



# NEBRASKA COLLEGE OF TECHNICAL AGRICULTURE

Nov. 9, 2021

## **Real conversations are key to recruitment**

By Andela Taylor, NCTA recruiting coordinator

The recent National FFA Convention in Indianapolis concluded several months of recruiting on-the-road for my fellow recruiter Rulon Taylor and me.

These travels included state and national high school rodeo events, state FFA conventions, junior livestock shows, the Nebraska State Fair, Husker Harvest Days, and nearly 30 college fairs across Nebraska.

The big takeaway is not surprising. Face-to-face conversations are essential in making strong connections with prospects and sharing the NCTA story with the enthusiasm it deserves. The excitement is contagious when a student with career aspirations and passions we can serve discovers us!

Common themes that occurred at every recruitment site included students' passion for horses and animals in general, desire for a small campus, need for affordability, and aspiration for an out-of-state college experience.

They liked the focus of our academic programs in agronomy, animal science, ag business and vet tech, along with the ag mechanic trade certificates. Students expressed the importance of teams and clubs to enhance their academic interests. The reactions to learning about our one-and-only collegiate stock dog team are delightful.

### **In-person classes**

The fact that NCTA returned quickly to in-person classes in June 2020 (and remained that way) after remote learning was a significant talking point to share. Our one-rate tuition and highly affordable room and board — and, of course, horse-boarding and the indoor arena - helped us check many boxes for students and parents alike.

The safety of our campus in a rural town, conveniently connected to the ag land and pertinent facilities, was a huge hit. Students applauded the prospect of diving right into two years of hands-on learning by student-focused faculty with shared passions, expertise, and industry connections.

We carried the message of career opportunities available in ag for non-farm students to the many college fairs across Nebraska.

The massive Husker Harvest Days event brings this realization to life in the middle of a cornfield. Every conversation with industry exhibitors there revealed these opportunities and the urgency of recruitment with the ever-tightening labor force of the future.

### **Friendly campus**

Our region won an extraordinary prize when Curtis was selected in 1911 to become a high school of agricultural excellence. It is the ultimate testimony to the vision, dedication, and generosity of the pioneer leaders of Curtis.

The presence of nearly 300 young people, ever-changing annually, in our midst, creates an opportunity for exposure to the quality of life we appreciate here. Their visiting friends and family broaden that network.

As we entice these potential students for a campus visit, Curtis residents may bump into them or their families in town. I would encourage our campus community to have a friendly conversation with guests—tell them about your favorite places or events in town or about a past or current student you’ve known. It will reveal the way the community enriches the student’s college-life experience.

### **Small towns celebrate veterans best**

As the daughter of a nearly 90-year-old United States Air Force veteran pilot and the wife of a United States Marine Corps veteran officer, my family cherishes gathering to celebrate the USMC birthday on November 10 and Veterans Day on November 11.

I appreciate the hard work and dedication of the American Legion and Auxiliary members serving at civic events, military funerals and providing the opportunity for youth to attend Cornhusker Girl’s and Boy’s State.

Our small-town celebrations of Veterans Day are important not only to show our respect but to help bring back the good memories of friendships and experiences of service members. It is heartwarming to see the schools now leading the Veterans Day celebration in our small towns.

Join in this celebration Thursday, taking the opportunity to express your gratitude and ask a veteran about a favorite experience or a special friend they made during their service. You will likely get a smile and a story!

### **NCTA Campus Events:**

Nov. 10: District 11 FFA judging contests, NCTA Campus

Nov. 10: Grazing Lands Program, 5 p.m., Ed Center (public, preregister)

Nov. 11: Veterans Day, NCTA is in session

Nov. 11: Collegiate Cattlemen Producers Panel, 6 p.m., Ed Center (public)

Nov. 12-14: Stock Dog Clinic, Kent Herbel, LTC Arena (preregister)

Nov. 15: NCTA Discovery Day, 8:30 a.m., Ed Center (preregister)

Nov. 16: Native American Heritage Month program, 7 p.m., Ed Center (public)

*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 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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Online: <https://go.unl.edu/vpmz>



NCTA’s booth in The Collegiate Connection at National FFA Expo was a prime opportunity for conversations on agricultural careers. (Andela Taylor / NCTA photo)