



# NEBRASKA COLLEGE OF TECHNICAL AGRICULTURE

Jan. 26, 2021

## **NCTA in 2020 – Part 2**

NCTA Dean's Message by Larry Gossen, Ph.D.

Winter has definitely arrived at the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture. Thank you to the Curtis community for assisting our students and staff during the snowstorm this week. We appreciate the work and services in keeping our campus community healthy and operating safely.

Last week, I shared reflections of 2020 in Part 1, so today we continue with the Part 2 of the NCTA Year in Review featuring the graduating Class of 2020, the Fall semester, recruiting, in-person events, communications, alumni, and recognitions.



*Rulon Taylor, left, and Andela Taylor, right, joined the NCTA recruiting staff in 2020. (Annie Bassett / NCTA News photo)*

## **Class of 2020**

Although our Spring semester ended with the final eight weeks in remote learning, NCTA celebrated the Class of 2020 in virtual methods. Special arrangements through the Dean's Office and Student Services provided graduates with caps, gowns and diplomas mailed in time for a virtual awards event and graduation ceremony in July. This recognition can be viewed at <https://ncta.unl.edu/2020> Later in the summer, with permission for a group event by the Southwest Public Health Department and the University of Nebraska, NCTA hosted a special reception in The Barn (student union) for graduates. On Sept. 26, President Ted Carter and Vice President Mike Boehm attended this festive event with some graduates and their families who were able to travel to Curtis.

## **On-campus Events**

With careful logistical planning by University, state and health entities, NCTA conducted in-person classes for veterinary technicians for eight weeks of summer session. This was a worthy test of full campus operations which enabled Fall semester to begin in late August, on our usual start date. Fall enrollment exceeded pandemic goals as our hands-on, face-to-face settings attracted additional students from institutions, both in and out-of-state, that were teaching remotely.

## **Experiential Learning, Recruitment**

Alan Taylor, M.S. in animal nutrition, became the fulltime Experiential Learning Coordinator in May, 2020. He teaches animal science, oversees livestock and farm laboratory resources for classes and for campus education programs such as FFA and 4-H activities, and manages the NCTA farm staff. He also is the Shotgun Sports coach.

NCTA Student Services was again fully staffed in 2020 with hiring of an enrollment associate, Gaylene Stinman, in the Spring, and two recruiters, Andela Taylor and Rulon Taylor (unrelated), in the Fall. Along with Aggie student ambassadors and summer student workers, they provided a presence virtually, on campus and were able to visit a few high schools which reopened to guests in late Fall. Admissions were steady through virtual tours and on-campus visits throughout the summer and fall.

We also hosted Discovery Days in October and November with a new theme of "NCTA: Where your passion becomes a career." Discovery Days netted 90% of the attendees submitting an application. In the Fall, NCTA also hosted four FFA events at campus for Districts 9 and 11. The live sessions brought many FFA students to NCTA who'd not been to campus before and provided a "near normal" opportunity for these FFA events to occur when most in-person youth activities had ceased.

### **Aggie Connections**

Josi Arnold, 2014 alumna of the veterinary technology program, joined the NCTA team in February as the Dean's Office administrative associate. Josi assists many sectors of the NCTA campus community including the Aggie Alumni Association. In 2020, a web page dedicated to Aggie Alumni news and activities was updated at <https://ncta.unl.edu/aggie-alumni>. Due to the pandemic, the 2020 Aggie reunion was postponed to June 26, 2021 on campus in Curtis. All alumni of the high school and college institutions are invited to attend.

A new digital communications piece entitled, *NCTA News Weekly*, was launched in October 2020 to inform NCTA students and campus community. Readers will find feature profiles on Aggie students, faculty and staff, along with stories and photos from campus activities.

### **Recognitions**

Highlights of individual and collective accomplishments in 2020 included:

- Wallet Hub again named NCTA a Top 2-Year College for career outcomes, based on income derived of federal records of Aggies 10 years post-graduation. NCTA also was named Top 2-Year college in Nebraska for career outcomes and student success.
- Dr. Brad Ramsdale, agronomy professor, received the Bruntz Family Teaching Award for 2020.
- Sandy Wills, a 25-year employee in custodial staff, received the Excellence in Service Award for 2020.
- Veterinary Technology Professor Barbara Berg received an IANR 40-year Service Award.
- Dan Stehlik, agricultural mechanics instructor, was recognized with the Outstanding Postsecondary Program Award by the Nebraska Agricultural Education Association.
- NCTA was named the 2020 Outstanding Postsecondary Career and Technical Education Program by the Nebraska CTE Division of the Nebraska Department of Education, and the Association for CTE Nebraska.
- A Federal Perkins Funding Action Grant of \$100,000 was awarded to NCTA by the Nebraska Department of Education (which administers the federal monies) to boost Career, Technical and Adult Education programs at the college level. The technology resources purchased in 2021 will enhance NCTA academics in agronomy, equine science, animal science and veterinary technology.
- A gift by the Mervin A. Eighmy Foundation will provide a MIG welding system for the welding program.

*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 for the success of student teams in numerous 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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