

Faculty Senate Resolution

RE: Resolution: Blue Line Imagery on Campus

Date: October 5, 2023

WHEREAS the [mission of College of DuPage](#) is to be a center for excellence in teaching, learning, and cultural experiences, valuing diversity and equity, and seeking to reflect and meet the educational needs of the residents of our large multicultural district;

WHEREAS the [College's institutional philosophy](#) recognizes “the importance of embracing individual differences and cultures,” and affirms the College’s “role as a catalyst for promoting dialogue and tolerance on issues supporting the common good”;

WHEREAS the blue line imagery displayed in the Robert J. Miller Homeland Security Education Center (H.E.C.) carries multiple meanings for various groups, including, for some, support for police officers, the imagery has also been used by white supremacists and at the US Capitol insurrection;

WHEREAS the phrase the “thin blue line” became popularized in the 1920s when then New York police commissioner Richard Enright used it to fight critics of policing practices and to gain public favor;

WHEREAS in the 1950s then Los Angeles police chief William H. Parker used the phrase to build support for the L.A.P.D., depicting the police as protecting society from communists, progressive politicians, minorities, and anyone else opposed to his beliefs;

WHEREAS under Parker’s leadership, the “thin blue line” became a symbol of unchecked authority, brutality towards minority communities, a closing of police ranks, and was a barrier to addressing deep-seated issues within the L.A.P.D. and policing in minority communities across the U.S.;

WHEREAS the “thin blue line” has come to represent a line that police officers must not cross, even to do the right thing, to protect unity among police officers, thereby silencing dissent and discouraging the reporting of abuses of power;

WHEREAS this sentiment discouraging dissent is conveyed on blue line imagery for graduating classes of recruits in the H.E.C., with lines such as “blue lines don’t break” and “blue line strong”;

WHEREAS many agencies and communities in Illinois and across the country view blue line imagery as divisive, unproductive, and contributing to the public’s distrust of the police, and have removed blue line stickers and patches from police vehicles and uniforms;

WHEREAS the community’s concerns, perceptions, and fears must outweigh the shared professional public investments in a symbol that separates and alienates our public servants from those they have promised to serve without prejudice or favor;

WHEREAS the College must not promote nor advance a culture of us against them, but instead us with them;

WHEREAS Board policy states, “The College will not tolerate discrimination or harassment of any kind. No Student, Employee, Trustee, or visitor will discriminate against or harass a Student, Employee or

visitor on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, or any other unlawful basis”;

WHEREAS the display of blue line imagery on campus creates a hostile environment prohibited by College policy, making students, faculty, and staff feel that some campus buildings belong not to all members of the College community, but to the police officers and recruits in the Suburban Law Enforcement Academy (SLEA), as indicated by a large wooden sign mounted in the H.E.C. that states “THIS IS OUR HOUSE,” with a blue line underneath the words;

WHEREAS in a nation that has struggled with issues of inequality, many students do not have adequate knowledge of the history and policies that contributed to these inequities, the College has a responsibility and opportunity to help build equity and justice;

RESOLUTION:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Faculty Senate resolutely rejects the display of blue line imagery on campus.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Senate calls for the immediate removal of blue line imagery from all public spaces at all College facilities.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the Senate calls for investigation into the approval of the mounting of blue line imagery to the walls in the Homeland Security building.