

- 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)
Addie Wong (Dean of Students Office)	Melissa Jankauski (Dean of Students Office)
Jean Giedraitis (Registration Services)	Samantha Salvato (Access and Accommodations)
James Ferro (Print Services)	Nancy Jadzak (Campus Services)
Jen Butler (Social/Behavioral Sciences & Library)	Kathryn Del Debbio (Sociology)
Kevin Willman (Multimedia Services)	Jane Vatchev (Physical Education & Sport Studies)
Lisa Erl (Procurement Services)	Daylee Dumas (Suburban Law Enforcement Academy)
Jennifer Matiassek (Research and Analytics)	Kate Szetela (Adjunct Faculty Support)
Kelsey Plefka (Athletics)	Beverly Smith (Athletics)
Tim Sweeney (Learning Technologies)	Lissi Mares (Languages: Spanish)

Individual (Nominee)	Nomination Submission
Addie Wong	<p>Criteria: Core Values, Service Excellence, Exceptional Performance</p> <p>From the moment I began in December 2024, Adeline (Addie), has been essential in helping me get acclimated to my role and COD as a whole. Addie exemplifies our values as she treats every person, whether student, staff, faculty or visitor, with respect and equity. Addie has a positive presence and is a wonderful resource for students as well as staff. There have been multiple times when a student has asked for help and Addie does anything she can to help them. She doesn't turn anyone away and is great at problem solving. I see how hard she works at everything she does, yet she still makes time to help others when they need it. Instead of running from adversity or barriers, she embraces it. I know that if I send someone Addie's way, that they will be treated with the utmost respect and receive the help they need.</p>

Individual (Nominee)	Nomination Submission
Jean Giedraitis	<p>Criteria: Core Values, Service Excellence, Exceptional Performance</p> <p>From the moment I started working with Jean, I was struck by her genuine commitment to our students and her deep-rooted compassion. Our paths first crossed when she was coordinating Medical Appeals, and I quickly realized her amazing ability to connect with students and sometimes their family members, especially during those tough moments when everything feels overwhelming. She truly goes the extra mile to make sure they feel heard and supported at every turn. Even as the management of the medical appeal process shifted to Access and Accommodations over the past two years, Jean has remained an essential part of that journey. Her steady presence has been a source of comfort and guidance, helping us navigate the changes with such grace and insight. What I admire most about Jean is her exceptional performance and innovative thinking. Whenever my team reaches out to her, she never simply says "no." Instead, she inspires us to think outside the box, often encouraging us with, "Let's explore how we can make this happen." Her unwavering dedication to supporting students is</p>

## Fall 2025 – I AM COD Individual Nominees

	truly inspiring, and it's this commitment that makes her an invaluable asset to our college. I feel fortunate to work alongside someone with such a big heart and a relentless drive to make a difference.
--	--

Individual (Nominee)	Nomination Submission
James Ferro	<p>Criteria: Core values, Service Excellence, Exceptional Performance</p> <p>James's contributions to the College of DuPage's Print Services team exemplify exceptional dedication and technical expertise. As one of the most senior members, he consistently goes above and beyond his role, demonstrating initiative and leadership without a formal title. His work in developing the Job Ticketing product catalog in PaperCut has significantly enhanced the user experience for Print Services customers and streamlined departmental operations. The Job Ticketing system, integrated with PaperCut MF, allows users to submit print orders online through a user-friendly interface. This system collects all necessary information during the ordering process via pre-configured products and options, ensuring efficiency and accuracy. James's initiative to tailor this system to the specific needs of the College of DuPage has made our version of the application a model for other institutions. His efforts in designing the interface and performing backend coding work have resulted in a seamless and efficient ordering process that benefits both customers and the department. Currently, James is working on adding over 40 popular publications, such as program guides, from Marketing and Creative Services to the Job Ticketing system. This involves coordinating with Marketing, configuring, and coding to develop the product catalog. The outcome will be a streamlined process that saves time and enhances the user experience across multiple departments. James's technical skills, initiative, and collaborative approach continue to have a lasting impact on the College of DuPage's Print Services department and others, setting a high standard for excellence and innovation.</p>

Individual (Nominee)	Nomination Submission
Jen Butler	<p>Criteria: Exceptional Performance</p> <p>I met Jen in the spring of 2023 when I had questions about my upcoming schedule. She was warm, friendly, and incredibly helpful. It was immediately clear that she takes great pride in her work and genuinely cares for those she collaborates with. Jen knew my name and the usual class I taught, and after our conversation, we agreed that I could teach a variety of courses. Thanks to her support, I have expanded my teaching abilities. I have shared my positive experiences with Jen with my fellow colleagues, and they all echo my sentiments about her helpfulness and dedication to the faculty at COD. I am confident that the College of DuPage is a better institution because of Jen.</p>

Individual (Nominee)	Nomination Submission
Kevin Willman	<p>Criteria: Core Values, Service Excellence</p> <p>Kevin Willman has just finished working on our sixth induction ceremony of the Athletic Hall of Fame at COD on June 7th. Our celebration of the inductees into the hall of fame included a wonderful video that Kevin Willman created using archived photos, researched details of achievements and an interview with someone introducing the inductee. So Kevin created six videos, one for each inductees - these videos are the highlight of the nights celebration which this year was attended by almost 200 people from the college and community. Kevin Willman also works with his staff to video tape the entire evening celebration and coordinates the playing of the individual videos to make the event spectacular. Mr. Willman has been creating six of these videos every year for our Athletic Hall of Fame since 2019. Kevin is a true professional</p>

## Fall 2025 – I AM COD Individual Nominees

	who knows his craft of multimedia and uses his talents to better the college in many events throughout the year. He works above and beyond his job, wanting to create the very best to represent COD. Kevin displays expertise in his area, great communication with those around him, and a willingness to strive to perfection reflecting the college's mission. The College of DuPage is lucky to have such a talented, creative multimedia coordinator. In Kevin's free time he volunteers with former servicemen and women in honor flights and documenting their talent stories of service. Kevin Willman is so deserving of this award!
--	--

Individual (Nominee)	Nomination Submission
Lisa Erl	<p>Criteria: Service Excellence, Exceptional Performance</p> <p>In February I was securing a venue for SLEA graduation. As a newer employee this seemed like a big task. I reached out to Lisa Erl, as I had no idea on where to begin. She demonstrated service excellence and exceptional performance in more ways than one. She was quick to respond to emails, called me and explained each step needed, offered to zoom to show how to work in contract management. Not only that but she was friendly, kind, understanding, and she always expressed that she was happy to help. I was able to get through the hurdle of unknowns when it came to my assigned task. The last thing that really stuck out to me was when I expressed my concern with understanding contracts and blanket orders in the future she stated "WE will work on that when we get there". Her expression of "we" really demonstrated her excellence and exceptional performance. As a newer College of Dupage employee, Lisa Erl, reflects positively on College of Dupage. She set the tone positively for how great it is to work at College of DuPage!</p>

Individual (Nominee)	Nomination Submission
Jennifer Matiassek	<p>Criteria: Core Values, Service Excellence, Exceptional Performance</p> <p>Jennifer has played a vital role in advancing the mission of our office through her expertise in research, analysis, and team leadership. Her contributions have been instrumental in helping us measure the impact of our initiatives so we can better serve our adjunct faculty—and ultimately, our students. One of Jennifer's standout qualities is her skill in designing surveys and guiding statistical analysis. Her support was invaluable during a recent study I conducted on the effects of leadership styles on adjunct faculty well-being. Jennifer helped design the survey instrument and interpret the data, which led to actionable insights. As a result of this work, we implemented improvements in our office and created the Adjunct Faculty Resource Guide, which clearly outlines key contacts and policies for both new and current adjunct faculty. Jennifer is currently leading a team effort to evaluate faculty engagement with the 4 Connections, a program we've run for five years that encourages faculty to build meaningful, student-centered relationships. Her leadership and dedication to this work ensure that we continue to refine and enhance this important initiative. She consistently brings thoughtful, effective solutions to the table. When I was preparing a leadership styles assessment for a national presentation, Jennifer recommended a creative and user-friendly approach—replacing a scored quiz with descriptive summaries of each leadership style. This shift made the presentation more accessible and engaging for participants, and it was a great success. Beyond her technical expertise, Jennifer is widely respected across the College for her professionalism, integrity, and collaborative spirit. Her thoughtful leadership fosters an environment where others feel comfortable sharing honest feedback, which has greatly enriched the College's efforts to review and improve internal policies and procedures. Jennifer's commitment to service, her reliability, and her ability to turn complex</p>

## Fall 2025 – I AM COD Individual Nominees

	ideas into meaningful action make her an outstanding nominee for this award. She exemplifies the spirit of service and is highly deserving of recognition.
--	--

Individual (Nominee)	Nomination Submission
Kelsey Plefka	<p>Criteria: Service Excellence, Exceptional Performance</p> <p>Kelsey is the Assistant Director of Athletics for Student Eligibility and Services. Kelsey meets with the Athletic teams to make sure all the Eligibility paperwork is complete. Kelsey always has her door open for Student Athletes. She goes over and beyond for the Student Athletes. Kelsey is instrumental for the Chappy Awards for the Student Athletes at the end of the year. The Chappy Awards is a celebration for the all Student Athletes at the end of the year.</p>

Individual (Nominee)	Nomination Submission
Tim Sweeney	<p>Criteria: Core Values, Service Excellence, Exceptional Performance</p> <p>I am pleased to nominate Timothy Sweeney for the I AM COD AWARD in recognition of his exceptional service to others, his empathy and compassion, and his outstanding performance and talent as an instructional technologist. Recently, I wrote two OER textbooks for students studying Spanish at the College. I aimed for my books to be technologically advanced and to incorporate AI within the publishing platform, Pressbooks. As I was new to OER and Pressbooks, I often required assistance during the writing process and the eventual integration of my books into Blackboard. That's when Tim stepped in. For every inquiry I had regarding OER, Pressbooks, or Blackboard, Tim consistently provided timely and high-quality feedback and support. What makes Tim truly special is that he goes the extra mile; not only does he share the necessary steps, but he also records videos to ensure the assistance is user-friendly and easy to follow. This dedication requires time, effort, and a genuine passion for helping others, qualities I believe are essential to highlight Tim. Tim is also a kind and compassionate individual. He recognized the urgency of completing my OER books and integrating them into Blackboard before the start of the semester. Tim was empathetic to my needs, understanding that these OER books would greatly benefit the students at College of DuPage and significantly reduce their expenses. He carved out time in his extremely busy schedule to assist me, meeting with me on Zoom several times—even while he was unwell and caring for his sick child. Additionally, Tim followed up after our meetings to ensure that the solutions he provided were effective. That is true dedication. Tim is a very thorough, generous, and devoted instructional technologist and colleague, and I feel honored to work alongside him. Lastly, Tim's knowledge, expertise, and performance in his field are truly remarkable. He addressed all my technological questions quite quickly because he was so knowledgeable in learning technologies. However, some of my questions were quite challenging due to the new AI and Blackboard integration components we were both navigating. Tim made it his mission to find the solutions I needed, demonstrating them with extra guidance and patience. For instance, I struggled with a new Pressbooks feature that tracks students' homework submissions in Blackboard. To better understand the student experience, Tim enrolled in my course as a student, allowing him to gain insights that helped us both implement the feature seamlessly. Thanks to Tim's expertise and efforts, my students were able to receive immediate feedback on their homework progress throughout the term, empowering them to take charge of their learning. College of DuPage is so fortunate to have such a talented, dedicated, passionate, and giving instructional technologist like Timothy Sweeney. He supports faculty when they need it most, guiding and equipping them with the knowledge required to build their confidence in learning technologies. His work ethic and performance are exceptional. I sincerely hope you select Tim for the I AM COD AWARD, as his outstanding service and expertise enable our students and faculty at the College to thrive with learning technologies.</p>

- Section 1: Items to Note and Criteria for Team Award
- Section 2: List of Team Nominees
- Section 3: Nomination Submissions

# Section 1: Items to Note and Criteria for Team Award

## Award Amounts

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

## Criteria for I Am COD Team Award

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



## Section 2: List of Team Nominees

Team (Nominee)	Team Members		Nominator(s)	
Adjunct Faculty Support	Kate Szetela Sonia Watson	David Deeds Danielle Berry-Herrera	Julie Adams Sarah Born (Nursing)	
Business and Applied Technology Team	Sue Cabay Bev Carlson Beth Holmwood Dan Jacobson Linda Jonynas	Bridget McFarland Channing Payne Gabriel Gonzalez Monica Wong	Business & Applied Technology Chairs	
			David Ellis Maureen McBeth Joe Aranki Robert Clark Brian Clement Felix Davis Casey Emerich	Tom Lanagan Marcelina Rakestraw Stephen Santello Christopher Sikora Shannon Toler Andreas Vrettos Annie Knight
Curriculum & Centralized Scheduling	Lisa Foglia Nancy Soukup		Jim Mahannah (Curriculum & Centralized Scheduling)	
ASL Interpreters	Amy Rainville Martha Harris		Tim Arroyo (Photography)	
Dual Credit	Lisa Haegele Kris Garay Jessica Sosnowski Sarah Manuel		Christine Jandak (Advising)	
Inn at the Water's Edge Team	Dylan Morici Princess Siafa Pamela Trost Megan Eskilson	Ashley Gamez  Siddarth Kuma	Mary Beth Leone (Hospitality)	
Nursing and Health Sciences Team	Pam Dinucci Jessica Lang Colleen Gonzalez Misty Fowler Erin Krause	Jarryl Anderson Dawn Tiangco Tandra Rutledge Kelly Diederich	Anna Campbell (Nursing & Health Sciences)	
CRSS Success Program Team	Sheila Wagner Stephanie Poland Maki Jursinic Nancy Ortiz-Romero	Bruce Sewick Andrea Polites Leslie Paprocki	Jason Florin (Human Services)	
Veterans Services and Finance Collaboration Team	Kristen Bruhnke Paul Annarella	Diana Christopher Juanita Gutierrez	Sheri Gross (Veteran Services) Michelle Resnick (Finance)	

## Section 3: Nomination Submissions

When was the team formed and/or what was/is the main purpose of this team? Describe the project/process/initiative that this team collaborated on. Describe the impact on students/employees/community.

Team	Nomination Submission Text
Adjunct Faculty Support	<p>Criteria: Service Excellence</p> <p>On behalf of the faculty representing the ACEN Taskforce, we want to extend our deepest appreciation for your incredible collaboration and dedication in supporting our accreditation efforts. Your willingness to work alongside us to ensure compliance with accreditation standards, while also enhancing the professional development of our adjunct faculty, has been truly invaluable. The outstanding professional development modules you have helped create for our adjunct faculty teaching pre-licensure nursing students are outstanding. The additional resources not only reflect a commitment to excellence in nursing education but also demonstrate a deep understanding of the unique challenges and opportunities in higher education. What has been most inspiring throughout this process is the incredible spirit of teamwork and shared vision. Your office has been a vital partner in aligning our faculty development for nursing adjuncts with accreditation goals, ensuring that we meet and exceed the standards. The collaboration between our teams exemplifies the best of interdisciplinary efforts, and we are grateful for your insights, expertise, and support. We recognize and deeply appreciate the time, effort, and excellence you have invested in this project. It has been a privilege to collaborate with such a talented and committed team.</p>

Team	Nomination Submission Text
Business and Applied Technology Team	<p>Criteria: Core Values, Service Excellence, Exceptional Performance</p> <p>As faculty chairs in Business and Applied Technology, we are honored to nominate the outstanding BTEC support team for this year's I AM COD award. Their daily contributions reflect the highest standards in all three award categories—core values, service excellence, and exceptional performance. The BTEC team exemplifies our college's core values of integrity, honesty, respect, responsibility, and equity in everything they do. They demonstrate a deep commitment to the college's mission by placing student success and community impact at the forefront of their work. They are reliable, beyond measure. As chairs, we know we can count on them to ensure schedules are finalized and submitted, classes are staffed, materials are available, contracts are maintained, information is promptly communicated, and events are exceptionally well-organized. They approach every task and interaction with integrity, professionalism, and a collaborative mindset, whether with students, faculty, external partners, or fellow staff members. This team is openly enthusiastic about the programs we offer, and that enthusiasm carries over to students, potential students, and the community at-large. They internalize and exude COD's shared values, even under the most challenging circumstances. Their service excellence is unmatched. This team is often the first line of communication for students—providing timely updates about class changes, helping students adjust schedules, and facilitating connections to essential campus resources like the Office of Student Records or the Learning Commons. They serve as a vital liaison between students and adjunct faculty, ensuring that communication is clear and issues are resolved efficiently. They listen to and support students. If a student is feeling lost in the system, our support team will stay with that student until they have found someone to resolve their issue. Their sincere, empathetic, and student-centered approach enhances the public image of our division and of the college as a whole. Further, their institutional knowledge, experience, and skills are vital to onboarding and supporting new faculty. If a student, faculty member, or co-worker needs something, we see</p>

## Fall 2025 – I AM COD Team Nominees

	<p>our support team stay late, come in early, travel across campus, and run out to the store. Whether assisting with evening and weekend outreach events to local K-12 schools or managing behind-the-scenes operations, they consistently go above and beyond. The BTEC team's exceptional performance stems from their innovative mindset, collaborative approach, and unwavering drive for excellence. They are instrumental in strategic enrollment management—analyzing enrollment trends, course formats, and scheduling needs with precision to ensure our programs align with student demand. They also serve as key points of contact with external vendors and contractors, maintaining strong relationships and ensuring high-quality instructional materials and platforms are in place. They volunteer for special projects, mentor peers, and lead by example in every facet of their work. Their proactive problem-solving and collaborative spirit have become essential to the seamless functioning of our division. Our dynamic programs would simply not operate at the level they do without the extraordinary skill, dedication, and professionalism of this team. They are not just a support function—they are the foundation of our operational excellence. We submit this nomination with unwavering support and confidence that the BTEC support team exemplifies the very best of the College of DuPage.</p>
--	---

Team	Nomination Submission Text
Curriculum & Centralized Scheduling	<p>Criteria: Core Values, Service Excellence, Exceptional Performance</p> <p>Since the beginning of 2025, Lisa and Nancy have demonstrated exceptional dedication and leadership within the Centralized Scheduling Office (CSO) during a time of significant transition. Amid retirements, internal role changes within COD, turnover, and the onboarding of new staff, they have remained steadfast in their commitment to both COD and the CSO. At the start of the year, Lisa and Nancy were the only two members of the CSO team. Despite the challenges this presented, they consistently performed their responsibilities at a high level while also stepping into supervisory roles type duties during a leadership vacancy. Their proactive approach ensured that operations continued smoothly, with no detail overlooked. In addition, both Nancy &amp; Lisa assisted AVP Nieto in fulfilling critical operational tasks. In mid-March, they welcomed three new team members over the course of just three weeks. Lisa and Nancy embraced their new colleagues with warmth and patience, providing mentorship and hands-on guidance through the complexities of CSO functions, all while maintaining excellence in their own roles. Their leadership during this critical time was instrumental in creating a collaborative, supportive, and high-performing team environment. In every respect, Lisa and Nancy have been vital to the continued success of the Centralized Scheduling Office.</p>

Team	Nomination Submission Text
ASL Interpreters	Criteria: Core Values, Service Excellence, Exceptional Performance

## Fall 2025 – I AM COD Team Nominees

	<p>Amy and Martha serve as ASL interpreters for our deaf students at the College of DuPage, and specifically worked with one student in one of my classes this past spring 2025 semester. I have had the privilege of working alongside these two exceptional professionals, and observed how they compliment each other to support this student. Their dedication, compassion, and skill continually elevate the educational experience for our student. Through a collaborative approach, tireless commitment, and unwavering support, they exemplify the highest standards of service and inclusion. Often working quietly behind the scenes so as not to disrupt the classroom, Amy and Martha can easily go unnoticed and underappreciated. However, their presence made an immeasurable impact in my class this past spring semester. It was an absolute pleasure having them join us to support our deaf student. They collaborate flawlessly and genuinely care about this student's success. Amy and Martha bring a warm, lighthearted energy that makes the environment feel welcoming and positive, all while maintaining the utmost professionalism and respect for our space. I am grateful for their dedication and the thoughtful effort they invest in engaging with the course material. By deeply understanding our curriculum, they can interpret it in a more meaningful and accurate way—an effort that has made a significant difference in our student's learning experience. Over the course of the semester, I witnessed a remarkable shift in our deaf student's engagement. He has become more involved—not only in his own work but within the Photography department as a whole. Observing his interactions with Amy and Martha, I sincerely believe their supportive and respectful presence has played a major role in this positive change. Their contributions to their students' success have been invaluable. It is with great enthusiasm that I respectfully nominate Amy Rainville and Martha Harris for this Award.</p>
--	---

Team	Nomination Submission Text
Dual Credit Team	<p>Criteria: Exceptional Performance</p> <p>The Dual Credit team is nothing short of amazing. They have a department of 4- yes 4 who enrolls thousands of DC students every year. They work tirelessly to students, parents, high schools, dual credits faculty, and our COD faculty to ensure that every class is meeting all of the DC standards. There is so much work that goes behind the scenes it is truly amazing that these 4 women are able to do their jobs as accurately, with such attention to detail as well as patience while students and DC faculty are navigating COD systems. This team holds events for students and parents, attends every open house, and provide training and information sessions to the COD community as a whole. These women are amazing! DC numbers have grown so much over the past year that they had well over a 100% increase in the amount of students. This data is counted in our overall enrollment data and their work should be celebrated by COD!!</p>

Team	Nomination Submission Text
Inn at the Water's Edge Team	Criteria: Service Excellence

## Fall 2025 – I AM COD Team Nominees

	<p>The team at the Inn at Water's Edge consistently goes above and beyond for not only the guests who stay on campus, but also the students and staff in the CHC Building. Have a question? Get an answer from the Inn. Need something, get it from the Inn. Judge a food competition, the Inn will help! They ALWAYS say YES! They work 24-7-- and it still is always YES! A couple of facts that help back up the quality of this team:</p> <p>*Hundreds and hundreds of Interns have trained at the Inn *13 consecutive years as a Tripadvisor Certificate of Excellence winner 🏆</p> <p>*Ranked as the #1 hotel in DuPage County by travelers 🏆 *Recognized as the #6 hotel in all of Illinois! I am always confident, when our students enroll in the internship program at the Inn, the Inn staff will take good care of them-- train them, model amazing customer service, teach them all they need to know about the hotel industry-- give them a GREAT start to their careers. On TripAdvisor, our guests always say "a hidden gem", and "the only thing they don't do is tuck you in at night" "clean, meticulous room" and so much more! A Recent Guest Review: "This is a training hotel for the College of DuPage's Hospitality Program. The hotel itself is very classy, it's a very nice hotel worth twice as much as they charge. This is hands down the best deal in the Western 'burbs, the service is phenomenal because the student workers are closely supervised by obviously well qualified instructors. This place compares favorably with Hiltons, and in fact, my recent stay here was far better than my last three Hilton stays. Strange thing happened, my friend was talking about how she would have liked toast with breakfast, you order it the night before and they bring it to the lounge at the end of the hall, it's very comfortable. There aren't a lot of choices, it's pretty healthy, go with the oatmeal. But anyway, she was saying she wanted toast, and the next day, she got toast. She didn't ask anyone, she only told me. We needed a corkscrew, it was one of those academic conferences (COD is a great place for smaller conferences) and again, I didn't mention this to anyone but that night there was a corkscrew in my room. Do they employ psychics? The views are great, it's right on campus if you have any business here, parking is convenient and safe, this is just an amazing place. And, free local newspaper in the morning!" Hospitality is all about the meeting the needs of those we serve, The inn at Water's Edge does this EVERYDAY at COD! Thank you for your consideration!</p>
--	--

Team	Nomination Submission Text

Team	Nomination Submission Text
Nursing & Health Sciences Team	<p>Criteria: Core Values, Service Excellence, Exceptional Performance</p> <p>I would like to nominate the NHS Support Team for the "I am COD Award". The NHS Support Team is tasked with the support of 30 NHS programs. The team works tirelessly ensuring faculty, students, and staff have everything they need to be successful. The NHS team has experienced a great deal of turnover including multiple administrative and staffing changes. Throughout these changes, the NHS team committed to working together and supporting each other through the turbulence, while keeping student success at the center of everything they do. The team supports each other through enhanced communication, training, mentoring, and relationship building. Everyone is "all in" and is committed to a positive, team-based culture that makes this an incredibly effective team. The team accomplished amazing projects this year, including the revision of all NHS Policies and Procedures and the development of the first comprehensive NHS Academic Plan. I am honored to work with this group, and look forward to watching everything they will accomplish in the future.</p>

## Fall 2025 – I AM COD Team Nominees

Team	Nomination Submission Text
CRSS Success Program Team	<p>Criteria: Service Excellence, Exceptional Performance</p> <p>This team collectively represents the CRSS Success Program, a state-funded grant now in its third year. The team has worked with over 150 students so far, helping them to address any potential barriers to academic and career success on their way to becoming state-certified peer support specialists in the field of mental health and addiction recovery. This group demonstrates extraordinary cooperation and dedication to student success. They meet regularly, address any concerns, and share their knowledge and experience to make the program work. When changes are needed to program policies, the group communicates and finds a quick and effective solution. The Illinois Department of Human Services has recognized the College as the gold standard in this field due to their tireless efforts and has renewed the grant award through fiscal year 2027. There are many examples of their work, including assistance with locate textbooks, identifying transportation alternatives, supporting childcare needs, working with students to locate internship sites, creating study groups to prepare for the state exam, and helping students find employment after graduation. Being able to witness the team's efforts firsthand has been one of the great privileges of my professional career.</p>

Team	Nomination Submission Text
Veterans Services and Finance Collaboration Team	<p>Criteria: Core Values, Service Excellence, Exceptional Performance</p> <p>The collaborative efforts of Kristen, Paul, Juanita and Diana exemplify the highest standards of service excellence and student-centered support. This cross-departmental team consistently works together to ensure that our military-connected students receive prompt, accurate, and compassionate assistance - often anticipating needs before they arise. Their coordination not only streamlines complex financial and enrollment processes, but also removes barriers that could otherwise delay or deter student success. Whether guiding a veteran through benefits certification or problem-solving an issue, this team demonstrates integrity, respect, and equity in every interaction, personifying the College's mission and values. In moments of high stress and urgency, especially at the start of terms or during policy changes, this team remains composed, courteous, and student-focused. They regularly suggest process improvements and develop innovative solutions to recurring challenges, such as automating communication flows between departments to reduce errors and enhance turnaround time. Their daily work reflects a deep sense of responsibility to serve our military-connected students with dignity and care. By mentoring peers, modeling excellence, and championing COD's values both within and beyond the college, they not only elevate their departments but also help make the College as a place where every student can thrive.</p>