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NCTA Dean's Column by Ron Rosati, Ph.D.

### **Access to higher education in Curtis and beyond**

An important part of the mission for the the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture at Curtis is to provide Nebraska residents with access to higher education services.

NCTA serves as the open door to the University of Nebraska. The college accomplishes this mission by being affordable and by accepting all eligible applicants. Students wishing to continue their education after completing a degree at NCTA have the option of transferring to the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, or other four-year universities, to complete a bachelor's degree in two years.

Agriculture students who choose to begin a college career at a two-year college may decide to continue their education beyond the associate degree to enhance their career opportunities. Some careers, such as employment as a high school agriculture teacher, require a bachelor's degree.

To facilitate easy transfer, NCTA and the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources (CASNR) at UNL formed a partnership which resulted in a significant increase in the number of students transferring from NCTA to UNL to complete a bachelor's degree.

A number of successful strategies have been implemented to make transfer easy for NCTA graduates.

The college has implemented six course-to-course articulation agreements which identify which courses from NCTA transfer directly to bachelor's degrees at UNL so that students in these degree plans can complete their programs in a total of four years between the two institutions.

Students can now receive direct UNL credit for courses taught at NCTA. In selected NCTA courses, students have the option of taking the course for either NCTA credit or UNL credit.

The college has a new transfer student program titled "Link to Lincoln" which provides joint advising, a visiting student status prior to transfer, and a multi-semester series of "transfer track" activities. These initiatives are designed to familiarize NCTA students with procedures, practices and personnel on the Lincoln campus.

Manyl NCTA courses have been evaluated by UNL faculty and accepted for direct course-to-course transfer between the two campuses. For general education courses, such as English, history and math, the NCTA course carries the same name and has essentially the same student learning outcomes as the UNL course.

Our two campuses have implemented a reverse transfer agreement so that students who move from the Curtis campus to the Lincoln campus prior to completing their associate degree can transfer credits from Lincoln back to Curtis to receive an NCTA associate degree during their junior year at UNL.

After implementing these initiatives for students, transfers from NCTA to CASNR increased from approximately 2% in 2013 to 18% in 2017. This demonstrates that partnership initiatives between our two and four-year institutions can significantly increase student goal attainment for baccalaureate programs.

NCTA and UNL share this goal of increasing the percentage of Nebraska residents who hold credentials in higher education. We are creatively implementing multiple initiatives to help the Nebraskans we serve to achieve this goal.

This initiative is consistent within post-secondary education: 1) University of Nebraska system-level priorities (“Increase the percentage of Nebraska high school graduates ... who enroll at and graduate from the university”), and 2) Lumina Foundation goals (“to ensure that, by 2025, 60 percent of Americans hold a credential beyond high school – a quality credential that prepares people for informed citizenship and economic success”).

We appreciate the support, creativity and collaboration from our colleagues at UNL and the University of Nebraska system as we implement increasing methods for helping NCTA students be successful.

**UPCOMING EVENTS:**

July 4 – Campus closed

July 16 – New Student Enrollment, 8:30 a.m., NCTA Ed Center

Aug. 3 – Summer Session ends

Aug. 8 – Agronomy Youth Field Day, 9 a.m.-3 p.m., NCTA

Aug. 17-19 – New Student Orientation, Welcome Weekend

Aug. 20 – Fall Semester begins

**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.*



Students at the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture in Curtis evaluate crop residue at the campus farm. Two of the NCTA graduates are pursuing 4-year degrees at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. (Craig Chandler / NCTA)

See this article online at: <https://go.unl.edu/bfhz>

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Source: Ron Rosati, PhD, NCTA dean (308) 367-5200

Editor: Mary Crawford, NCTA News, (308) 367-5231, [mcrawford@unl.edu](mailto:mcrawford@unl.edu)