

- 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)
1.	Amber Kalish, Procurement Services	Theresa Dobersztyn, Procurement Services
2.	Beth Holmwood, Business & Applied Technology	Beverly Carlson, Channing Payne, Bridget McFarland Business & Applied Technology
3.	Bob Chasteen, Operations Support	Joseph Latoria, Sameena Parveen, Robyn Abend, Admissions & Outreach
4.	Brenda Large, Continuing Education	John M. Linardakis, Continuing Education
5.	Channing Payne, Business & Applied Technology	Joe Aranki - Automotive, Christine Santos - Academic Affairs
6.	Christine Santos, Academic Affairs	Danah Agha, Academic Affairs
7.	Edward Ortega, Admissions & Outreach	Iris Castellanos, Admissions & Outreach
8.	Eric Frick, Procurement Services	Theresa Dobersztyn, Procurement Services
9.	Jennie Nicodem, Learning Commons	Daniel Rische, Access & Accommodations
10.	Jennifer Stewart, Financial Aid	Kelsey Plefka, Athletics
11.	Joseph Latoria, Admissions & Outreach	Jason Sanchez, Admissions & Outreach
12.	Kevin Casey, Procurement Services	Theresa Dobersztyn, Procurement Services
13.	Kiantra Loza, Admissions & Outreach	Sameena Parveen, Admissions & Outreach
14.	Kris Garay, Dual Credit/Dual Enrollment	Jessica Sosnowski, Dual Credit/Dual Enrollment
15.	Kristi Hainline, Testing Center	Josephine Cammallerie, Mathematics
16.	Lisa Erl, Procurement Services	Theresa Dobersztyn, Procurement Services
17.	Mike McKissack, Marketing & Communications	Amy Calhoun, Marketing & Communications
18.	Monica Chowanec, Facilities	Julie Braun, Marketing & Creative Services
19.	Regina (Gina) Wisemiller, Print Services	Nancy Jadzak, Campus Services
20.	Rich Dawkins, Athletics	Kelsey Plefka, Athletics
21.	Rob Nardini, MAC	Diana Martinez, MAC
22.	Ryan Kaiser, Athletics	Matthew Rahn, Athletics
23.	Sarah Ariza, Institutional Advancement	Rachel McKay, Institutional Advancement
24.	Valerie Reniche, Student Registration Services	Joseph Latoria, Admissions & Outreach
25.	Vera Humphrey, Administrative Affairs	Dave Virgilio, Michelle Resnick - Financial Affairs
26.	Wendy Melgar, MAC	Diana Martinez, MAC

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Individual (Nominee)	Nomination Submission Text
Amber Kalish	<p>Service Excellence</p> <p>In May Amber was working through an issue with an ESM User and the Budget Manager. She was very patient when called for additional information in order to assist the user. Amber takes the time to explain what is needed and why in order to help the users better understand not only the system requirements but also the system limitations. Amber always demonstrates excellent customer service skills when dealing with both internal and external customers, who can be extremely difficult at times. Amber always shows her professionalism while dealing with difficult situations while always maintaining a professional attitude. I am very fortunate and proud to have Amber as a dedicated and valued member of the Procurement Services Team.</p>
Beth Holmwood	<p>Core Values, Service Excellence, Exceptional Performance</p> <div data-bbox="453 586 1990 1203" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p>Beverly Carlson submission: I would like to nominate Beth Holmwood for the "I Am COD Award." Beth is the Administrative Assistant for the Business and Applied Technology Division Dean and is the go-to person for everyone in the division. This means she receives a tremendous amount of emails and calls. Additionally, Beth is the first point of contact for student concerns and questions throughout the semester. It is hard to narrow it down to just one situation or event because Beth consistently demonstrates her dedication and support to the Dean, support staff, students, and numerous faculty members she assists daily. She always does so with a caring and humble spirit. Beth thoughtfully and promptly responds to the countless emails she receives every day. She has a unique way of making you feel like your problem or question is her top priority, ensuring you never feel like you are interrupting her work. For example, I recently needed some data for one of my programs and thought Beth might be able to access the information. Although the day was nearly over and Beth was likely wrapping up projects, she immediately started researching my question while we were on the phone. She could have easily told me she would investigate it the next day, but instead, she even offered to stay late to work on my request. I'm confident that everyone in my division has similar stories, as this type of attitude and behavior is typical for Beth. I believe Beth should receive the award because she embodies the spirit of College of DuPage and exemplifies service excellence every day. If Beth does not win the award, which I sincerely hope she does, I hope she at least receives the recognition she deserves.</p> </div> <div data-bbox="453 1203 1990 1433" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p>Bridget McFarland submission: I'm writing to express my deep appreciation for Beth Holmwood from the Business and Applied Technology division. Her exceptional dedication and outstanding performance truly stand out. Beth's commitment to service excellence and her professionalism have really made a difference for our team. She handles multiple tasks with ease and skill, always helping us find the right solutions thanks to her deep understanding of our operations and institutional knowledge. One of Beth's most admirable qualities is her genuine warmth and hospitality. She greets everyone with a warm smile and sincere acknowledgment, fostering an environment of</p> </div>

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	<p>inclusivity and camaraderie. Her willingness to go above and beyond to help others showcases her remarkable character and dedication to service. Beth is an invaluable asset not only to our division but also to others, always ready to lend a helping hand. Her selfless attitude and collaborative spirit make her a true team player, promoting teamwork across our organization. Beth has stepped up to help other divisions fill gaps, while managing her own work. Beth excels in her role. Her contributions have greatly enhanced our team's success, and her dedication to excellence is truly inspiring.</p> <p>Channing Payne submission: I am thrilled to nominate Beth Holmwood, Administrative Assistant to Dr. Janice Kaushal (Dean) and the Business and Applied Technologies division. With her steadfast dedication and unwavering commitment, Beth exemplifies the pinnacle of service and performance. Beth embodies the essence of service excellence and exceptional performance, making her a deserving recipient of this award. Her impact on students, staff, and the broader community is profound and enduring. I am proud to work beside her, and not only consider her a great colleague, but a wonderful friend and confidant.</p>
<p>Bob Chasteen</p>	<p>Core Values, Service Excellence, Exceptional Performance</p> <p>Joseph Latoria submission: Bob Chasteen has continually been an MVP for Admissions and Outreach by assisting the Admissions Operations Team generate and send Username Emails for recently admitted students who have not received their dupage.edu credentials. He embodies COD's Core Values, Service Excellence, and Exceptional Performance daily by helping us and our incoming students whether they be Early Admissions students, former students, and brand new students. Bob demonstrates Core Values, Service Excellence, and Exceptional Performance by assisting us troubleshoot and identify issues with username generation and getting students to the next stage in the steps to enrollment process. Bob helps us... EVERY. SINGLE. DAY. As well as throughout the day. Our requests for his assistance are always completed quickly and efficiently and he provides insight into some of the glitches students experience. With Bob's help, students can proceed in the Steps to Enrollment and set-up all their COD accounts, especially their Inside.cod.edu portal. If students do not receive their dupage.edu credentials, they are immediately hit with a GIANT roadblock. They cannot do anything. They cannot register. They cannot pay. They cannot move forward. They are essentially stuck. Thank you Bob for always helping Admissions and our students!</p> <p>Sameena Parveen submission: I would like to nominate my esteemed Colleague, Bob Chasteen - Operations Support Supervisor in Information Technology Services. Bob embodies the College's core values of integrity, honesty, respect and responsibility. Our team reaches out to Bob frequently regarding glitches in the systems that prevent students from proceeding through their application funnel and Bob is always quick to respond with action. He has an unwavering commitment to student success and never shies away from answering our questions about technical processes regarding student registries and automated communications. Bob demonstrates a deep</p>

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	<p>understanding of accessibility in education and shows exceptional dedication to his work. He is a valuable asset to our team and we are grateful for his quick action, depth of knowledge and willingness to help us when needed. Without Bob's quick action, insight and helpful nature - many students would have experienced technical stumps to enrollment. I am grateful to know Bob and proud to nominate him as a recipient of the IAMCOD award. Thank you! Sameena</p> <p>Robyn Abend submission: Bob Chasteen provides consistent and timely support to the Office of Admissions & Outreach (specifically the Admissions Frontline and Enrollment Operations Team), who regularly receives inquiries from recently admitted students reporting that they have not received their "COD Student Portal Username." This important email contains a student's COD credentials and provides step-by-step instructions on setting up their InsideCOD Portal and Student Email account. Without these in place, students are unable to move forward with their Steps to Enrollment. Bob regularly comes to the rescue by "manually" processing each of these students through a specific workflow that will generate the COD credentials and send the highly needed email communication. This allows students to move forward with placement testing, registration, payments, and attending classes. In addition, Bob has partnered with the Enrollment Operations Team in evaluating why the automated workflow is not working as intended in certain circumstances. His own insights and those he has gathered from folks in IT are helping the Ops Team to anticipate which recently admitted students will or may experience Username issues. Meanwhile, Bob continues to remedy these issues when they occur, which makes him stand-out in his support of student success at COD and employee success within the Office of Admissions & Outreach!!</p>
Brenda Large	<p>Service Excellence</p> <p>I have had the (continued) privilege to work with Brenda Large, Coordinator of Youth Academy programs, since she became Program Coordinator a few years ago, effectively handling the instructional management (both Glen Ellyn and Naperville campuses where I teach summers) in the capacity of effective communication, coordination, scheduling of all classes and particularly my course, the popular summer enrichment course, "Jr Med Lab" to a level of great efficiency; and, her collegiality and direction in the highest professional manner. Brenda's commitment to COD educational excellence and holistic values encompass the positive attitude and ability to ensure successful implementation, enrollment and instructional support to best serve the learning goals of the course, and best meet the parents' expectations, student learning needs with great accommodation and flexibility, deserving of this award. One example of her service excellence to others and the CoD community (parents, students, teachers and staff) is the incredible way she handled the "air conditioning crisis" in summer of 2023 when the Naperville campus air conditioning in the building failed during a heat wave on a Wednesday, and she handled that crisis by Herculean means and long hours, communicating as late as 11:30pm, to resolve the concern amongst all stakeholders (teachers,</p>

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	<p>supporting staff, students and parents) for "plan B" successfully continue the learning program without skipping a beat, under intense pressures and circumstances, which we did successfully as parents were all committed to the learning of their children by driving them to the Glen Ellyn campus for the remaining days, Thursday and Friday. This tense, difficult situation was most efficiently handled and coordinated successfully by the great commitment and vision of Brenda Large which left a positive impression and solution to students and the learning community! Brenda's ability to manage the demands of the Youth Academy is remarkable and worthy of recognition!</p>
<p>Channing Payne</p>	<p>Core Values, Service Excellence, Exceptional Performance</p> <div data-bbox="457 475 1984 824" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p>Joe Aranki submission: Although I can make a case for any of the nominating criteria, it is the exceptional performance that has compelled me to make this nomination. I am delighted to nominate Channing Payne for the I am COD award. Her exceptional performance is a testament to her innovative approaches in tackling both new and recurring challenges. Continuously demonstrating creativity, she generates original ideas that not only improve processes but also significantly enhance productivity. Channing is a strategist par excellence, consistently formulating and implementing effective strategies to achieve ambitious goals. Her dedication extends beyond the routine, as she willingly volunteers for special projects and committees, enriching the team's collaborative spirit. Serving as a beacon of excellence, Channing leads by example, inspiring colleagues with her unwavering commitment to excellence. Moreover, she fosters a culture of encouragement and positivity, empowering peers to thrive.</p> </div> <div data-bbox="457 829 1984 976" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p>Christine Santos submission: Channing has always been courteous and respectful to her colleagues. She goes above and beyond when completing tasks and makes sure everything is complete. She reassures her colleagues that she will get the right answer by reaching out to others with such kindness. Channing is very helpful and shows the true meaning of a team player.</p> </div>
<p>Christine Santos</p>	<p>Core Values</p> <p>Christine Santos has been nothing but supportive and helpful since the very first day I started working at COD. Having been at COD for several years before, she's well-versed in the COD community and standards and was able to communicate her personal experience with me, to give me insight that I could've never received anywhere else. I remember more than one instance where Christine provided me and the team with much needed assistance, beginning with my first few weeks at work. I was still a new-hire trying to navigate my way around the office, when we held our big in-service event for faculty. I was given little to no sense of direction and felt quite lost, when Christine jumped in and helped me print out a few things and walked me through the initial steps of the event. She had assisted me on projects more than once, including the most recent one (a focus groups event) where she provided technical setup assistance. Without her continuous support and encouragement, I would've felt more isolated than I already was--I'm sure many other new-hires like me can relate. Her friendliness and approachability are traits that are hard to</p>

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	<p>find in the workplace nowadays. She continues to communicate and check-in with me daily to offer a helping hand when needed. It is because of her and only her that my time at COD was great. Everything I learned about COD's community, values, and goals were from her and for that I'm forever grateful. She has been the most positive colleague I've ever worked with and I feel very fortunate to have met and connected with her.</p>
Edward Ortega	<p>Core Values, Service Excellence, Exceptional Performance</p> <p>I am thrilled to nominate Edward Ortega for the Service Excellence and Exceptional Performance award as an admissions representative for the College of DuPage. In his role, Edward has consistently demonstrated an outstanding commitment to service and has gone above and beyond in every aspect of his responsibilities. Edward possesses a rare blend of professionalism, empathy, and efficiency that sets him apart. He approaches each interaction with prospective students, their families, and colleagues with warmth and sincerity, making everyone feel valued and respected. Edward takes the time to listen attentively to the needs and concerns of students, offering guidance and support tailored to each individual's circumstances. Moreover, Edward is a true team player who is always willing to lend a helping hand to colleagues and collaborate on projects that benefit the department and the college as a whole. His positive attitude and willingness to pitch in wherever needed make them a valued member of our admissions team. In summary, Edward exemplifies service excellence and exceptional performance in every aspect of his role as an admissions representative. His dedication, professionalism, and genuine care for students make him an invaluable asset to the College of DuPage community.</p>
Eric Frick	<p>Service Excellence</p> <p>Eric came to the Procurement Services Team from the grocery industry as a supervisor with exceptional customer service experience. Eric is very calm, cool and collected when dealing with customers due to his extensive customer service experience. Eric enjoys completing research while trying to figure out issues, such as the animation punch press purchase that Eric researched. He was so fascinated by the animation aspect of this purchase that Eric signed up for and completed an Animation class. Eric is a very dedicated employee that came to COD with excellent customer service experience while also having great technical skills so he is able to quickly troubleshoot issues as they arise. Eric is very personable, easy to talk to, not afraid to bring up issues or concerns as they arise, and is always friendly and approachable. Eric is a very valuable member of the Procurement Services Team and I am very fortunate to have such a dedicated employee on the team.</p>
Jennie Nicodem	<p>Core Values, Service Excellence</p> <p>Jennie naturally embodies excellence in service as well distinction in COD's Core values. Jennie's commitment to service is her daily mode of operation. As a member of the Learning Commons team Jennie meets with students to formally mentor them and provide them tools for success in the executive functioning coaching and other tutoring</p>

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	<p>related meetings she has with students. Ultimately Jennie helps them develop a foundation of skills and techniques to be successful in their studies. Jennie also interacts and builds relationships with students on a personal level to encourage them to be the best version of themselves beyond their academics. On a professional level Jennie establishes, builds and maintains relationships with faculty, staff and others in the COD community that is integral to the support COD provides students. Jennie values equity by championing inclusion and diversity in the work she does and by encouraging and giving tools to others to do so as well. Jennie's spirit of empathy shines through in how attentive she is to how students are doing and meets them where they are to celebrate accomplishments and to manage stress in a healthy and productive way. These attributes as well as Jennie's positive attitude, bright smile and unflappable commitment to service and COD's Core Values make Jennie a standout and honorable nominee for the I AM COD award.</p>
<p>Jennifer Stewart</p>	<p>Service Excellence, Exceptional Performance</p> <p>Jennifer has been an integral part of ensuring our student-athletes are well prepared for their academic year at COD. Jennifer assisted at our Football Orientation this May and even though the 24-25 FAFSA was not yet pulled into the COD systems, she still met with each individual student and their family/guests to give them an overview of their anticipated costs while at COD. After the orientation, Jennifer took the time to make individual appointments with each student-athlete to go over their offer letter once it was available. This commitment to ensuring our student-athletes understand their financial obligations is so appreciated in our department. Because I have a financial aid background, I know how tedious and time-consuming these conversations can be. But Jennifer always handles them with patience and a friendly demeanor so our student-athletes are comfortable discussing tough topics, like affording a college education. We are so thankful for Jennifer's partnership and willingness to be there for our student-athletes.</p>
<p>Joseph Latoria</p>	<p>Core Values, Service Excellence, Exceptional Performance</p> <p>Joseph is a one of a kind employee. He helps promote the core values of the College at every given turn. He is hardworking, respectful, COD focused, student-oriented, and everything in between. He goes out of his way to help his team and help others learn/understand all components in a situation and how to find the solution. Joseph is always a key component to the success rate of the EOS Team. In stressful situations Joseph is always collected, concerned, and pragmatic on how to go about the situation at hand while managing the stress of the environment and personal emotions at the same time. He always has shared information or communication from other teams to always keep us up to speed. Even in frequent meetings within the department, "Lets defer this to Joseph and his experience." has been stated by management multiple times due to his valued skills/experiences. On top of his skills, Joseph has exceptional performance and high professional Morals. Being the first and only one in the office every day during the first hour and selflessly stays well beyond his time when needed to ensure success of his team. His educational</p>

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	<p>training demeanor to others helps make those that are uncertain more at ease, more confident in decisions, and collectively educated on the matter going forwards. His skills, knowledge, and demeanor are all extremely infectious to the department in making procedures and everyday work that much better.</p>
Kevin Casey	<p>Service Excellence</p> <p>Kevin worked tirelessly with assistance from Amber Kalish on the SSC Renovation bid this past fall that opened in early December. The HVAC portion of the bid had to be re-bid due to an error in the specs regarding the temperature controls so the HVAC bids were rejected by the Board of Trustees on December 21, 2023. The specs were corrected and were prepared to re-bid by Kevin right before the College's winter break. On December 22, 2023, the first day of winter break, Kevin worked in order to insure that the HVAC bid was released before the Christmas holiday. Kevin's demonstrated his dedication to not only the College but also to Procurement Services and the Facilities Department by insuring the re-bid was released in a timely manner by working on the first day of holiday break. Kevin is a dedicated Public Procurement Buyer who always insures that the procurement process is always followed by our end users. I am very fortunate and proud to have Kevin Casey as a dedicated and valued member of the Procurement Services Team.</p>
Kiantra Loza	<p>Exceptional Performance</p> <p>I am nominating Dr. Kiantra Loza, current director of Admissions and Outreach, Campus Central & International Services for exceptional performance and a model of excellence at COD. Kiantra first came to the Office of Admissions as an Associate Director and was an instant change maker in our office improving our organization structure, and making sure all vital groups within Admissions came together to strategize and implement positive and effective outreach and enrollment goals. She faced unexpected challenges such as staff resignation, vacant critical roles, staff medical emergencies and low enrollment numbers with great leadership and minimal disruption to daily Admissions tasks. The most exceptional performance during her short tenure as Associate Director, she quickly learned technical processes and worked on completing them herself such as academic term closings, territory reassignments and solving application barriers/glitches within the admissions CRM system. She was instrumental in hiring new staff and set the stage for streamlined processes and well documented standard operating procedures to minimize future disruptions to Admissions processes. The ripple effect of solidifying key roles and re-organizing the Admissions staff structure has achieved higher office morale and record application completion numbers. Kiantra takes time to engage with students in person, attends every event and is a key player in all things enrollment here! She ensures her staff's needs are met and hosts regular meetings to engage and plan ahead. Her dedication and commitment to student success and our College makes her the ideal candidate for the IAMCOD award. Thank you!</p>
Kris Garay	<p>Service Excellence, Exceptional Performance</p>

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	<p>I am pleased to nominate Kris Garay for the I Am COD award for her exceptional performance and unwavering dedication to College of DuPage. As the Dual Credit/Dual Enrollment Registration Specialist, Kris has demonstrated outstanding commitment to the college's core values of integrity, honesty, respect, responsibility, and equity. Her efforts have led to a 20.7% increase in Dual Credit Enrollment for the spring semester, contributing to COD's recognition for having the highest Dual Credit enrollment in the state, with a headcount reaching 10,000 students for FY24. Kris exemplifies service excellence through her consistent courteousness and respect, even during stressful peak periods. She anticipates the needs of students, high school partners, and instructors, enhancing the public perception of the college. Her dedication to exceptional customer service is evident in her willingness to work overtime during peak registration periods to meet critical enrollment deadlines. In addition to customer service, Kris's approach to problem-solving is noteworthy. She successfully led the testing and assisted with implementation of a new Dual Credit registration software, DualEnroll, which required extensive training for students, high schools, and college faculty and staff. Her ability to manage hours of meetings with the DualEnroll and COD IT teams and deliver exceptional service to all stakeholders is admirable. Kris has played a pivotal role in assisting with my onboarding and training on the new system during her busiest time of the year. Kris mentors and supports her colleagues with positivity, making her a role model. Her results-driven and collaborative approach improves departmental processes and support the college's mission. For these reasons, Kris represents the spirit of College of DuPage, and I wholeheartedly support her nomination for the I Am COD award.</p>
Kristi Hainline	<p>Core Values, Service Excellence, Exceptional Performance</p> <p>This semester I must applaud Kristi Hainline for all the help she has given me. During the Spring 2024 semester, I initially had some difficulties using some of the forms (for virtual testing) and the testing apps (in general) inside the COD portal. When I had trouble, Kristi came to me aid. With her help, I was able to ensure that my class in-person exams - as well as my individual student exams - were properly found in the proper testing center site places. Furthermore, at the end of the Spring 2024 semester, I had three students who - for various reasons - were not able to complete their department final exam prior to the end of the semester. With Kristi's help AGAIN, I was able to provide an individual make-up for each of these three students. Yet, it was Kristi's additional effort ... that I MUST applaud! Since I do not have a COD mailbox, Kristi's help was definitely exceptional! After two students of my three students took their final exam, Kristi scanned the student exams back to me within 24 hours. Without Kristi's actions to scan and email me these exams, I would not have had these completed exams graded for my two students prior to the start of the summer session. (NOTE: Furthermore, BOTH students were so pleased to learn - that after taking their exams - they passed!!) Kristi ... many, many thanks ... and definitely you are a terrific COD employee!!!!</p>
Lisa Erl	<p>Service Excellence, Exceptional Performance</p>

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	<p>Procurement Services was asked to present at the December 2023 Administrative Support Networking Group Training Session on the ins and outs of Procurement and Contracts. Lisa did a tremendous job organizing the training session by working directly with Dave Virgilio in Finance as the contact person, creating and managing the PowerPoint presentation as well as leading the team. This was an engaging training session that was attended by approximately 60-70 employees of all levels. The feedback received by a majority of the attendees was very positive with the Procurement Services Team being extremely pleased with the overall success of the training session. Lisa is a very dedicated Contract Specialist who goes above and beyond in order to insure that the contracting process is completed in the most expeditious manner while protecting the interests of the College by insuring that the contract terms and conditions are meeting the College's statutory requirements.. I am very pleased and proud to have Lisa Erl as a dedicated and valued member of the Procurement Services Team.</p>
<p>Mike McKissack</p>	<p>Service Excellence</p> <p>I am nominating Mike McKissack, our Internal Communications Specialist, for the I AM COD Award. During the past two years, Mike has supported the growth of COD Announcements making an impact through his dedication and hard work. This year alone, Mike has collaborated with over 65 employees across the campus and processed more than 350 items for the Green Sheet and COD Announcements. His commitment to serving College of DuPage employees is evident in everything he does. Mike frequently adjusts his schedule to come to campus on his work-from-home days, ensuring he captures the perfect photos or videos. He also meets employees where they are, assisting in developing best-in-practice communications strategies to deliver the best results. Although Mike is not the campus photographer, he is frequently requested to capture photos at campus events. These photos are later used on social media, in the Green Sheet or shared with the departments hosting the events. Mike's ability to connect with people on a personal level is truly his superpower. He has a unique talent for encouraging employees to participate in front of the camera, making them feel comfortable and at ease, even if they start out feeling nervous. Mike's interactions consistently bring out the best in people, which creates COD Announcements that reflect COD. His genuine and engaging approach makes every interaction a pleasant experience, turning apprehensive employees into relaxed and confident participants. Mike has been there to see our smiles and capture our proud moments. Now, it's his turn to be recognized and celebrated for his contributions.</p>
<p>Monica Chowaniec</p>	<p>Service Excellence</p> <p>As our department prepared for STEMCON, Monica went out of her way to meet with us to anticipate any needs we would have. She met with us several times, coordinating times and dates when she and her staff could help us set up, host, and break down the event. Even though she had a personal obligation on the Saturday morning of STEMCON,</p>

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	<p>Monica came in person to assure that her staff understood what was needed. Without Monica, STEMCON would not have been nearly as successful as it was. She and her staff kept the facility clean and comfortable for staff and the public. Our entire department appreciates the care and dedication with which Monica approaches her work.</p>
<p>Regina (Gina) Wisemiller</p>	<p>Core Values, Service Excellence, Exceptional Performance</p> <p>Gina is approaching her 23rd anniversary of working at College of DuPage. In her role as Digital Print Operator, she brings her "A" game every day and provides top-notch service to faculty and staff while carefully fulfilling their print orders. Her lengthy tenure has allowed her to recognize and know the names of most of the customers, including all their specific preferences. Gina has a critical eye, and if she thinks someone may have made a mistake in submitting their print order, Gina will put extra care into reaching out and ensuring the end result is exactly what they were looking for. She patiently assists new faculty in helping them understand the online submission process. Gina takes pride in knowing that her work ultimately contributes to the success of our students. Gina creates a welcoming environment in Print Services with her cheery counter decorations that are updated seasonally and for all holidays. Gina's decor includes her bobblehead Chappy, whose bespoke outfits always match the season perfectly. She puts a lot of heart into turning ordinary times into celebrations, even coming in at night on her time off to update her display, knowing the smiles will be bright the next morning. On Gina's days off, the question from everyone is always, "Where's Gina?" Gina is also a proud supporter of the College of DuPage Foundation, she is active in COD Cares, and she donates her time frequently to Veterans' events, including the Vietnam Traveling Memorial Wall at COD May 30 to June 2, 2024. It is with great pleasure that I nominate Gina Wisemiller for the I Am COD Individual Award.</p>
<p>Rich Dawkins</p>	<p>Exceptional Performance</p> <p>Rich has been a constant source of encouragement, advice, and support since I began working at COD in January 2023. Rich gives 100% to our Athletic department staff every day. Whether it is helping new coaches overcome obstacles with team travel or giving advice and sharing expertise on a difficult eligibility file, we can always count on Rich to set aside whatever he was doing and lend a hand. For example, we have three interim Head Coaches right now who have each led their teams into post-season competition. Rich became the department travel agent for these new coaches and ensured that all of their needs were taken care of when they were on the road. Rich also used his previous experience in Student-Athlete Eligibility, with enthusiasm, to help decipher complicated transcripts at least three separate times this year. Rich ensures that the administrative staff and all coaches are well prepared to give our student-athletes the best experience possible. When I traveled for the first time to the National Championships with the Track & Field teams this season, he called me every night to make sure things were going smoothly, ask if I needed help, and reminded me to have fun. He also acts as the on-site administrator for the majority of our home athletic</p>

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	<p>competitions. He gives his time and effort freely to anyone who needs him. Whether it is pouring rain at the Soccer game or 90 degrees at the Baseball field, we can always count on Rich to be there.</p>
<p>Rob Nardini</p>	<p>Service Excellence</p> <p>I am thrilled to nominate Rob Nardini, House Manager at the McAninch Arts Center, for the "I am COD" award. Rob plays a crucial role in ensuring the safety, security, and overall positive experience of all guests who visit our center, and his dedication and professionalism are truly commendable. Rob's responsibilities are extensive, including training front of house staff and volunteers on evacuations and emergency procedures, as well as managing the service provided to the public during our numerous events. With over 300 events annually and a large number of community members attending, Rob faces a variety of expectations and challenges. However, he handles them with exceptional competency, always maintaining a positive, friendly, and direct demeanor. One of Rob's standout qualities is his ability to provide personal and attentive service, particularly to elderly patrons. He goes above and beyond to ensure their comfort and well-being, whether it's assisting them to their seats, helping them navigate accessibility needs, or even escorting them to the parking lot in inclement weather. Rob's charm, graciousness, and genuine care make everyone feel welcome and valued. Rob's leadership extends beyond his interactions with guests. He inspires his staff and volunteers to emulate his professionalism and positivity, creating a team that is deeply dedicated to their roles. Under his guidance, the front of house staff consistently receives high praise from customers, with over a 90% rating for their service. In addition to his exemplary work with guests and staff, Rob also demonstrates great judgment in handling difficult situations, such as guests who may have had too much to drink or those experiencing emergency medical situations. His ability to handle these moments with grace and efficiency is truly commendable. In conclusion, Rob Nardini's exceptional work ethic, dedication to service, and positive attitude make him a deserving candidate for the "I am COD" award. He is a true asset to the McAninch Arts Center and embodies the spirit of excellence that we strive for at the College of DuPage.</p>
<p>Ryan Kaiser</p>	<p>Core Values, Service Excellence, Exceptional Performance</p> <p>Ryan became the Athletic Director around the end of 2019 before COVID hit. Ryan walked into an extremely toxic environment that had a mixture of amazing staff committed to enriching the student-athletes of COD and also of individuals that created a toxic environment which took away from the student-athlete experience here. Over time, Ryan has embraced this amazing institution by putting the needs and best interest in front along with making changes to the department and staff to ensure we had people with an aligned vision here. The proof is there with all the recent national titles, which many are from programs that have historically struggled, the winning of the Learfield Cup (once in a lifetime award for the success of the department), the individual success to move on with the student-athletes.</p>

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	<p>The athletic department here at COD is an amazing thing to be a part of. We truly are changing lives and setting student-athletes up for success not only here but for the rest of their lives. This is a direct reflection to Ryan Kaiser, his work ethic, vision and leadership.</p>
<p>Sarah Ariza</p>	<p>Core Values, Service Excellence, Exceptional Performance</p> <p>I am pleased to nominate Sarah for the “I Am COD” Award due to her exceptional contributions to our Institutional Advancement Department. Sarah consistently exemplifies the COD values of integrity, honesty, respect, and responsibility in every interaction. Sarah leads by example and sets a standard of excellence for our team members daily. She is a database expert, possessing extensive knowledge in database management, optimization, and troubleshooting, making her an indispensable resource for our team. Despite her job's demanding and time-sensitive nature, she consistently finds ways to improve our processes within the Advancement Services team. Her deep knowledge, experience with our database, and continuous drive to enhance our operations are impeccable. Sarah's kind and helpful nature is evident in every interaction. She is an excellent listener, and her caring attitude and problem-solving abilities are truly remarkable. Recently, Sarah had just warmed her lunch to eat at her desk when a colleague came into her office with questions. Despite being ready for her meal, Sarah immediately set aside her needs and spent over 45 minutes addressing the team member's concerns. Because of her extreme database proficiency, “no” is not in her vocabulary. She can always find a resolution to any question presented. Sarah handles everyone in every situation with the utmost respect and care, always maintaining an open-door policy. In summary, Sarah’s dedication to COD, our department, and her colleagues, her exemplary work ethic, and her continuous pursuit of improvement make her an outstanding candidate for this award. Her high integrity and respect for others make her an invaluable asset to our team. She embodies the COD values and serves as a role model for everyone in our organization.</p>
<p>Valeri Reniche</p>	<p>Core Values, Service Excellence, Exceptional Performance</p> <p>Valerie Reniche has been part of my College of DuPage journey since 2018. We’ve collaborated at the Addison Center, worked side-by-side at Student Registration Services, and although we’re in different offices now, our paths still connect together. Valerie demonstrates Core Values, Service Excellence, and Exceptional Performance while we worked together across COD and she continually excels and reaches a role model status. One of the most challenging aspects of Registration is managing the blitz of phone queue calls, non-stop emails/chats, and assisting walk-in students with registration, residency, holds, and general questions. Registration is a first-stop for many incoming students who actually need Admissions or Counseling or another office. I am always impressed by Valerie’s calming nature and her ability to decipher what a student needs and where they need to be guided. Students in Valerie’s hands are always put at ease. Her ability to analyze Colleague records, determine student status, and resolve errors</p>

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	<p>students are receiving is incredible. Her college-wide knowledge about Financial Aid, Records, and Admissions is also amazing. Her foresight into potential barriers and her skills to think ahead are to be admired. Valerie is an asset as well since she was a former student at COD. She knows the insides and outs because of that since she has gone through the entire process herself. Students will never be bounced around with Valerie but they will be guided and reassured. Thank you Valerie for all you do for COD, Registration, and all the students! You are greatly appreciated.</p>
<p>Vera Humphrey</p>	<p>Core Values, Service Excellence, Exceptional Performance</p> <p>We would like to nominate Vera Humphrey for the I Am COD Individual Award for Fall 2024. It is safe to say that Vera does so much to hold all of Administrative Affairs together! In her role as Administrative Assistant for the Vice President of Administrative Affairs, Vera coordinates everything from weekly staff meetings to our annual Administrative Affairs service awards. More recently, Vera also has assisted in setting up the meetings of the Administrative Support Networking Group. Coordinating these large meetings and events involves working with scheduling to find rooms large enough to host, as well as working with Sodexo Catering. Beyond her expectational organization skills, Vera fosters a supportive and inclusive environment. She consistently checks in with colleagues, expresses genuine appreciation, and goes above and beyond to make everyone feel welcome. Vera’s efforts, while appearing effortless, are driven by immense dedication and pride in her work. She elevates the entire College community and inspires those around her to be their best. On top of everything she does as part of her role as Administrative Assistant, Vera is also the College’s lead records custodian. When the College’s eight-year litigation hold on records disposals expired in 2023, Vera undertook a significant task of identifying records custodians and delegates from across all College departments and divisions. Vera held multiple training sessions to inform the delegates on how to correctly identify what official records were and how to compile lists of those records so they could properly be added to State of Illinois records disposal requests. At the same time, Vera worked tirelessly with the Illinois Local Records Commission to update the College’s records retention schedule which had not been updated in about a decade. Vera also created a Records Management team site on the employee portal where she has uploaded many important documents related to the effort. At the end of this effort, divisional records delegates identified and successfully disposed of approximately 1,900 cubic feet of records that had reached their retention period and had been approved for disposal by the Illinois Local Records Commission. Vera transformed a complex and tedious process into one that was straightforward and manageable for all departments. Some of Vera’s colleagues say: “The record disposal process is complex and has many moving parts, Vera is a great filter between the state and the process. She makes it easy to understand and has the answers and the connection to the state to ease the way for the rest of us. She is fast and efficient and is the most pleasant and understanding person to work with.” – Kathy Cosentino “Vera took on the Records Disposal project which in any typical organization would be difficult and</p>

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	<p>encompassing. However, in an institution as large as the College of DuPage, it was on a totally different level. She coordinated and provided clear guidance but was also open and flexible when the need arose. She created a foundation that will make future Record Disposal efforts easier and more efficient for everyone involved.” – Tracey Frye “Records Management for the College is critically important work, this time complicated by years of a litigation hold. Vera took on this project with dedication and determination from the start. She made sure every person was trained, completed the various forms when required, understood the process, and most importantly, had the eligible records ready for destruction. Vera was willing to answer questions and offer guidance, providing quick responses. She exhibited a pleasant demeanor, acknowledging the extra effort involved for everyone. Vera was an iron fist in a velvet glove! I know all of us appreciate the challenges she handled so successfully. She truly embodies the best of COD!” – Les Hollowed “Vera serves the entire college very well in her Records Management Coordinator role without being afraid to get into enough detail to properly guide us through the many decisions that had to be made. She is always on top of things, including quickly getting my many Records Delegates access to the systems. Due to the reconstruction project approaching, some of my departments needed to accelerate the timeframe of records disposal and she was able to help facilitate that successfully for us. The thing that truly sets Vera apart is how she is able, even with so many different departments pulling at her with various needs, she moves us through the process in such a genuinely kind way – always keeping a sincere smile on her face. What a role model for us all!” – Melissa Doguim “Vera managed the record retention documents and demonstrated exceptional dedication from the start to the end of the project. Her commitment was evident as she conducted informative Zoom meetings clarifying the project’s details. She ensured that the process was seamless and was always available for questions and helping navigate through the process. She definitely is a COD team player.” – Barb Mitchell</p>
<p>Wendy Melgar</p>	<p>Core Values, Exceptional Performance</p> <p>I am pleased to nominate Wendy Melgar, at the McAninch Arts Center, for the "I am COD" award. Wendy has been an invaluable asset to our team for over a year, consistently demonstrating outstanding dedication and commitment to her work and the College of DuPage community. Wendy's positivity and enthusiasm are contagious, making her a pleasure to work with. She goes above and beyond her role, supporting and participating in numerous college-wide offerings. Wendy's child has even participated in COD Summer camp and takes private voice lessons, further showcasing her deep connection to our institution. One of Wendy's standout qualities is her extensive social media presence, with over 10,000 followers. She actively promotes college-wide community events, like bringing children to STEMCON, shows, and helping to increase engagement and awareness. Wendy is not only a talented graphic designer but also a dedicated team player, always willing to assist others in her department and beyond. Her impeccable attendance and adherence to deadlines are commendable, and she consistently delivers professional, beautiful, and</p>

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	<p>thoughtful work. Wendy's creativity and unique approach to design make her an invaluable asset to our team. Wendy is always pitching in to help a team member in any way she can from helping to come up with decor ideas, setting up events, helping with mailings, coming in on off hours to help with events and always with enthusiasm and a positive attitude. Outside of work, Wendy continues to promote COD and its offerings, documenting and sharing good ideas for things we could do at the MAC. Her passion for our institution is evident in all that she does, making her a deserving candidate for the "I am COD" award. In conclusion, Wendy Melgar embodies the spirit of the "I am COD" award through her dedication, professionalism, and passion for the College of DuPage. She is a shining example of what it means to be a member of our community, and I am confident she will continue to excel in her role.</p>
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