (Athletics)	Ryan Kaiser
Samina Khan (Support Services) (2 nominations)	Sarah Brase Theresa Dobersztyn
Princess White (Intercultural Student Initiatives)	Omar Gordon
Damin Keenan (Office & Classroom Technology)	Brenda Large
Bobby Marek (Financial Affairs)	Molly Junokas
Nancy Jadzak (Business Services)	Magdalena Ogrodny

Individual (Nominee)	Nomination Submission
Gabriel Gonzalez	I am incredibly proud to recommend Gabriel Gonzales for the I Am COD Award in recognition of his outstanding contributions and unwavering dedication to our department. As BTEC's Business Associate, Gabriel handles a massive and complex workload with absolute precision. From managing all of our Concur requests, navigating intricate contracts, and processing vendor intake forms to overseeing our budgeting, he ensures that the operational backbone of our program runs flawlessly. He is consistently on top of every detail, highly accessible, and proactive in keeping our department moving forward. Gabriel's true impact, however, was demonstrated when our administrative assistant accepted another position. Without hesitation, he stepped up to fill the void, seamlessly taking on those additional responsibilities on top of his already demanding workload to ensure we didn't skip a beat. No matter how much pressure is put on him or how chaotic the environment becomes, Gabriel maintains a remarkably positive, kind, and helpful personality. His exceptional work ethic, willingness to support the team in times of transition, and constant professionalism embody the very best of the College of DuPage, making him truly deserving of this honor.

Individual (Nominee)	Nomination Submission
Omar Gordon	Working in Registration has given me the opportunity to work closely with the Financial Aid department especially with our departments sharing a home in SCC 123 while the Enrollment Center was being built, and while the entire team is exceptional, I would like to recognize one individual in particular: Omar Gordon. Omar consistently goes above and beyond for both students and his colleagues. He takes the time to ensure students receive all the information they need and explains it in a way that is clear and easy to understand. I have also witnessed him skillfully de-escalate situations with students who arrived frustrated due to challenges they were facing. By the end of their interactions with Omar, they often leave feeling informed, supported, and at ease.

Fall2026 – I AM COD Individual Nominees

	Omar has been, and continues to be, a pleasure to work with. His dedication, professionalism, and commitment to student success make a positive impact every day. I look forward to continuing to collaborate with him in the future.
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Individual (Nominee)	Nomination Submission
Luisa Maka	I would like to give a shout-out to an amazing coworker, Luisa Maka. She is one of the many unsung heroes who gives her all every day to provide exceptional service to our students. Luisa tirelessly answers call after call, ensuring that each student receives personalized care and attention. No matter how busy she is, she is always willing to jump in and help with a project, answer a question, or support her colleagues in any way she can. On top of that, she skillfully manages the many other responsibilities that come with her role. Luisa is a shining light in our office. Her dedication, positive attitude, and commitment to both students and coworkers make a meaningful difference every day. Registration is beyond lucky to have her.

Individual (Nominee)	Nomination Submission
Richard Dawkins	Rich is one of the main reasons why College of DuPage athletics continues to get asked to host national championships. This past season FY26, we hosted the Football, Men's Volleyball, and Women's Flag Football National Championships. This upcoming year FY27, we will host Football, Women's Volleyball, and Women's Flag Football. Rich's attitude is second to none as he wants each team that ventures onto our campus to have a quality National Championship experience. Rich will lead each of the three zoom's that we have with the NJCAA office to ensure we are preparing and loop in all of the different groups that need to be involved for a national championship. This includes but is not limited to; hotel arrangements, banquet for all the teams and the logistics that come into play regarding the meal, the service learning project that many of our championships have with 'Feed our Starving Children' in Aurora, coordinating with the apparel company that will sell clothing, coordinating with the head officials or assignor of officials, VIP/Hospitality Room, working directly with ESPN and the NJCAA marketing team to ensure production is running correctly, working with each team to ensure their transportation needs are met, ensuring that all needs are met for each and every party that helps put together a National Championship. Rich even stays at the host hotel to ensure if something goes wrong or there is an emergency, COD athletics has someone on site to help fix or solve a problem. Rich is a tireless worker and gives of himself to the coaches and teams that he represents. He wants each person to leave COD with an experience that is based in collegiately, sportsmanship, care, and solid competition. Rich also oversees all of the travel for each of the department securing buses and hotels for teams that represent the college. He is a leader on a national level which allows the College of DuPage to showcase our talented athletics department and overall school with the entire nation. The number of emails I receive or feedback that I get from NJCAA surveys after the National Championship itself speaks volumes about how much he cares for this institution, putting on a fantastic championship, and ensuring that all the needs are met while institutions send their teams to us. Whether it is the NJCAA office or other schools around the nation, all share their kind words about how Rich makes their experience so pleasant. They may not win the championship as only 1 team can do that, but he makes them feel seen and valued during their time on our campus.

Fall2026 – I AM COD Individual Nominees

	Rich is so very deserving of this award. He is COD athletics, and I'm proud to have him as a peer and as a friend.
Individual (Nominee)	Nomination Submission
Samina Khan	Nomination 1: Samina Kahn has been an educational asset and supportive mentor during my time with Support Services. It is her thoughtfulness and engagement in her work and colleagues that allow me to write confidently about her worthiness for the I am COD individual award. While my time with the college has been short, Samina has worked for COD for five years, serving the college in many ways. Samina started her time at COD working in Student Records and quickly transitioned over to Support Services. When I joined the Support Services team, I learned just how much Samina's presence aids in the success of the department and the college. She is the backbone of entire directory. Every addition, change, or termination within the college, she single-handedly logs and files. She also never hesitates to step in and assist when anyone has issues or questions. Whether I am having a technology issue, or Print Services needs an extra hand, Samina is always ready to volunteer. She also volunteers her time around campus by taking part in student led eye exams and tabling during the first week of classes. She assists students and community members every day through the phone with a sincere and pleasant attitude, always providing excellent service. Not only does she lead by example and provide a welcoming environment for students and staff, but she is also kindhearted and supportive. Her smile and laugh are contagious and never fail to brighten the day of anyone who comes across her. Samina's service to the college does not stop at work expectations. She recently assisted in two separate medical emergencies. The first time, she noticed an unusual sound coming from a colleague and discovered she was choking. Samina reacted quickly and performed the Heimlich maneuver, dislodging the item from her throat, before paramedics arrived on scene. The second time, she called 911 promptly after learning of a colleague not breathing and stayed on the line until paramedics arrived. Her readiness to act and her composed demeanor saved someone's life. Samina's continued attentiveness and uplifting spirit is what oils the gears of COD. Support Services would not be the same without her. Nomination 2: On the morning of Tuesday, January 13, 2026, sometime before 9:00 a.m. an employee in the IRC Building had a choking incident in their office. The person had a persistent cough, was sucking on a cough drop, accidentally swallowed a piece of the cough drop and began choking. Samina Khan in Support Services heard the person coughing very loudly, asked if they were ok with no response but continued coughing, went running into the office and proceeded to perform the Heimlich Maneuver on the person. Campus Police were called, with Samina continuing to perform the Heimlich Maneuver until the employee was able to spit up the piece of cough drop while breathing with some difficulty. Campus Police arrived, the Lisle-Woodridge Paramedics arrived also and provided medical assistance. The employee was cleared to stay at work, signed the release, and stayed for the remainder of the work day. Samina went above and beyond by performing this life-saving measure on the employee that was in distress. The staff in Suite 1001 of the IRC Building are forever grateful that Samina was trained to perform this life-saving measure on the employee in distress. I was that employee in distress and can't thank Samina enough for being at the right place at the right time in order to help me get through this life threatening choking event. I submit this nomination for Samina Khan for Service Excellence for going above and beyond when she performed the life- saving measure of the Heimlich Maneuver on me. Theresa Dobersztyn, Procurement Services Manager.

Fall2026 – I AM COD Individual Nominees

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Princess White	The way that she interacts with the student and her professional demeanor makes it easy for the students to approach her for anything. The exceptional way that she approaches her job to stay on top of tasks and to make sure that the whole team is kept in the loop, makes her easy to approach for assistance. Definite joy to have her be a part of COD.
Individual (Nominee)	Nomination Submission
Damin Keenan	On Friday afternoon, May 1, 2026, Laura Seymour, Youth Coordinator, experienced an extremely stressful situation. A spreadsheet housed in TEAMS had a catastrophic failure that impacted several months of careful tracking. This sheet is of great importance to the Youth Academy coordinator team and would have taken countless hours to try to recreate. Damin was able to assist Laura with successful recovery of the excel sheet. During the process Damin expressed understanding of the situation and provided calm reassurance and compassion for what was a very upsetting experience for Laura. I also had tried to assist with the situation and am so appreciative not only of Damin's ability to solve the problem, but of his kindness and patience. Thank you Damin!
Individual (Nominee)	Nomination Submission
Bobby Marek	Bobby Marek recently resolved a complex accounting issue impacting the McAninch Arts Center, where the Box Office processes \$2–3 million in ticket sales annually. Since revenue is distributed across multiple departments – including College Theater, College Music, CCMA, New Philharmonic, Buffalo Theatre, and Performance Series events – accurate categorization is critical. When a reporting issue caused weekly deposits to be miscategorized, Bobby led the effort to develop a solution. After weeks of investigation and collaboration between Financial Affairs and MAC, he built an Excel macro workbook that allocates all sales activity to the correct departments in a clear and user-friendly format. His solution not only corrected the issue but will save both departments significant time and ensure ongoing accuracy. Beyond his technical expertise, Bobby stood out for his leadership on this project. He steered our discussions with respect for all perspectives, provided clear direction, and kept the team aligned and focused on a workable solution. This level of integrity is consistent across all of Bobby's work. He is knowledgeable, accurate, and thorough, while remaining approachable, collaborative, and generous with his time. Even while managing high-stakes responsibilities such as audits, payroll accounting, and tax reporting, he ensures every colleague feels supported and heard. His work ethic embodies the core values of COD, and we are lucky to have him at the College.
Individual (Nominee)	Nomination Submission

Fall2026 – I AM COD Individual Nominees

Nancy Jadzak	During the Managed Print Services new device installation project, Nancy Jadzak—who had recently been promoted to Manager of Campus Services—assumed leadership of a complex, campus-wide initiative without hesitation. The project involved replacing printers and multifunction devices across the College of DuPage, as well as the full replacement of large-format production equipment in the Print Services Center. This included a large Colex cutter and a flatbed printer, which required multiple days of highly coordinated work involving disassembly of existing equipment, rigging, delivery, assembly, installation, testing, and staff training. Nancy managed all aspects of this extensive project with exceptional organization and dedication. She developed detailed implementation plans, including campus maps that designated precise loading and unloading locations for equipment, as well as meticulously coordinated schedules that worked around existing classroom use to avoid any disruption to instruction. For the Print Services Center installations, Nancy coordinated multi-day timelines, vendor logistics, and internal staffing to ensure business continuity while highly specialized equipment was removed and installed. Throughout the project, Nancy actively engaged and motivated her team, fostering a collaborative and positive work environment while clearly communicating expectations and timelines. She routinely worked extended hours to be present during critical phases of the installation, ensuring that any issues were addressed immediately and proactively. Her leadership, preparation, and hands-on involvement ensured that each phase of the project progressed smoothly. The impact of Nancy’s work on students, employees, and the broader COD community was substantial. Campus operations and classroom instruction continued uninterrupted, and many faculty and staff were unaware that equipment had been replaced—an exceptional outcome for a project of this scale. Print Services Center operations resumed seamlessly following the installation of new large-format equipment, ensuring continued support for academic programs and campus needs. Nancy’s efforts were recognized by both internal and external partners. An IT colleague remarked they could not believe how smoothly the project went, and our vendor partner, GFC, praised the professionalism, responsiveness, and dedication demonstrated throughout the process. Nancy’s leadership and commitment directly contributed to a successful project that enhanced operational reliability, upheld service excellence, and positively reflected the College of DuPage’s values. Nancy Jadzak deserves the I Am COD Individual Award because her exceptional leadership, dedication, and service excellence transformed a highly complex, campus-wide and print production equipment installation into a seamless experience, demonstrating her deep commitment to COD’s mission, her team’s success, and the students, employees, and community we serve.
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