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U.S. Rep. Danny K. Davis Unveils $1 Million Grant to CSU Program to Focus on Decline of African-American Males in Higher Education

CHICAGO (November 14, 2008) U.S. Rep. Danny K. Davis and Chicago State University officials on Thursday publicly unveiled a $1,084,211, two-year grant from the U.S. Department of Education to attract and retain African-American males in higher education. The rollout was part of a public policy forum, State of the State: Higher Education and the African-American Male, held in Chicago State University's Academic Library. Davis sees the initiative as part of a greater need for a comprehensive approach for black males to become involved in community and social life.

"Inner-city urban America is tough 'dog eat dog', said Davis. "The notion of survival is so great, almost anything is justifiable. Many African-American males have not seen an adult male read a book or a newspaper. There are no male teachers in elementary schools. There is no Boy Scouts without Boy Scout leaders. There is no Little League without coaches.

The grant awarded to CSU is through the U.S. Department of Education Predominantly Black Institutions Program. It will fund activities that will strengthen the university's ability to enhance the educational outcomes of African-American males. Leading the program at Chicago State University is Dr. Anitra J. Ward, associate provost for academic affairs. She described the project's goals as:

* Increasing the number of African-American males in the college-bound educational pipeline at Chicago State University;

* Creating a university setting where African-American males can flourish with encouragement, develop and cultivate positive expectations, and be guided and retained toward timely degree completion; and

* Conducting research and assessment activities to identify risk factors, barriers, and intervention measures that can negatively affect Black males in higher education and disseminate best practices.

Dr. Ward said the number of Black males incarcerated now exceeds those in college, and large percentages of that population are not prepared for college and are not pursing higher education in any form. She said the numbers for African-American males in urban areas are even worse. The grant will fund the establishment of the African-American Male Resource Center on the CSU campus, and a national conference in the spring.