

Tuesday, February 19, 2019

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CVTC Wins Grant to Develop Nursing Open Textbooks ***Partnership with other technical colleges will benefit nursing students statewide***

Eau Claire, WI – Thousands of nursing students throughout Wisconsin will be able to save hundreds of dollars on textbooks and develop skills through the use of virtual reality as a result of a grant awarded to Chippewa Valley Technical College.

The U.S. Department of Education awarded the \$2.5 million grant to CVTC as the lead institution on an open textbook pilot project in which all 16 Wisconsin technical colleges will take part. CVTC partnered with Gateway, Northeast and Madison Area technical colleges in developing the proposal, with all playing major roles.

Over the four-year grant period, faculty from the four partnering technical colleges will create and review open educational resources, including open textbooks, for WTCS nursing programs across the state. The grant will help alleviate rising textbook costs, which can be a barrier to student success. The materials developed will eliminate the need for students to purchase textbooks for certain courses.

An estimated 6,100 students will benefit from reduced textbook costs in hundreds of nursing course sections statewide, with an average cost savings of almost \$700 per student. On average, WTCS students spend over \$1,300 on textbooks throughout a two-year associate degree program.

“Not only will students see a financial benefit as a result of this grant, they will benefit from an educational perspective as well,” said Amy Olson, CVTC associate dean of nursing. “This will be innovative and best-practices education, designed and reviewed by faculty throughout the state. It will be a real collaborative effort and help strengthen our curriculum.”

The four partnering institutions will implement the textbooks first and provide easy access to all materials for broader use by other educational institutions.

In addition, the grant will lead to the development of 25 virtual reality scenarios that create a personalized experience for students as they practice the skills and abilities needed as nursing professionals. The four partnering colleges will purchase equipment and develop virtual reality centers.

“This is a huge win not only for Wisconsin technical colleges, but also for students from all over the country who may benefit from the work we will be doing for this grant. Wisconsin nursing students

alone will be able to save over \$4 million, but it's only the beginning," said Vince Mussehl, CVTC's director of library services and executive officer of Wisconsin's open education organization, Community for Open Wisconsin.

"CVTC is proud to take the lead in this grant project, which will benefit thousands of nursing students for years to come," said CVTC President Bruce Barker. "By working together with our partnering technical colleges, we can enhance the educational experiences and lower the costs for our nursing students. This will be an exciting project for our faculty, who will work closely with their colleagues at the other colleges in developing these new tools for student success."

With over 95 programs and both online and on-campus classes, Chippewa Valley Technical College delivers superior, progressive technical education which improves the lives of students, meets the workforce needs of the region, and strengthens the community. CVTC programs are designed with input of business and industry to prepare graduates for today's jobs, with 93 percent employed within six months of graduation and associate degree graduates earning an average annual salary of \$44,000.

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Director of Human Resources
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