



# NEBRASKA COLLEGE OF TECHNICAL AGRICULTURE

August 19, 2021

## **Opening Day at NCTA**

By NCTA Dean's Message Larry Gossen, Ph.D.

Welcome Aggie students to the new year at the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture. We are glad you are here!

We begin classes August 23<sup>rd</sup> and have a great orientation weekend planned for incoming freshmen and transfer students. Saturday is move-in day for our new Aggies residing on campus in one of the three residence halls.

A hearty greeting, as well, to the parents and family members who accompany their students for their move to Curtis.

The community has rolled out the welcome mat, as has our staff and campus community. Enjoy your time at NCTA and in Curtis. Please let us know if you have any questions or how we can assist.

Along with our sophomore Aggies, this will be my second opening of the academic year. What an exciting time!

Fay and I became new Curtis residents a little over a year ago, when I became NCTA dean last June. We love living in Curtis. We greatly appreciate our friends, neighbors, and colleagues here in southwest Nebraska.

A huge thank you, in advance, to the Medicine Valley Chamber of Commerce and local volunteers for co-hosting welcome packets and a campus picnic this weekend. Area businesses, churches and organizations will soon meet Aggie students as one of this weekend's orientation activities is a scavenger hunt around town and on main street. Enjoy the social time and get acquainted.

### **Campus housing leaders**

A team of 11 students will serve as Resident Assistants and leaders in student life programs this fall. Residence Life Manager is Erika Arambula.

The team of RAs includes, Rylie Borgerding, Kaden Bryant, Connor Crumbliss, Amy Egelhoff, Ayden Long, Melody MacDonald, Paige McKenzie, Ashlyn Mohling, Olivia Nyberg, Clayton Runkle, and Brianna Sjolander.

Aggie Central and Aggie West each have four RAs in those residence halls. Traditional has three RAs.

These young adults are active in campus organizations, academic and travel teams, and know our programs and campus protocols quite well. They help create an enjoyable, safe, and friendly campus.

### **Health measures**

We are thankful to be having full, in-person classes again this academic year at NCTA. We were quite successful in protecting our campus health from coronavirus last year, due to the safety practices we maintained. Our students on competitive teams could travel and compete, even out of state, with careful hygiene, routine testing (saliva-based) and social distancing. Although some events off campus were virtual, NCTA was able to provide in-person tours and campus visits, plus held some collegiate contests along with FFA, 4-H, and public activities including 2021 Commencement.

With concerns existing this summer with the spread of the delta variant of Covid, we have looked at what we can and should be doing to help maintain a safe, open campus. My utmost priority is the safety of our students, faculty and staff, while keeping a live, in-person campus this year (protecting our bubble).

I have conferred with the Southwest Public Health Department in McCook, plus University of Nebraska leadership. NCTA will implement re-entry testing procedures starting Thursday. This will be a saliva-based test as we did in January and throughout the semester.

This testing is required of everyone that will spend time on campus, regardless of vaccination status.

This week, for re-entry at the start of fall semester, we will test over four days. Depending on the results of the tests, we will then determine if additional random or required testing will be conducted.

As we did last spring, we will test all individuals and teams traveling as a part of NCTA. Also, all who interact with outside groups participating in campus events will be tested.

### **University guidance**

NCTA will follow the guidance of University President Ted Carter. Guidelines are subject to change upon recommendations of President Carter or other health professionals. Current guidelines are:

- All vaccinated faculty, staff and students, as well as visitors to campus, are encouraged, but not required, to wear face masks indoors. Unvaccinated individuals should continue to wear masks.
- COVID-19 vaccination is strongly recommended for all members of the university community. Vaccination is not required.
- Faculty, staff and students are not required to disclose COVID-19 vaccination status. Those who choose not to disclose their status should expect to take additional safety measures.

### **Vaccination clinic Aug. 31**

In accordance with President Carter's second point, NCTA will offer a vaccination clinic on campus on Tuesday, August 31 from 5:30 to 7 p.m. in The Barn student union. This will be the Pfizer vaccine. The second shot will be scheduled at the time of the first shot. The clinic is free of charge and is available to the community.

To register for the inoculation, go to <https://vaccinate.ne.gov> or call the SWPHD at 308-345-4223. A consent form for minors, ages 18 and under, is needed.

### **Course enrollment is open**

College-bound students are still being accepted, along with high school students taking dual credit courses. To register for either, contact Gaylene Stinman at [gstinman2@unl.edu](mailto:gstinman2@unl.edu). College classes are \$139 per credit hour. Dual credit classes are half price. See the dual credit course listing at <https://go.unl.edu/udom>.

I look forward to welcoming everyone to NCTA.

### **NCTA Events:**

Aug. 23: NCTA Fall Semester at Curtis and Dual Credit Classes begin  
Aug. 25: Gudmundsen Sandhills Laboratory Open House, 8 a.m., Whitman  
Aug. 25: NCTA Recruiter at Cuming County College Fair, West Point  
Aug. 27: Final day to register for Dual Credit classes  
Aug. 27: Nebraska State Fair opening day  
Aug. 31: COVID-19 Vaccination Clinic, 5:30-7 p.m., NCTA Student Union

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Resident assistants at the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture are student staff at three residence halls. This group welcomed Aggies last year. In person classes begin August 23 in Curtis. (M. Crawford / NCTA News)