

July 18, 2016

Dean's Column by Ron Rosati, PhD

NCTA gains high marks for national review

The United States Department of Education evaluates the effectiveness of colleges and universities by sending teams of experts to campuses to study the schools and determine if they are performing according to best management practices. Colleges that are performing well become accredited, or they have accreditation standing "reaffirmed" or continued.

The Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture reached an important milestone this year by being reaffirmed as an accredited postsecondary institution.

NCTA's accreditation is evaluated by an authorized representative of the U.S. Department of Education called the Higher Learning Commission. At a June 28 meeting of HLC's Institutional Actions Council, the HLC reaffirmed our accreditation for 10 years, indicating our next Reaffirmation of Accreditation evaluation would occur in 2025-2026.

In short, this is very good news and indicates HLC evaluators feels NCTA is doing a great job educating its students and managing its campus.

In preparing for the HLC visit, NCTA faculty, staff, students and administrators worked diligently developing reports, documentation and evidence of NCTA's academic and campus-wide rigor in delivering a quality technical educational setting for a largely-agricultural population. Our college community has been working hard for more than two years to prepare for this evaluation.

When NCTA started offering college-level coursework in 1965, it operated under the accreditation of UNL. It wasn't until 2004 that NCTA received independent accreditation. As a result of our 2016 evaluation, NCTA is now recognized as a mature, highly effective institution.

I shared with staff my pride in their extra effort not only for this dedication in preparation for and during the site review team's visit and in-depth examination of NCTA, but more so for our continual dedication to providing quality academic programs at NCTA.

Our stakeholders and our students (and prospective future students) can be assured that NCTA meets all national requirements for the institution.

During the recent HLC visit, NCTA was also evaluated on its distance education programs. As a result of the visit the college was authorized to offer its first program online.

NCTA's national review by HLC also included careful review of our assessment and performance measures of student outcomes. We track student performance throughout each semester, measuring success in course grades and achievement of benchmarks throughout the year.

Last year, we asked for public input into our accreditation process and I appreciate those who gave comments to the HLC and to me. Dottie Evans, who just retired at the end of the school year, led us through this process. I thank Dottie immensely for guiding us, and assuring all accreditation-related items are available to the public. See our web site for further information at <http://ncta.unl.edu/ncta-accredited-institution> or feel free to call my office with any questions.

Thank you for your role in helping NCTA with this national review and success in well-earned reaccreditation.

Upcoming Events:

July 20 – NCTA Stock Dog Club practice, 6 p.m., arena

July 25 – Cow and Calf 4-H Contest, 3 p.m., Red Barn

July 27 – Nebraska Cattlemen Regional Tour, 12 p.m., Ed Center

July 27 – 4-H Career Portfolio Training, 6 p.m., Ed Center

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.



Two NCTA students lead a campus accreditation review team through the Nebraska Agriculture Industry Education Center during the team's site visit in March, 2016. (M. Crawford/NCTA News)