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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CVTC Honors Top Educators

Awards presented for excellence, new faculty recognitions

Eau Claire, WI – Strong reputations for connecting with students have earned two Chippewa Valley Technical College teachers the school’s top award for educators.

Information Technology-Software Developer instructor Jon Cooley and English Language Learner instructor Juli Baker were presented with the John Frank Excellence in Education Award Aug. 22. In addition, Physical Therapy Assistant instructor Krissa Reeves was presented with the Domer Award for new faculty.

“For the teacher, mastering the information that is to be taught is very important, but not enough on its own,” said Cooley, who has been an instructor at CVTC since 1999. “The teacher must also be passionate about connecting with the learner at the level they are at, caring about their personal well-being as well as their mastering of the course material.”

Cooley’s students have noticed his commitment to establishing that connection with them. Joe Rupslauskas, a student in Cooley’s class who left a career as a K-12 social studies teacher, said he believes making that personal connection is the most important thing teachers do. “Jon truly connects with his students in a way that supersedes the standard student-teacher relationship, in a professional manner,” he wrote in a letter supporting Cooley’s nomination for the award. “He is fun, witty, themes his software classes with interesting lessons, and always treats all students with respect and dignity.”

“Jon is passionate about student success, student preparedness in the job market and staying current and relevant with our curriculum in the program,” said Dr. Jeff Sullivan, dean of manufacturing, engineering and information technology at CVTC.

As an English Language Learner instructor, Baker works to improve the English language abilities of a class of students from different cultures, speaking different languages, with varying levels of English proficiency, and different educational backgrounds and life experiences – without speaking any of their native languages herself.

“She is able to teach all levels of students simultaneously,” wrote student Eunsook Hwang in supporting Baker’s nomination. “She respects every culture and feels pleased at learning new things. I believe all students are very thankful for her warm heart and devotion.”

“Juli has a genuine nature to help others and knows what everyone needs to be cheered up and strengthened,” said former student Johanna Lobos. “Her words gave me courage to go forward to continue my education.”

“I begin by finding out what students want to learn by asking them what their goals are, what skills they most need to improve, and how they like to learn,” said Baker, who has been a CVTC instructor for 14 years. “Then I tailor my teaching to meet their needs. With the right information about each student, I can start wherever they are and help them advance – each at their own pace based on their ability, time and motivation.”

Named for retired instructor and award sponsor John Frank, the Frank Award is the highest honor for a CVTC instructor. The award comes with a \$1,500 stipend and is presented each year to one program and one general education faculty member.

“Krissa Reeves continually reflects on her teaching practices to find creative and practical ways to improve her students’ learning experiences,” said Dr. Julie Furst-Bowe, vice president of instruction for CVTC in announcing the winner of the Domer Award for instructors in their first three years of teaching. “Her dynamic teaching style includes interactive lectures and frequent formative assessment practices that enable her students to find success with challenging content and skills in classroom and lab settings. Her students appreciate her frequent use of visuals, models, analogies, physical movement, case studies, and humor to make complex concepts more accessible.

With over 97 programs offered both online and on-campus, 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 95 percent employed within six months of graduation and associate degree graduates earning an average annual salary of \$46,816.

Cutline:

Frank Award

Retired CVTC instructor John Frank, left, is joined by 2019 Frank Excellence in Education Award winners Information Technology-Software Developer instructor Jon Cooley and English Language Learner instructor Juli Baker following presentation of the awards Aug. 22.

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