

**Without being humble, describe what you value most about yourself, your work, your organization.**

The two biggest traits I value in myself are my ability to connect with others (empathy) and my ability to stay resilient. In the time I have worked at Chippewa Valley Technical College, I have demonstrated resilience through several organizational changes including new leadership and departments merging. My team has also gone through several personnel changes due to promotions and individuals leaving to pursue other opportunities. Throughout the changes, I have stayed calm and focused on my job.

I am also resilient in my life. I have faced many challenges and obstacles growing up and maturing into my young adulthood. My father was ill during my childhood, and my mother worked several jobs to support our family. I have stayed strong through difficult decisions such as choosing to drop out of school to care for my father, layoffs at a previous employer, and navigating higher education as a non-traditional student. These are scary obstacles, but I've been able to navigate them and become a stronger person as a result of them.

My current role as a College Specialist allows my ability to empathize and connect with others to shine. I work with a wide variety of prospective students including high school students from some of our smaller, rural school districts in the area (Thorp, Gilman, and Owen-Withee) and adult students who may be using college to earn a job promotion or change career paths. I embrace diversity, and I am happy to work with others who are from different backgrounds or culture. My role allows me to feel like I am making an impact and difference when helping students. This role also enables me to constantly learn. As a College Specialist, I'm expected to be an expert regarding the 95+ programs we offer, so I've become familiar with careers and occupations I have never worked in or even knew existed.

I truly believe in the mission and values of Chippewa Valley Technical College. Attending CVTC as a student changed my life and helped me find an unexpected career path in higher education. I believe in our low tuition rates and programs that translate to valuable careers. Education is transformative, and in all honesty, I love being surrounded by learning anywhere I am on campus.

**Describe an incident when you or someone you know went the extra mile to deliver what the customer wanted when they wanted it. What made it possible?**

This is a fresh example from this week. We had a planned Career Tours on Wednesday, February 20, which is the same day as the scheduled ACT testing day for high school juniors in the state of Wisconsin. All 700 planned Career Tour attendees were high school students – mostly freshman and sophomores – whose counselors wanted to use the day for academic and career planning. Planning Career Tours involved my direct supervisor and my colleagues Christine and Haley. The ACT Career Tours date involves nearly everyone on campus (this is the second year on campus for the large Career Tour on the ACT date – luckily, we had a good template in place for the event, but there were still many details to polish). Faculty, staff, academic advisors, college specialists, and facilities are all working on this day to provide an incredible experience for the prospective students visiting campus.

Unfortunately, mother nature had other plans this week. As soon as we saw the forecast was predicting a significant snow storm, my department supervisor, Kendra, and my colleagues Haley and Christine worked tirelessly to develop a winter weather plan that was first distributed to local high schools attending the event with instructions on what to do if their school has a two hour delay or other

important information. Eventually, our winter weather plan was shared with faculty through the assistance of my colleague Katy, but we made it clear to the faculty that we would not officially cancel the event until certain parameters were met. Kendra, Christine, Katy, and Haley woke up at 4:30 a.m. the day of the storm to check school closures or delays. Our official work day does not begin until 8:00 a.m., so they went above and beyond by waking up early to coordinate messages to schools. Katy sent an official cancellation to the faculty at 5:30 a.m. when all schools were confirmed closed. Kendra began to research ACT test make up dates. Once the alternate testing date was discovered, Christine and Haley began to reserve rooms and drafting communication for the rescheduled date. By the end of February 20, the team was able to communicate with schools that we can run the event on March 12. The schools did not expect us to reschedule! I admired my colleague's dedication to making it happen. They worked early in the morning and stayed until 4:30 p.m. to coordinate the rescheduled event! Their hard work, team work, and quick response made it possible to cancel the event, inform all affected parties of the cancellation, and secure a rescheduled date.

**Describe a moment or example when you or someone you know was recognized by a "I could not have done this without you" letter, e-mail, public acknowledgment, etc. What were the circumstances and how did people feel afterward?**

About two years ago, I helped a student tour campus to learn more information about the Architectural Structural Design program. At the time, we had a full-time day option for the program as well as a part-time evening option. The prospective student was nervous, and I helped calm her fears during the tour. I even helped her submit her application to the part-time option, and a few weeks later, I saw that she was accepted to the program. At that time, I thought my interactions with her were completed.

Unfortunately, several weeks later, a decision was made to cancel the part-time evening option and offer daytime class enrollment to the students affected. All communication to those students was done through the academic advising office and through a formal letter in the mail. I received a call about a week after the letters were mailed. It was from the prospective student I helped apply to the part-time evening program. She was frustrated as she had left three messages for her academic advisor (concerning the letter she had received) and hadn't received a call back over the three days she had left the messages. She had tried to call the general CVTC number and didn't receive assistance with that route as well. Even though she was outside the scope of my work as she was an accepted student, I worked with my department supervisor that day to help find the answers to her questions and schedule a call with her academic advisor to officially change her course registrations. She seemed really grateful that I helped her.

Two weeks into the semester, I received an email from the student explaining that I had saved the day for her when I helped her. She was really upset and frustrated by the news about her program (in all honesty, it had poor timing with only 3 weeks before the semester began). She took the lack of call backs from her academic advisor as a sign to potentially consider delaying or canceling her college plans. She was upset during the process, but my help alleviated her concerns and assured her she was making the right choice in attending CVTC.

I immediately forwarded the email to my supervisor, who then shared the email with our director. Eventually, it was shared with the College President! I felt immensely proud that I made a

difference, and I was so excited that my accomplishment was shared with the College President. More importantly, I was elated that my help motivated the student to keep her college plans in place. I had a large smile on my face when I watched her walk across the stage at graduation this past spring.

**How do you stay professionally affirmed, renewed, enthusiastic, and inspired?**

It is easy to stay enthusiastic in my role if I remember how my personal mission and values align nicely with the College's mission and values. I believe in the power of education, and I feel empowered when I am helping students take steps to enroll in college.

When I begin to feel my energy or enthusiasm is draining at work, I begin to look for professional development opportunities. Attending a seminar or conference on a professional development topic crucial to my role or future success normally helps me feel excited and helps reinvigorate me. I used to feel the same way when I worked in a different industry (Cosmetics – Estee Lauder) and attended the quarterly sales meetings.

I also allow myself to acknowledge when a situation is difficult, but I do not allow myself to dwell on negative feelings. I also do my best to block out other's negative attitude or feelings. I find that once I allow negativity to enter, it is difficult to let get rid of it.

I also use embrace my individuality in my role. While I am always professional in all that I do, I allow my personality to shine at work, which helps me to stay affirmed and positive in my role as I don't "fake" my enthusiasm at work or any personality traits that I have.