

Sept. 13, 2016

Dean's Column by NCTA Dean Ron Rosati, PhD

Earning NCTA credits in high school

High school students across Nebraska are earning college credits again this year through the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture.

From Pawnee City to Scottsbluff, and Rock County to Chase County, students are taking agricultural-related courses which count for high school and college credits.

These courses are taught by college faculty who are dual certified as high school teachers by the Nebraska Department of Education, and by NCTA's regional accrediting agency, the Higher Learning Commission, for college curriculums. The programs and procedures used in our dual credit programming have been evaluated and approved by our accrediting agencies.

This fall, NCTA is offering primarily agriculture courses in its dual credit program. Seventy-seven high school juniors or seniors are enrolled in these college courses. Last year, NCTA offered a significant number of liberal arts courses to more than 250 high school students as part of this programming. Some of those liberal arts courses are still offered in a limited manner this semester. However, this fall we made a strategic decision to focus on coursework which is more closely tied to NCTA's primary mission in agriculture and veterinary technology.

Students at 30 different high schools are now taking NCTA classes. They do this as University of Nebraska-NCTA students, and pay a reduced tuition of \$60 per credit hour. This affordable rate allows a student to take a 3-credit class for less than \$200 – significantly less than if they were sitting in the college classroom on campus.

Students enrolled in dual credit certificate programs, such as the Agricultural Chemical Applications Certificate, have the option of making significant progress towards completion of a college program while they are still enrolled in high school. We even have partnership agreements with some schools which will allow students to complete the entire certificate while enrolled in high school. Our industry partners work closely with NCTA and the local high school to provide carefully-controlled learning opportunities for students in these programs. NCTA is exploring the potential of expanding these partnership opportunities with new high school and industry collaborators.

We are confident that the delivery of these courses is a win-win. In fact, we hope to see the first graduates in a program started last year at York High School receive a certificate when they graduate in May for their studies in Agricultural Chemical Applications.

All of the courses offered in dual credit programs count towards degree requirements at NCTA. Our transfer agreements outline how NCTA courses count for credit if students decide to continue their education. We have a strong partnership with the UNL College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources (CASNR) which allow students to begin their college career with NCTA courses and finish their bachelor's degree in four years through CASNR. The details of that agreement, which outline course by course transfer approval, may be found at ncta.unl.edu under "A to B Transfer".

Dual credit courses allow high school students an opportunity for an early start towards a college degree. These low cost courses are in keeping with NCTA's mission of providing academic and financial access to higher education services for the residents of Nebraska.

This past year, two independent, external agencies ranked NCTA's academic programs as being among the best two-year college programs in the nation. Dual credit is one method we use to maximize the opportunities for Nebraska residents to access those programs in our number one industry – agriculture.

We look forward to sharing more information on dual credit programs for the coming semester, as well. For more information, contact Eric Reed at NCTA, who serves as our dual credit coordinator. See ncta.unl.edu or phone 1-800-3-CURTIS for details.

Upcoming Events:

- Sept. 13-15 – NCTA Outreach, Husker Harvest Days, Grand Island
- Sept. 15 – Intramural Flag Football
- Sept. 16-17 – NCTA Aggie Rodeo, Buffalo Bill Arena, North Platte
- Sept. 17 – AggieFest 6, Livestock Judging Contest, 8:30 a.m., LTC at NCTA
- Sept. 17-18 – Curtis Fall Festival
- Sept. 21 – NCTA Trap Team to North Platte

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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York High School offers NCTA ag classes for dual credit programs (Crawford/NCTA News)