Connecting to careers with CTE
NCTA Dean’s Message by Larry Gossen, Ph.D.

Building student success. Building academic environments. Building stairsteps to a career.

All are components in our statewide mission at the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture in Curtis.

This month, we join partners in secondary and postsecondary education across Nebraska and the nation in observing Career and Technical Education month.

CTE programs are career fields in agriculture, food and natural resources such as those we focus on here at NCTA; business, marketing and management; health sciences; computer science and technology; human sciences, family and consumer sciences; and skilled and technical sciences.

NCTA is a proven leader in CTE, with our hands-on opportunities preparing skilled individuals for high-demand, high-wage careers in the agricultural or veterinary technology workforce.

In fact, in June 2020, NCTA was recognized by the Nebraska Department of Education and the Association for Career and Technical Education Nebraska as the 2020 Outstanding Postsecondary CTE Program in the state.

Later in 2020, NCTA was awarded a CTE program grant of $100,000 to expand distance, mobile and on-site education programs in workforce development.

We are now in the process of obtaining bids and using the grant from federal Perkins V program funding to purchase advanced technology for expanded youth and adult education programs at NCTA.

Our targeted programs are in agricultural mechanics (welding), agronomy, animal and equine science, and veterinary technology. Through each of these four primary academic programs (along with the expertise gained in agribusiness management also provided at NCTA) we educate a skilled workforce for the industries and careers offering high wages and are in high demand by employers.

NCTA is a partner in building the stair steps to successful careers for youth or adult learners. Some of our youth education partners are Nebraska Extension and 4-H. Nebraska FFA chapters and leadership entities are key partners. And middle schools and high schools are building blocks to career awareness.
Career connections

Public and private schools join with Nebraska Extension and dozens of employers and educational partners such as NCTA in a popular program called “Connect the Dots.” Two regional events had to be cancelled this week, unfortunately, due to the frigid temperatures and power outages. NCTA will be prepared when these are rescheduled so our recruiters can provide information about going to college.

Through advance interest profiles, then a series of interactive exercises for the students who attend a Connect the Dots event, the youth can explore their interests and opportunities in careers. We look forward to helping make that connection.

Recently, ninth-grade students from Perkins County High School visited NCTA to see what a technical college can provide in career development. They were explorers seeing, firsthand, the NCTA agricultural mechanics shop with hands-on opportunities in welding, electricity, and center pivot irrigation technology.

At Veterinary Science, they viewed laboratories and classrooms. For some, it may have been a first time to step foot on a college campus much less see x-rays of a cat, or the skeletal structure of a cow displayed down the hall in the anatomy and physiology classroom.

Knowledgeable graduates are trained at NCTA in agronomy and crops production, in livestock management and equine sciences, and agribusiness marketing. By the end of 2021, NCTA will have more resources and advanced technologies for our CTE programs. I look forward to sharing our progress for Aggie students and learners in our public programs.

Mark your calendars to further explore NCTA on March 2 and April 12 in our Discovery Days. NCTA: Where your passion becomes a career!

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 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.

Upcoming events:
Feb. 17-20: NCTA at Cattlemen’s Classic, Kearney
Feb. 18-19: Women in Ag Conference, remote
Feb. 20: Food Pantry, 9-11 a.m. Curtis Community Center
Feb. 20-21: NCTA Stock Dog Trials at campus
Feb. 22: Collegiate FFA Cupcake Sale, Ed Center
Feb. 24: District 9 FFA CDE’s at NCTA
Feb. 24: FFA Ag Olympics, 7:30 p.m., LTC Arena
Feb. 24: Red Cross Blood Drive, Maywood

Online: https://go.unl.edu/ipbw