NCTA enriches college experience
By Ron Rosati, NCTA Dean

The college experience is so much more than sitting in the classroom. The Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture strives to broaden learning for all students.

This last week is an example of how NCTA hones career skills for our students in academics, athletics, team spirit, leadership and public interactions.

From Cheyenne, Wyoming just to the west of Curtis, to Brookings, South Dakota and Moline, Illinois, much farther to the east of us, NCTA students experienced events which will leave an indelible mark on personal character.

Let me tell you how proud I am of ALL of our students and faculty for dedicated commitment to higher education. We have an amazing collegiate team and outstanding spirit of cooperation and leadership on this campus.

Here are highlights:

Last week 19 students accompanied by faculty members Brad Ramsdale and Jeremy Sievers traveled to Moline, Ill., to compete in national academic contests. They returned home this weekend with a stack of awards proving that hard work with industry partners, in laboratories, computer labs, the livestock arena, and classrooms paid off.

They attended the “super bowl” of academic achievement for 2-year and 4-year colleges, a contest hosted by the North American Colleges and Teachers of Agriculture (NACTA) organization.

NCTA students repeated high marks in knowledge bowl, 2nd place team; ag business, 2nd place team; crops/agronomy, 2nd place team; and business computer applications, 5th place team. These teams came from one of the smallest colleges competing in this national event and finished in the top five, attesting to the skill and dedication of the faculty and students involved.

Ryleigh Rainey of Mud Lake, Idaho, took first place in the individual ranks for agribusiness. Other top-five finishers were 4th, Desarae Catlett of Broken Bow, Neb., and 5th, Aaron Doxon of Maywood, Neb., both in the crops competition.

Our Ranch Horse Team went to Cheyenne, Wyo., and came home with second place. Watch for them in action next weekend as they host the Jeanne Mueller Barrel Racing Clinic here in Curtis at the NCTA Livestock Teaching Center Arena. Animal Science Professor Joanna Hergenreder is the team’s coach.
The rodeo team kicked off its spring season last Friday and Saturday by traveling to Brookings, South Dakota. Nine students compete, coached by Bridger Chykta, animal science professor. Several Veterinary Technology Systems students helped NCTA’s Glenn Jackson, DVM, present hands-on demonstrations in an educational expo affiliated with the “2015 Omaha International Horse Show” at the Century Link Center in Omaha.

And, nine NCTA students were coordinated by Animal Science Professor and Livestock Judging Team Coach Douglas Smith as volunteers with the Nebraska FFA state convention in Lincoln. Thousands of FFA members in the blue jackets were part of outstanding events at the convention’s new site, The Pinnacle Bank Arena.

Teaching and learning in these activities is a great motivator for students. We rely on industry partners and agriculture employers for direction on student learning. There are many ways to generate the skills that the industry advisory groups tell us we need to have for successful graduates.

Our past week is a great example of student learning, in the classroom and out. Graduation is coming up in a short time. Please join us in honoring students at their awards night on May 6, and at graduation on May 7.

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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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