



NEBRASKA COLLEGE OF TECHNICAL AGRICULTURE

July 21, 2020

Look ahead, Aggies

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

It's official. My wife, Fay, and I have been Nebraska residents for five weeks.

We moved into the Dean's residence on the campus of the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture in June so that I could begin my duties June 15.

From Day One, it's been an enjoyable transition. Getting to know the names of friends and business owners in Curtis. Settling into our home once all of our furnishings arrived in the moving van from the house in Springfield, Missouri.

Exploring some of the area communities in southwestern Nebraska. And, of course, navigating around this lovely campus and into Aggieland, the wooded area and pasture where the NCTA cowherd grazes for part of the year.

We are making memories, and by the time you are reading this message, we have hosted our adult children and grandchildren to our new home in Curtis.

It be remiss of me to not extend my sincerest gratitude from Fay and me for your kind welcome to town, and to this wonderful campus community. Thank you!

Learning curve

I'm thrilled to be the dean of NCTA. We are the only two-year institution that is part of the University of Nebraska system, and it is unwavering in its support of student success. NCTA has a statewide mission of preparing students for successful careers in agriculture, veterinary technology and related industries, and I am excited to now be an NCTA Aggie.

During the application phase and early interviews for the position of NCTA dean, I had several conversations with individuals in the community and the NU system.

I learned a great deal about the NU Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources, along with NCTA's much larger counterpart in education, the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources, which are both based at East Campus of the flagship campus, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

To be honest, the commonly-used acronyms IANR, CASNR and UNL are now frequently used during my daily conversations. It seems everyone in Nebraska agriculture has these in their household's lingo.



NCTA Dean Larry Gossen, on right, visits with Jeremy Sievers, agribusiness professor, and Associate Dean Jennifer McConville at Ag Hall during a visit in May. (NCTA photo)

I've been undergoing an immersion for my new role as NCTA dean, a process of administrative "onboarding" that brings me daily into Zoom sessions with individuals across departments and campuses throughout the state. Each day is an adventure, with me as the student!

This educational journey spans new faces, names and duties to commit to my brain bank, and confirmation of the goals I'd outlined for myself and NCTA should I be selected as the new dean.

Forward view

Here are a top five:

- Financial resiliency, and donor and stakeholder stewardship
- Recruitment: Growing NCTA as a destination for technical agriculture in Nebraska and beyond
- NCTA culture: continue to build an inclusive community and esprit-de-corps among faculty, staff, students
- Development of partners: Strengthen existing partnerships with community colleges, public schools, UNL's College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources, industry partners, and alumni to ensure Nebraska and the surrounding region continues to draw from a talented workforce of agricultural professionals and leaders
- Curriculum relevancy: Ensure that NCTA's curriculum is cutting edge, experiential, aligned with talent and workforce needs and leads to exceptional student success outcomes

Discover Your Way

A primary slogan NCTA has used for years has been to "Discover Your Way at NCTA." I've applied that to my learning curve, or some might coin it as the deep plunge. My education continues into Month Two.

I am inviting potential students and those with some trepidation about entering college this fall to give us a phone call. Ask questions. Visit with Gaylene, Vicky or Kevin in Student Services. Come to second floor of Ag Hall and have a conversation with Jennifer McConville, Josi Arnold, or myself in the Dean's Office.

Being a student here in Curtis is a great experience, just ask me, the new dean! Until next week, 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.

Online: <https://go.unl.edu/apjq>

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