



NEBRASKA COLLEGE OF TECHNICAL AGRICULTURE

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Equine Program Centers on the Horse

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Tucked away in the hills of southwest Nebraska is an experience unlike any other, one that is challenging yet infinitely rewarding. The experience is offered through the NCTA Equine Industry Management Option which uses a unique teaching model, the horse at its center.

Students come to NCTA's equine program to gain the technical skills required for entry to multiple areas within the industry, but they also gain proficiency in transferable skills. Such skills are difficult to teach in a traditional classroom setting. The teaching model employed in the equine program is able to build such effortlessly.

Classes such as the basic equitation class or equine practicum classes improve students' self-perceptions regarding their patience, confidence, verbal communication skills and ability to work with others all while working within students' areas of interest.

Perhaps working with another species that has its own needs, devices and agendas facilitates this element to the learning process.

This teaching model is by far my favorite aspect of the equine program at NCTA. I currently serve the institution as an Associate Professor, as the LTC and Equine Coordinator and as the Ranch Horse Team Coach. In my roles on campus, I have the privilege to work with our students and incorporate the horse in our daily interaction.

The greatest challenge with the teaching model and transferable skills is that it requires a high level of involvement from educators. I am confident in saying that the educators at NCTA, in all areas, are up to and work to meet this challenge. It is also what many of us enjoy most about this unique and incredible institution.

In addition to the hands-on, experiential learning based model, the equine program also structures opportunities for students to connect and network directly with industry. Students get to experience professionals we bring to campus, like Sherman Tegtmeier, as well as internship experiences all over the country, like one student that recently completed her time at Claiborne Farm in Kentucky.

This lends our students the distinct advantage to build a network with the industry *prior* to graduation, which results in high access to job opportunities.

Access to the industry and the employment opportunities it provides is also met through our incredible array of extracurricular activities on campus. The equine program boasts two of the six competitive teams on campus, the Rodeo Team and the Ranch Horse Team.

The Ranch Horse Team students practice regularly and get to work with myself as well as various other trainers to hone skills for competition in events such as; ranch pleasure, ranch trail, reining, and the coveted cow work.

Unique to the collegiate ranch horse experience, competitions include collegiate riders but also bring professional trainers, clients as non-pro competitors, and future NCTA students in the youth divisions to the events. The Ranch Horse Team experience is like no other, just ask a team member!

The team travels to Colorado, Wyoming, and Nebraska and as far as Amarillo, TX for the Collegiate National Championships in April.

We also host one of the region's largest events, the PUNCHY IN PINK Spring Round Up, slated for April 6-9, 2023 in McCook, NE. The students plan, organize, and host this event. New this year, we will be including an AQHA Ranching Heritage Challenge to the line-up, which will bring breakaway and steer stopping, among others, to the event.

We want to share all that we are doing with the world, so please stop in and check out what we have going at the LTC in Curtis and make plans to enter or watch the spring events!

