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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CVTC saves students \$1 million in textbook costs

College's affordable learning program credited for savings

EAU CLAIRE – Chippewa Valley Technical College saved students more than \$1 million in textbook costs in the 2020-21 school year, thanks to the school's recently launched affordable Learning program.

Many instructors and courses have switched to using free textbooks called open educational resources, or OER, instead of traditional, commercially-published textbooks that are often high cost. Last school year, more than 4,000 CVTC students experienced at least one course with no textbook cost for an average student savings of approximately \$246.

"We know that parts of Eau Claire and Chippewa counties are experiencing disproportionately higher poverty rates than the rest of Wisconsin. Using OER instead of high-cost textbooks has been a big win for our students who are often hit hardest," said Vince Mussehl, director of library services and executive member of Community for Open Wisconsin. "We have had such dedicated faculty from many different programs make the switch to OER, including courses in general education, business, trades and nursing."

CVTC leads the use of OER in Wisconsin. One particular project, Open RN, was funded by a \$2.5 million grant from the Department of Education. The Open RN project is creating five free OER nursing textbooks with an expected annual savings of \$1.5 million for Wisconsin Technical College students.

In addition to cost savings, OER also promotes student equity and increases students' overall success related to graduation.

"We saw student success rates improve in nursing courses using Open RN textbooks throughout the state last year despite the effects of the COVID pandemic on in-person classes," said Kim Ernstmeyer, director of the Open RN grant project. "Free Open RN textbooks are developed by Wisconsin Technical System nursing faculty based on what students need to know in the classroom and on the first day of their nursing career. We are thrilled to see the impact that OER is making for Wisconsin nursing students."

CVTC hopes to see these trends in cost savings and student success continue. More information about CVTC's Affordable Learning program can be found at www.cvtc.edu/pay-for-college/affordable-learning-resources.

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Director of Human Resources, Chippewa Valley Technical College, 620 W. Clairemont Ave. Eau Claire, WI 54701

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ABOUT [CVTC](#): With 119 programs, 38 certificates and 13 apprenticeships offered online and on-campus, Chippewa Valley Technical College delivers innovative, applied and flexible education that supports a diverse community of learners, improves the lives of students and adds value to our communities. CVTC [programs](#) are designed with the input of employers throughout the CVTC district to prepare graduates for today's jobs with 92 percent employed within six months of graduation and associate degree graduates earning an average annual salary of \$48,175.

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