

February 20, 2017

Dean's Column by Ron Rosati, PhD

### **Celebrating traditions of NCTA and FFA**

George Washington was a politician, farmer, arborist and agricultural leader who led our nation as the first president.

He also was an inspiration for the founders of the FFA who in 1947 established a national week of observance for the Future Farmers of America. National FFA Week is to be observed annually at the time of President Washington's birth date.

In 2017, from Feb. 18-25, the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture joins in the salute to the National FFA Organization and FFA Week.

As a post-secondary institution which is one of the nation's few "agriculture-only" colleges, NCTA fully embraces the FFA mission.

Students planning to become high school agriculture teachers and FFA advisers can start their careers at NCTA. We have an award-winning curriculum in agricultural education which provides the first two years of the required bachelor's degree. NCTA students then transfer to UNL to complete their degree with our outstanding colleagues in Lincoln.

NCTA's special transfer arrangement guarantees that NCTA students can complete their bachelor's degree in four years. Students have the added advantage of being able to take their hands-on, applied courses here at NCTA which give them the technical skills required for teaching high school courses.

The NCTA Agricultural Education program features an Associate of Science core curriculum of 26-28 credits, plus a specialized agricultural education focus of 24 credits, and 11 credits of advisor-guided electives for a total of 64 credit hours.

We offer a very high quality, rigorous academic program that provides training in technical agriculture, leadership, youth development and general academic skills. Our students are on track for careers as agriculture teachers, extension educators, and as leaders in agricultural communications.

Dr. Doug Smith, animal science professor and livestock judging team coach, is chairman of the NCTA Animal Science and Agricultural Education Division. He also holds the title of "Professor of Practice" with his counterparts at UNL. In this capacity, Dr. Smith can teach classes for both the Lincoln and Curtis campuses as he prepares NCTA students for their transfer to UNL.

NCTA also supports the Aggie Collegiate FFA and 4-H Club where students can gain valuable leadership and professional development experiences. At NCTA, they are event leaders and ambassadors providing tours and interactive opportunities for visitors and prospective students. They help at contests and expos such as Nebraska State Fair, Nebraska State FFA Conference, and the Cattlemen's Classic. They also provide agricultural literacy lessons in school settings with area FFA chapters, in elementary, middle school or high school programs, and at day camps and community career events.

As we celebrate FFA Week and the future of our agricultural leaders, producers and agribusiness owners in America, I invite you to explore more about NCTA's career preparedness by visiting our web site at <http://ncta.unl.edu/agriculture-education> or contacting Dr. Smith at 1-800-3CURTIS.

**NCTA Events:**

23-24: Women in Agriculture conference, Kearney

24-25: Cattlemen's Classic, Kearney

27: Central Nebraska Science and Engineering Fair, 8 a.m.-5 p.m., Ed Center

28: Master Gardener class, 6:30-9 p.m., Ag Hall

**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.*

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FFA students compete in a District floriculture contest at the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture. (Crawford/NCTA photo)