



NEBRASKA COLLEGE OF TECHNICAL AGRICULTURE

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Vet Tech Adventures

By Noel Ochoa, Faculty Lecturer

The Spring 2023 semester has been one of action, change, and innovation for many on the NCTA campus. For myself, it started with international adventure as the NCTA Safari Club and I traveled to Costa Rica over Winter Break 2022-2023.

We spent 12 days and 11 nights traveling to Costa Rica with the help of Sarah Stuckey from Costa Rica Study Tours. From the breathtaking landscape of the cloud rainforest to the conversations with local veterinarians, we got a glimpse of the diversity in nature and business we don't usually see in good old Nebraska. We visited dairy farms using regenerative agricultural practices, visited an indigenous tribe, the BriBri, and even tasted termites! This Costa Rican adventure introduces any participant to so much more than exotic animals and flowers; for those who got to go this time, it was a life-changing experience.

Soon after the beginning of the semester and shortly after our return to NCTA, four students from STVMA Club, Leighlynn Obermiller and myself, were off to Las Vegas, Nevada. In this case, though, "what happened in Vegas" was hopefully brought back with us as we traveled to Las Vegas for the 95th annual Western Veterinary Conference.

WVC is one of the largest regional veterinary industry conferences, with over 12,000 participants this year and over 400 exhibitors. We attended lectures on various topics, from exotic animal anesthesia to postoperative analgesia, bovine clinical testing, small animal radiology, vaccination protocols, and many more! Just like its host city, WVC has a little something for everyone!

Even with busy schedules, we have still made time for some fun activities to help enrich the lives of the menagerie of animals here on campus. With every new group of students, seeing the new ideas and creativity they bring is always exciting. One recent activity the STVMA and I worked on was building reusable toys for the larger psittacines in our care. Reusable toys? If you know ANYTHING about parrots, you know that most of their toys are demolished in a matter of minutes to hours at most. To provide more enrichment for the parrots, the students constructed toys using PVC pipes, rope, and wooden blocks for the birds to chew on and destroy. Once the wood blocks are destroyed, the rope is replaced on the PVC structure of the toy with new wood blocks to make a whole new toy for the birds to enjoy!

As we get closer to the end of the semester, we enjoy hearing back from those students we sent out to internship a few weeks ago. From stories of interesting patient cases to pictures of beautiful perfect canine dental X-rays, it is overwhelmingly exciting to hear back from these students. Some students may be offered permanent jobs at their internship sites, which is always very thrilling to hear, too! Weary of taking the plunge and moving to a new state for her internship, Shelby Kofler is currently at Loving Family Animal Hospital in Aurora, Colorado, a clinic I worked at in the Denver Metro area. Shelby has

been busy practicing her blood draws, anesthetic monitoring, IV catheter placement, and many other skills. Shelby is interested in Exotic Companion Animals and loves seeing the Rockies every morning on her way to work!

This semester has been busy, to say the least! With the days getting warmer and that sun seemingly shining brighter—we are all ready for days at the lake, rodeos, and county fairs.

NCTA Events:

Apr. 16-20: Nat'l Ranch Horse, Amarillo, TX

Apr. 17: Recruit at South Dakota FFA

Apr. 18: New Student Enrollment

Apr. 20: Recruit at Wyoming FFA

Apr. 20: NCTA Alumni Entrepreneurship Fair

Apr. 20: Branding Meal Cafeteria

Apr. 21: Student Speech Night

May 3: Awards Night

May 4: Commencement

Part of the University of Nebraska system, the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture is a two-year institution with a statewide mission of preparing students for successful careers in agriculture, veterinary technology, and related industries. NCTA is known for its affordable tuition, high job-placement rate for its graduates and the success of student teams in competitive activities, including crops judging, ranch horse events, livestock judging, shotgun sports, stock dog trials, and intercollegiate rodeo. The college is consistently ranked as one of the best two-year schools in the nation.

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