



NEBRASKA COLLEGE OF TECHNICAL AGRICULTURE

July 14, 2020

Why NCTA: Focus on student success

Dean's Message from Larry Gossen, Ph.D.

This week I ventured off campus to visit some of our agricultural partners and stakeholders of NCTA, including an alumna newer to the ranks of classroom teaching.

Similar to my encounters in the last four weeks, these introductory conversations have been equally energizing and informative to the “new” dean at the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture.

My first stop was to the voice of rural Nebraska (and surrounding states) in the studio of KRVN Radio. I certainly enjoyed meeting the team of agricultural professionals who keep the airwaves live with news, weather, markets and ag information.

Listen in later this week on 880 AM or hear the recorded podcast “Chat with the Chancellor” with Brandon Benitz for our conversation about NCTA and the next academic year. I had a lot of fun meeting Brandon and learning about KRVN along with the history behind the Nebraska Rural Radio Association.

While there, Beth Rogers showed me around the NRRA flagship station – which is a product of farmer and rancher members. I look forward to more visits and projects in ag communications. Thanks, Beth!



Haley Rogers is an NCTA Aggie graduate, agriculture teacher and FFA advisor at Lexington, Nebraska.

The Rogers family is dedicated to agriculture and education. Son, Ross, is an elementary teacher and daughter, Haley, teaches agriculture education in Lexington Public Schools.

Haley started her college career here in Curtis at NCTA in our agriculture education program, earning an associate degree before transferring to the University of Nebraska-Lincoln for a bachelor's.

After student teaching at Gothenburg High School, Haley is starting her second year of teaching fulltime at the middle school and is one of two chapter advisors for Lexington FFA. She has crafted curriculum for middle school students studying agriculture. I applaud the vision and commitment by Lexington Public Schools to launch this academic career track in earlier grades.

I also had a chance to drop in on Brian Neben and Heather Heinemann at the Lexington Clipper-Herald to thank them for their continued support of our programs. It is because of partners like this that our message continues to spread across the state.

Finally, I met with Bruce Treffer with Dawson County Extension. He was busy preparing for the county fair, so our quick visit was a nice touch base on how things were going and how the current pandemic had impacted 4-H programs and the extension office.

I look forward to making visits to more Nebraska communities and NCTA partners, and invite your suggestions and invitations for a chat.

Thanks, Team NCTA!

Congratulations and thank you to the team here at NCTA for wrapping up the 2019-2020 year, both academic and fiscal, with the annual awards recognition for staff and faculty.

Last week the NCTA Awards Committee, led by Mary Rittenhouse, chair of the Agribusiness Management Systems division, honored two individuals with annual campus-wide awards, some “fun” acknowledgements and we all said a huge thank you to Dr. Kelly Bruns who served as interim dean at NCTA for the past 10 months.

Excellence in Service Award: Sandy Wills has been in the NCTA custodial and security services for 25 years. Her commitment was saluted by our campus community. Bravo, Sandy!

Bruntz Family Award for Teaching: Dr. Brad Ramsdale, chair of the Agronomy and Agricultural Mechanics division was named the 2020 faculty member to receive this high honor. Professor Ramsdale is a dedicated and top-notch educator and advisor who makes a significant difference in the lives of his students and all NCTA Aggies. Congratulations, Brad!

Aggie Buckle: Dr. Kelly Bruns was presented an Aggie commemorative belt buckle from the campus faculty and staff members as an appreciation salute for his leadership during the NCTA transition prior to my arrival in June. He wore two hats for nearly a year. He continues as director of the University of Nebraska West Central Research and Extension Center, North Platte, and has a courtesy appointment at NCTA as associate dean.

Kudos from colleagues: Eric Reed, chair of the General Education division, stepped into the role of coordinator and campus leader as NCTA prepared for reauthorization of accreditation by a Higher Learning Commission regional review team. Mary Rittenhouse thanked Professor Reed and Dr. Ramsdale for their stellar work in leading strategic planning, assessment and coordination for this HLC process. It was a great success!

Mary presented Eric Reed, an English instructor and author, with an old, manual typewriter so he could type his next great novel on a Hemingway-like tool. For Dr. Ramsdale's thank you, she and retired NCTA lecturer and previous HLC coordinator Dottie Evans (who now resides in Kansas with retired professor Paul Clark) put their heads together for a timely acknowledgement. You may see Brad using a purple, protective facial mask supportive of his alma mater, Kansas State University Wildcats. (Here in the Land of Red, we KSU fans must stick together, you realize)!

Until next week, I'll say thank you, all, and Go Aggies!

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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