



August 29, 2019

NCTA Dean's Message  
By Interim Dean Kelly Bruns, Ph.D.

### **Communication and collaboration are key**

CURTIS, Neb. - A popular slogan during my youthful days of showing livestock and participating in 4-H projects in Hall County was "put your best foot forward."

Our staff and faculty at the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture did exactly that this past couple of weeks. As they prepared the campus for the fall semester to begin, they put their best foot forward.

Students and families traveled to Curtis, many coming from long distances, to ensure their investment in a college education was off to a good start, with the best foot forward.

I shared with our new students at orientation on Sunday that I am very glad they have chosen this institution. Our collaboration at NCTA is different than public high school.

There, taxpayers paid for their education. The taxpayers also pay a big chunk of it here, but the students make an investment from their own pockets in many cases, or that of their parents' pockets.

Also, the student-teacher relationship at college is different from high school, too, in that the students are our clients, paying clients. That relationship changes a lot from the senior year in high school to today, as does the communication. Students identify and voice their needs, as does the college on what we can fulfill.

We engage in an ongoing process of expectations, communication, collaboration and accountability. As faculty and staff we are accountable to our clients, and they are as well to our institution. We have standards that a degree from NCTA meets all of the requirements of the University of Nebraska.

But it also carries a bit of a reputation to it. So not only is this a two-way street with us, according to accountability standards, but we want students to leave here in two years being successful and holding us to standards. Communication becomes key in how we communicate those deficiencies in either area. I hope that the relationships developed with NCTA faculty and staff become very important.

Early in August, I stopped and talked with retired Dean Steve Waller of the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources. He attended a two-year college before going to Purdue University to finish his four-year degree. He talked about leaving his small town in Indiana and community college to go to the booming town of Lafayette. And one of the things he said was he never would have been successful if it hadn't been for the students on either side of him.



*NCTA Aggies put their best foot forward on the way to New Student Orientation. Classes began Monday at the Curtis campus. (Crawford/NCTA)*

We all have a lot of talents, and many of us have some deficiencies. People have some great talents, and those of you who have those God-given talents need to help those of us who have some deficiencies.

I was a first-generation college student from a diversified farming and cattle going to college in the Eighties when it was a tough time financially. I am fortunate for me to be where I am today, and it's because I had the opportunity to be around some people with outstanding talents. My message to students is, "See how you can capture the strengths of the person next to you, and if they drag you along or you bring them along first, that can be key to your success."

### **Thanks, Partners!**

The community welcome picnic for NCTA students on Sunday was a huge success. We are grateful for hometown hospitality.

- Medicine Creek Valley Chamber of Commerce members stuffed welcome packets with small gifts, coupons, business offers for students, and area information.
- The Rotary Club of Curtis grilled and served hamburgers
- Cookies and desserts provided by area churches included Berean Bible Church, St. James Catholic Church, St. John's Lutheran Church, First United Methodist Church, Lonestar Cowboy Church of Farnam, and Vineyard Christian Fellowship.
- Western Nebraska Bank for serving root beer floats

College students often share in fellowship and meals at some of the churches on Sunday noon or evening. That's what small town fellowship is all about in rural Nebraska.

Since Monday is the finale for the Nebraska State Fair and it is Labor Day weekend, we know many of our students will be traveling or away from campus until Tuesday. It should be warmer weather and hopefully, if you are harvesting last cutting of alfalfa or finishing up some of the delayed harvest in the area, you can have a safe and productive weekend.

Until next time, go Aggies!

***NCTA Mission:** The Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture is devoted to a statewide mission of preparing students for successful careers in agriculture, veterinary technology, and related industries. The college provides open access to innovative technical education resulting in associate degrees, certificates, and other credentials*

### **Upcoming events:**

Aug. 30-31 – Aggies volunteer at the State Fair, Grand Island

Sept. 2 – Labor Day, NCTA Offices closed

Sept. 4 – NCTA Student Seminar, "The Hook-up", 7-9 p.m., Ed Center

Sept. 8 – Stock Dog Club practice