It is indeed my pleasure to share a message as the new Dean of NCTA. My wife Fay and I moved to Curtis in mid-June and I hit the ground running. Since then, I have had the opportunity to meet several of our 4,000+ alumni. We have connected face-to-face, through technology such as Zoom, or enjoyed a telephone conversation. There are so many more of you to meet, and I look forward to that during 2021. My background in agricultural education and FFA provides me with a slightly different pathway to campus. The culmination of all my different roles makes NCTA a perfect fit.

A year ago, our world was turned upside down. Besides classes switching to virtual settings the last eight weeks of Spring 2020, and our faculty quickly adjusting NCTA’s unique, hands-on approach to an online environment, many events and activities had to be canceled. Unfortunately, one of those was the Aggie Alumni reunion. Good news! We invite you to Curtis on Saturday, June 26, 2021 for a day of celebration, featuring a special noon luncheon which honors all graduates, particularly the 50-year milestone for Classes of 1970 and 1971, and 40 years for Classes of 1980 and 1981. I hope to meet many of you then!

Although 2020 brought many disappointments and some of us experienced personal loss of loved ones and cherished friends, our campus community did share many positive aspects. A few highlights were:

- Successful completion of Spring semester with graduates honored in virtual events.
- Fall enrollment grew for incoming freshmen from 82 in 2019 to 102, plus 21 new transfers.
- New staff in recruiting and admissions puts extra focus on recruiting and student retention.
- Free tuition to Nebraskans from households of $60,000 or less through Nebraska Promise.
- NCTA named #1 by Wallet Hub for top 2-year college in U.S. for career outcomes (ratio salary 10-years post-graduation to cost of college).
- NCTA named Outstanding Postsecondary Career Technical Education Program by Nebraska Department of Education.

I look forward to our work together on student and campus successes. Come visit campus any chance you get. Keep spreading the word about NCTA: where your passion becomes a career. Go Aggies!

Dean Larry Gossen, Ph.D.
Aggie Alumni: Look for the Boots at https://ncta.unl.edu/aggie-alumni featuring:

- Aggie Reunion June 26
- Photo Gallery 2019
- Update your contact information
- Aggie officers & board list
- Aggie Alumni Charter
- Aggie Newsletters & Minutes

Meet Aggie Alumni Leaders

President: Ann Ramm Bruntz, UNSTA ‘71
Vice Pres: David Fulton, UNSTA ‘80
Secretary: Dan Stehlik, UNSTA ’75
Treasurer: Wade Shipman, NCTA ’14

Board Members:
David Bruntz, UNSTA ’71; Boni Perks Edwards, UNSTA ’79; Gene Heller, UNSTA ’73; Dave May, UNSTA ’75; Dave Mehaffey, UNSTA ‘83; Linda Ramos, UNSTA ’79

Ex Officio:
Josi Arnold, NCTA, ’14 NCTA Dean’s Office; Larry Gossen, Ph.D., NCTA Dean; Kristen Houska, NU Foundation; Jerry Sundquist, UNSTA ’68, retired NCTA faculty & interim dean.

Stay, don’t stray from NCTA

Society is on the move. Help us to locate you and your classmates. Get connected and stay in the loop. Update your mailing address, email and best phone number (landline or cell) by Wufoo form at https://ncta.unl.edu/aggie-alumni.

2020 Service Awards

The University of Nebraska recognizes employees for service by 5-year increments. Four NCTA awards presented by Dean Larry Gossen:

- 5 years - Rachel Faber, Food Service Associate
- 5 years – Dan Stehlik, Agricultural Mechanics
- 20 years – Mark Gardner, Custodial
- 40 years - Barb Berg, Veterinary Technology

Stehlik, PA ’75 and Berg, VT ’73 are UNSTA alumni, NCTA faculty and active in Aggie Alumni, both having served as president. Berg was honored in 2017 with the Alumni Achievement Award.

NEW Alumni page: https://ncta.unl.edu/aggie-alumni
From the President

Will you serve?

We are still seeking volunteers for alumni outreach. Would you serve as a class agent for UNSTA or NCTA? Share the success stories of NCTA today – make some phone calls or social media posts, urge classmates to attend our Aggie Reunion June 26, 2021.

Class agents:
1971 - David & Ann Bruntz
1974 – Rahn Bek
1975 – Dave May
1976 – Steve & Joan Ruskamp
1979 – Boni Perks Edwards & Linda Ramos
1980 – Judy Derr & Joan Wieczorek Ruskamp
1983 – Marti Jo Winget Fisher & Kim Bowers Mortensen
1984 & 86 – Robyn Kennedy
2001 – Stephanie Vogt Stedman
2014 – Mollie Taylor & Josi Arnold-Krumweide

Contact Ann Bruntz at ann.bruntz@gmail.com, or comment on Facebook at NCTA Alumni or U.N.S.T.A. Alumni pages.

Welcome Dean Gossen

Alumni Friends,

On behalf of all alumni and students of NCTA, UNSTA, UNSA and NSA, David and I (both UNSTA Class of ’71 alumni) welcome Larry and Fay Gossen to Curtis! We enjoyed getting acquainted with “Dr. G” early in 2020 during the national search and interviews for NCTA’s new dean.

Steven Stettner (APS ’99) and I were appointed by NU Vice President/IANR Vice Chancellor Mike Boehm as Nebraska ag producers and college alumni to the NCTA Dean Search Committee. It was an honor to represent you in the five-month process that concluded with four outstanding finalists. With interim leadership by Dr. Boehm and Dr. Kelly Bruns (who also served on the search committee) NCTA was in good hands.

“The decision wasn’t an easy one for IANR but I think Mike Boehm made the right decision. The direction that the institution is headed today, they are making strides moving forward. I think we got the right guy with Dr. Gossen,” Stettner says. I agree!

Please make an effort soon to reach out to Dean Gossen – come to campus, send him an email, give him a phone call, and attend our Aggie Alumni Association reunion on Saturday, June 26.

We have much to celebrate!

Aggie Alumni President
Ann Ramm Bruntz, VT ’71
Friend, Nebraska

Buckle Award

Thank you to Kelly Bruns, Ph.D., interim dean at NCTA for 11 months in 2019-2020 while also director of the West Central Research & Extension Center, North Platte. In appreciation, we gave Dr. Bruns an NCTA commemorative belt buckle at the 2020 Faculty & Staff Luncheon.

Congrats Class of 2020

Deans Larry Gossen and Jennifer McConville, NU President Ted Carter, VP Mike Boehm

NCTA recognized the Class of 2020 with virtual celebrations in July. The Dean’s Office mailed caps, gowns, diplomas and mementoes to Aggies so they could participate in virtual events from home with family members. Class valedictorian was Alexis Penna of Holley, New York, with a 4.0 GPA. Dalton Keller of Torrington, Wyo. was salutatorian. The virtual awards program and graduation were recorded and are available to view at https://ncta.unl.edu/2020.

Last September, NU President Ted Carter and Vice President Mike Boehm attended a small reception for graduates and their families at The NCTA Student Union. Next graduation is in person on May 6, 2021.
Nebraska Promise

A program started in 2020 by NU President Ted Carter now better enables Nebraskans to receive a college education. The “Nebraska Promise” offers free tuition to any Nebraska student whose household income is less than $60,000. We have welcomed several Nebraska Promise students.

Another plus in 2020 for Aggies was news of a three-year freeze in tuition rates for ALL students. Incoming freshmen are assured tuition of $139 per credit into 2023.

What’s ahead in 2021?

Five Goals for NCTA:
• Showcase campus with beautification projects to improve student recruiting and retention. Outdoor maintenance on landscaping, sidewalk upgrades and lighting. Improve eye appeal and safety measures for campus community and visitors
• Expand welding program by doubling the size of the shop, adding a robotic welder, and boosting technology to align with industry needs and career-readiness
• Broaden recruitment with more high schools visits, invite student groups to campus, share interactive, virtual classroom programs, expand Aggie outreach with personal and online conversations
• Refresh statewide advisory networks, academic advisories for guidance on NCTA’s strategic initiatives
• Expand experiential learning opportunities on campus, with Nebraska Extension, industry partners and new projects at Frank and Mabel Leu Memorial Ranch (Hayes County)

Technology grant will boost workforce skills training

In June, NCTA was named the 2020 Outstanding Postsecondary CTE Program by the Nebraska Department of Education, and in October given a $100,000 federal grant for upgraded technology educating youth and adults. “This is quite exciting for NCTA to be able to broaden its long-standing history of hands-on learning in careers serving agriculture and veterinary technology,” said Dean Larry Gossen. “The federal grant is significant in our ability to deliver educational programs beyond the traditional campus methods.”

Expand Welding – Double the size of the existing facility, increase the number and types of welding equipment, add CNC plasma cutters, and purchase a robotic welder.

Mobile Agronomy Lab – Interactive, hands-on unit for schools, fairs and learning centers. Promote careers in plant/soil science and pest control, irrigation technology, and natural resources.

Animal Simulation Models – Teach animal-care skills on life-size horse, cat, and dog simulators. Equine palpation/colic simulator can be used at NCTA and for large-animal outreach education.

Remote and Livestream – State-of-the-art imaging system recommended by AVMA for teaching hands-on techniques used in veterinary practices. Cameras, microphones, and mobile filming to livestream equine clinics, livestock judging, animal science classes from indoor arena for NCTA and virtual settings.
News of Aggie Alumni

Steven Stettner of Palmer, NCTA APS ’99 and UNL ’01, served as president of the 550-member Nebraska Association of County Extension Boards. In 2020, NACEB was honored with the Presidential Medal of Service for advocacy on behalf of Nebraska Extension and the NU system. Stettner also served on the NCTA Dean Search Committee in 2019-20 and was inducted into Ag Builders of Nebraska in 2020.

David Bruntz of Friend, ’UNSTA PA ’71 and Aggie Alumni Association president 2012 & 2013, was re-elected chairman of the Nebraska Corn Board.

James (Jim) P. Stewart of Lincoln, UNSTA PA ’75, president of the Mervin R. Eighmy Foundation, in October announced the Foundation’s second gift to support NCTA’s welding program. The $14,000 contribution enables the college to purchase an advanced MIG welding package for improved technology resources. In 2017, the Aggie Alumni Association presented the Alumni Service Award to the Eighmy Foundation for equipping the agricultural mechanics lab with eight new welders Lincoln welders.

Dan Stehlik of Curtis, UNSTA PA ’75 and UNL ’86, ag mechanics instructor at NCTA, was recognized in 2020 with the Outstanding Postsecondary Program Award from the Nebraska Agricultural Education Association. The Dorchester native taught agricultural education at Red Cloud and Columbus Lakeview high schools from 1986-1989, then in Kansas high school programs at Concordia and Belleville from 1996-2015 before coming to NCTA in 2015. Stehlik has twice served as the Aggie Alumni president and is currently secretary and awards committee chair. Stehlik teaches welding, irrigation technicians, electricity, ag safety and coordinates some district and state FFA agriculture mechanics activities.

James (Jim) P. Stewart

Dan Stehlik

How you can support NCTA

Craig Buescher at NCTA Legacy Wall with Marvin Stumpf and Ron Rosati.

You can directly support NCTA students, faculty, programs, and other campus priorities with your gift to the NCTA Fund at the University of Nebraska Foundation.

Make your gift at ncta.unl.edu. Click on GIVE at the top of the page. Or, send a check to NCTA Fund, University of Nebraska Foundation, 1010 Lincoln Mall, Ste. 300 Lincoln, NE 68508.

We appreciate our partners at the University of Nebraska Foundation who assist Dean Larry Gossen and Vice Chancellor Mike Boehm in charting further growth and success for NCTA.

Congratulations to Craig Buescher on his retirement in December. Craig served on the Aggie Alumni board as the NU Foundation representative. Thank you, Craig, for your dedication to Aggies and NCTA!

Measuring up

In early 2020, NCTA was evaluated for regional re-accreditation by the Higher Learning Commission. Prospective and existing students can be assured that NCTA meets rigorous standards in all facets of our college programs.

Also, in early 2021, the Veterinary Technology Division, underwent re-accreditation by the American Veterinary Medical Association – earning the AVMA seal of approval for almost 50 years.

June 26: Spend the day at NCTA

Aggie Alumni will gather in Curtis for a daytime reunion on Saturday, June 26, 2021. Plans are underway for a luncheon at the Student Union. Events coincide with Nebraskaland Days in North Platte, and evening concerts on June 25 and 26.

We will pack in plenty of Saturday social time, campus tours and fun! See updated schedules at https://ncta.unl.edu/aggie-alumni.

Valley View Inn has a block of rooms for us. Call 308.367.4580 for reservations. Camping spots are available by Arrowhead Golf Course. Also, lodging might open in an NCTA residence hall. Since 2020 events were canceled, this will be a very special year for honor classes from ’70 and ’71, and in 5-year increments after. ALL graduates and friends are welcome—not just honor classes so please join us.
Welcome Team Taylor! Assistant recruiters Andela Taylor of Cambridge and Rulon Taylor of Curtis joined the NCTA staff in 2020. Although they have the same last name, the two are not related but do share the goal to boost Aggie enrollment! Rulon is a graduate in rangeland management from Chadron State College and was most recently employed by the City of Curtis. Andela’s extensive background in rural economic development and her family’s business, Cambridge Bed & Breakfast, brings customer service and marketing expertise to NCTA’s recruiting.

“We are excited to get these two outstanding individuals out on the road and into high school classrooms across the state and region,” says Dean Gossen. “With an additional focus on retention of our current students, we are looking forward to great numbers next fall.”

Alumni, you can help in these efforts. Please let Andela or Rulon know if you might introduce them to a prospective student, join them for a visit to your local high school, or share some screen time in a ZOOM conversation with youth, their family, or even a group of individuals. Find contact details at https://ncta.unl.edu/faculty-staff-directory.

April 12 Discovery Days at NCTA – Where your passion becomes a career! Encourage a prospective student to visit campus, take a tour, learn about financial aid, and meet academic advisors.

Discovery Days are free, but to assist with meal counts and materials, please preregister at https://ncta.unl.edu/discovery-days. Sophomore Sophie Nutter won a naming contest in 2020 with the Discovery Days slogan, “NCTA: where your passion becomes a career!”

NCTA News Weekly is an electronic campus newsletter which launched in October to keep the campus community informed on Aggie events, news, profile stories and photography. Contributions are welcome from students. Let us know at mcrawford@unl.edu if you want to be on the partner’s list to receive this free NCTA update by email. It is produced while NCTA classes are in session.

Josi Arnold-Krumweide, VetTech 2014, joined the NCTA Dean’s Office in February 2020, as administrative associate. She is integral to the “Dean’s Team” of Dean Larry Gossen and Associate Dean Jennifer McConville where she wears many hats and keeps things running smoothly as a liaison to Aggie Alumni and administers and coordinates the COVID-19 screening for campus.

This is Josi’s second term of employment with NCTA where she was administrative associate for the Veterinary Technology Division and worked with many VT students in coordinating and supervising the Facilities Management classes. Josi also is studying for her bachelor’s degree in early childhood education through online courses at the University of Nebraska-Kearney.

Gaylene Stinman serves as enrollment associate in admissions, joining the NCTA staff in February 2020. She speaks with many prospective and enrolling students, especially in coordinating the popular Discovery Days twice each spring and fall semester and collaborating on projects with the Student Services Team of Kevin Martin, Vicky Luke, Linda Cole and Erika Arambula.

Campus is familiar turf for Gaylene as her father, Carl Yonkers, was a campus groundskeeper for over 25 years at UNSTA-NCTA. She can share stories of her summer jobs on campus mowing lawns, pulling hoses, painting, and cleaning, and on holiday breaks babysitting the campus power plant. Read about Gaylene’s professional career at https://go.unl.edu/hnma.
From the NCTA Farm

When you visit NCTA on June 26 (or anytime in 2021) you will see some upgrades around campus. Remember the old steam tunnels that ran north of Ag Hall and toward the residence halls? That was replaced with underground pipes. Last fall, we also improved drainage along the north side of the Student Union and installed a sidewalk from the Union west to Ag Hall.

Alan Taylor, Experiential Learning Coordinator, the NCTA “farm crew” which includes student workers and Farm Manager/Instructor Roy Cole, built a new alleyway and pens at the Andy Knepp calving shed in Aggieland. The project aids the flow of moving and sorting cattle plus improves safety and efficiency. At the feedlot located at the north edge of campus, Taylor upgraded the bunks and pens. Sturdy pipe pens were installed with help of Dan Stehlik’s advanced welding students, along with new concrete feed bunks. These hands-on experiences occurred in spring and summer of 2020.

Students are busy with spring-calving rotations now into April. Then, they will help brand calves in late April. We will add a fall-calving herd by buying 35 cows from the Gudmundsen Sandhills Lab. Future livestock plans are to add sheep, some sows, and take in cattle pairs to graze at the Hayes County pasture. Aggies will provide all animal care and grazing management during grass season.

Future projects on the drawing board include doubling the size of the welding shop by adding welding booths in the adjoining space to the south. The staff maintenance and carpentry now located at Ag Mech will relocate to larger space in the Lashley Building on the east side of campus.

Finally, a campus beautification initiative will be launched in 2021. Already, shrubbery on the south side of Ag Hall has been removed. A schematic of the campus redesign can be seen at the Dean’s Office.

Aggie Linkages

In partnership, the University of Nebraska provides several opportunities for NCTA students to associate with researchers and faculty at WCREC in North Platte. These include internships, part-time employment, and academic programs at lab facilities at the Gudmundsen Sandhills Laboratory near Whitman, the Stumpf Wheat Center at Grant, West Central Cropping Systems Research near Brule, and the Agroecosystems Entomology and Pesticide Application Technology Lab, both at North Platte.

NCTA Faculty Award

Brad Ramsdale, Ph.D., was awarded the 2020 Bruntz Family Teaching Award for Excellence for his outstanding academic programs and leadership at NCTA. The award was announced by the Faculty Senate and Mary Rittenhouse, awards chair. Ramsdale is associate professor in agronomy, coaches the crops judging team, chairs the Agricultural Mechanics and Agronomy programs, and coordinates NCTA Assessment. Dr. Ramsdale joined the faculty in 2007. See the full news article: https://go.unl.edu/ak5b