

Jan. 11, 2018

Special to the NCTA Dean's Column

Looking toward continued growth and opportunity in 2018

By Hank Bounds

President, University of Nebraska

A new year is a time for us to reflect on the progress we've made, look ahead and recommit ourselves to our goals.

With thousands of talented students and faculty returning to campus, and important initiatives underway across our University and state that will grow Nebraska for the future, I'm filled with gratitude and anticipation for what 2018 will bring.

The past year was a period of remarkable transformation for our University.

There were challenges, yes – and those aren't going away. Chief among them is the difficult reality that we are dealing with budget cuts at a time when the role of our public University in growing our state's economy and quality of life has never been more important. We understand the state's fiscal situation, but I will continue to advocate for a strong, affordable University that serves all of Nebraska and changes lives here and around the world.

Amid challenges, there was also success, and there was opportunity. There were inspiring stories of impact and partnership that showed me Nebraskans have their eyes on the horizon.

We celebrated a record-high enrollment – 53,000 future nurses and doctors, farmers and ranchers, teachers and entrepreneurs across our four campuses and in Curtis. That wouldn't be possible without strong partnerships with the state and private sector that help keep our tuition affordable and the support of students and parents who believe in the power of a University education.

We produced another 11,000 graduates for the workforce – talent on which Nebraska companies rely and who will someday create jobs and businesses that we can't even envision yet.

We completed the boldest public-private partnership in Nebraska history, the Fred & Pamela Buffett Cancer Center, a shared venture between the University, private donors, Legislature and Governor, city, county and people of Nebraska. This facility will transform cancer care and research for the 1 of every 2 Nebraskans who will be diagnosed at some point in their lives. The images of the cancer center's first patients – like a woman named Helen, an adenoid cystic

carcinoma patient who got up at 3:30 a.m. to drive from her home near Falls City to receive treatment – are ones I won't soon forget.

We continued to lead the way in research that matters to Nebraska and the world. Our faculty's work in water and agriculture, powered by partnerships with farmers and ranchers across our state, is helping to feed a growing global population that will require twice as much food by 2050. The work our faculty are doing to keep our warfighters safe is meeting the needs of our partners at USSTRATCOM and the Department of Defense. And those are just a few examples.

What keeps me up at night is that we are facing fiscal challenges during a period of such momentum. We're in the process now of cutting our spending by \$30 million, a rethinking of the way we do business that has yielded efficiencies that we can be proud of. But we will not close our shortfall without impacting academic programs and losing jobs. And the cuts would be more significant if we had not already raised tuition this year and next. Further cuts would only deepen the impact, limiting our ability to educate the future workforce, offer a wide breadth of programs and have a statewide presence.

The good news is that I hear every day from Nebraskans who are convinced there's never been a more important time to join together on a plan for our state's future. They believe, as I do, that we must grow our way out of the current challenges, and that their University plays a vital role.

We're going to spend 2018 engaging Nebraskans in that conversation. That's what I'm excited about in this new year.

* * * * *

NCTA Dean's Report: *I appreciate this message shared by University of Nebraska President Hank Bounds. The Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture at Curtis is proud to be a vital part of the University of Nebraska system. Students have returned to Curtis and campus this week for the start of the new semester. We are all looking forward to this new year of challenges, growth and partnerships with each of you. ~ NCTA Dean Ron Rosati*

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.

#

Source: Ron Rosati, PhD, NCTA dean (308) 367-5200
Editor: Mary Crawford, NCTA News, (308) 367-5231, mcrawford@unl.edu
Deans.Column.01.08.18