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Durbin, Duckworth, Casten Announce \$4 Million In Federal Funding For College Of DuPage

CHICAGO – U.S. Senate Democratic Whip Dick Durbin (D-IL), U.S. Senator Tammy Duckworth (D-IL), and U.S. Representative Sean Casten (D-IL-06) today announced \$4,000,000 in federal funding through the U.S. Department of Education for College of DuPage. This grant comes from the Department of Education’s Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education Special Projects, which provides grants to institutions of higher education to support innovative projects concerning one or more areas of national need identified by the Secretary of Education.

College of DuPage will use the \$4 million federal grant to develop and expand short-term, for-credit aviation and Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) workforce certificates. Over the next four years, College of DuPage will launch new employer-validated programs and enhance program resources and technology. These efforts are designed to significantly increase the College’s aviation workforce output, increase certificate and degree completion, and create a scalable model for preparing students – including adult leaders, veterans, and dual credit high school students – for high-skilled, high-wage careers in aviation and UAS.

“One of the best things we can do for the next generation is fortify job training and employment opportunities,” said Durbin. **“Today’s announced funding for College of DuPage will open doors for students and strengthen our workforce here in Illinois. It also demonstrates the importance of the Department of Education as the Trump Administration continues its attempts to dismantle the agency. Senator Duckworth, Representative Casten, and I will always work to ensure Illinois students have access to resources that put them on a path towards success.”**

“Every student deserves the opportunity to reach their full potential, which is why I’m proud to see this investment support the College of DuPage,” said Duckworth. **“While this funding will reach our state this time around, it’s cruel that Donald Trump’s cuts to federal services have jeopardized programs that prepare the next generation—hurting the very middle-class families he swore to protect, all while enriching his billionaire buddies. That’s why I will continue doing everything I can at the federal level, alongside Senator Durbin, to**

safeguard these investments and help ensure every student across our state has the chance to succeed, both inside and outside the classroom.”

“College of DuPage serves more than 26,000 students and offers over 170 programs of study. This grant will strengthen academic programming and help students meet the evolving needs of the workforce. I’m happy to see this grant awarded to such a deserving institution,” said Casten.

“This transformative grant from the U.S. Department of Education allows College of DuPage to significantly expand our aviation and drone technology programs, addressing critical workforce shortages in these high-demand fields. By investing in advanced simulation equipment, personnel, and employer-aligned short-term certificates, we are creating accessible pathways to high-wage careers while strengthening the region’s aviation talent pipeline,” said College of DuPage President Dr. Muddassir Siddiqi.