NCTA: Preparing for our future
By Ron Rosati, NCTA Dean
Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture

This week we held “Discovery Day” at the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture to showcase to potential students the access and opportunities they have here in Curtis for a career in Nebraska’s number one industry, agriculture. I appreciate the dedication of our visiting high school students, their families and guidance counselors who fully explore our offerings for higher education.

Aggie academic programs in animal science, agriculture education, veterinary technology, agronomy, horticulture, and agribusiness management are designed for successful outcomes.

After two years at NCTA, these new high school graduates, transfer students and on-line learners can earn an associate degree. Most will immediately enter the workforce and become productive citizens of Nebraska.

Or, their studies at NCTA can transfer to the College of Science and Natural Resources at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, or to other four-year institutions, where they can work toward a bachelor’s degree or other professional studies.

We have been excited about a 28 percent enrollment boost realized last fall. In addition to student recruitment, however, we also aim for student satisfaction and success. We survey students when they graduate to ask them their thoughts on their time in Curtis. More than 75% of recent NCTA graduates tell us they would choose the college again if they were starting college over. We survey graduates again after they’ve been in the workforce for five years. At that time, again, more than 75% of NCTA graduates express satisfaction with the career preparation they received in Curtis.

Last summer, NCTA and the University of Nebraska Board of Regents started the process to commit additional state resources to our 101-year-old institution.

We are seeking an increase in state appropriations to meet the needs of NCTA’s growing student population and to maintain the academic quality that has led to NCTA’s top-ranked national reputation.

NCTA’s request seeks expanded funding to core operations and strategic investments in classroom and laboratory supplies and equipment, distance learning technology, faculty salaries and talent development, and fire and safety systems in older facilities.

Last week, I outlined these needs to the Legislature’s Appropriation Committee in a hearing at Lincoln. The biannual request of $1.3 million is divided between the 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 budget years.

As many of you know from previous years in this state funding process, the NCTA budget is a separate line-item. More than 70 percent of our budget is from state sources. As a college with a statewide mission, NCTA
receives no local funding or taxation base.

I believe our appropriators and legislative leaders understand and appreciate the unique mission of NCTA within the University of Nebraska system. We discussed the need to recruit and retain top quality faculty, the importance of providing cutting-edge instruction for Nebraska’s agricultural workforce, and the importance of having the resources needed to comply with governmental regulations and accreditation requirements.

Agricultural and industry partners such as the Nebraska Farm Bureau and Nebraska Cattlemen testified and submitted letters of support. So have individual producers and others interested in the history and future success of this institution, when it first was a high school in 1913, and became a college in the 1960s.

The NCTA Community Advisory Committee represents your interests. However, if you have any questions or are seeking specifics about the budget request, please let me know. I can be contacted at 308-367-5200, or at the Dean’s Office at Second Floor in Ag Hall.

Our future is your future. Please feel free to visit the campus anytime and “Discover Your Way at NCTA.” We will continue a tradition of excellence in training young men and women as the farmers and ranchers of Nebraska’s future.

For more information on any of NCTA’s programs call 1-800-3CURTIS or visit the web site at ncta.unl.edu.

- Ron Rosati, Dean
Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture

**NCTA Mission:**

*The Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture is devoted to a statewide mission of preparing students for successful careers in agriculture, veterinary technology, food and related industries. The college provides open access to innovative technical education resulting in associate degrees, certificates, diplomas and other credentials.*

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