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LC Industries Foundation announces Durham Tech grant for visually impaired students

(Durham, NC) – LC Industries Foundation has announced a grant of $100,000 to fund resources for visually impaired students at Durham Technical Community College.

The funding will help Durham Tech expand and improve the resources available for visually impaired students by ensuring accessibility of the college’s web presence, online learning tools, and other digital assets. Durham Tech also will use the grant money to purchase and install dedicated accessibility hardware, software, and supplies across campuses in Durham and Orange counties, and improve the quality of support services by offering accessibility-related tools and professional development to equip faculty and staff.

“Durham Tech aspires to be a first choice for our students and our community. With this gift, we have the opportunity to be a first choice institution for students with visual impairments. We are grateful to have LC Industries Foundation as an outstanding partner in this endeavor,” said Dr. Bill Ingram, president of Durham Tech.

“We are proud to partner with Durham Tech in this endeavor,” LCI President Bill Hudson said. “We look forward to seeing these improvements lead to better opportunities for education, training, and development of job-related skills for the blind.”

Dynamic technology and its growing integration in classrooms make improved support for learners with visual impairments crucial. Durham Tech offers approximately 850 curriculum course sections annually, nearly 30 percent of which are provided as online-only or hybrid offerings. There is often high demand for these course sections from the diverse student population, as many students work or have families in addition to attending school. Furthermore, instructors for some traditional seated courses are moving toward increased use of technology by altering the presentation of learning modules — providing video lectures for home viewing and reserving class time for hands-on group activities and labs.
LC Industries Foundation has been a previous benefactor to the college. In 2004, the LC Industries Foundation made a generous donation of $100,000 to the Durham Tech Foundation. Of this gift, $40,000 was used to purchase vital basic tools to assist visually impaired students, including: a laptop equipped with assistive technology for loan to students; closed circuit enlargers; CD players for recordings for the blind; an institutional membership for recordings for the blind; assistive listening systems; disability management software; and incentives for volunteer tutors, interpreters, and note takers. The remaining $60,000 was used to create an endowed scholarship that has helped to keep the cost of higher education affordable for students as they pursue a credential at Durham Tech.