

Nov. 10. 2020

Be safe, stay healthy

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

Now in our 12th week of in-person classes since starting the fall semester on August 24, our Aggie community continues to work hard on keeping the campus a healthy and safe environment for education.

I commend the diligence of all as we social distance, utilize facial coverings, and practice healthy choices by avoiding large groups.



NCTA veterinary technology students Kaylee Springer, left, and Gaby Campisi clean the ears of a dog. Facial coverings are required to be worn inside all campus buildings for COVID-19 precaution. (Crawford / NCTA News photo)

including classrooms, labs, arenas, offices, dorm common areas, hallways, and dining facilities. We ask everyone to respect these policies.

The requirement for masks also includes students engaged at intramural activities off campus in the gymnasium of the Curtis Community Center. Teams are playing volleyball now and will have championship rounds starting soon.

Additionally, NCTA will require 25% occupancy of indoor halls, classrooms, and events. We have shifted all seating and spacing to abide by this requirement.

Since the start of the semester in August, all classrooms, laboratories, offices, dining areas, restrooms, and common public areas have been cleaned after each class or group of occupants in the area. Cleaning schedules are adhered to with diligence.

The campus has issued sanitizing supplies and personal protective equipment in the buildings and to all personnel. We have consolidated food service for the campus to Aggie Dining in one location at the cafeteria. If students have been in contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID, they are asked to quarantine. We have provided accommodations for isolation in a separate area of a residence hall, if needed.

As a college, we have been actively engaged in planning and following health processes since two dozen students returned to campus for summer session in June.

Guidance from the Southwest Nebraska Health Department, University of Nebraska and State of Nebraska is an integral aspect of our health policies and campus operations.

Because of changes in Directed Health Measures issued in Nebraska on Monday, NCTA has upgraded its risk level dial from yellow to orange for the rest of the semester. This is designed for the health and safety of our entire campus community. Moving into the orange means masks will be required in all indoor facilities

Event process

A thorough evaluation and decision-making process is used for campus events and all NCTA-related travel. Each professor and staff member who plans an activity on campus or makes a request for travel to an off-campus event such as a horse show, judging contest or outreach activity, submits a written plan to administrators. This also includes a risk assessment for the level of activity, number of participants, ability to socially distance and the status of risk at the destination. I evaluate the goals, risk and value of each request.

We have opted to forego attendance or outreach at several public events this fall. These include large gatherings conducted by non-NCTA organizers.

One on-campus activity we are proceeding with this week is District FFA events and contests for Thursday and Friday. We are in communication with high school leadership to ensure FFA chapters who are participating will rotate by respective school.

Occupancy will follow directed health measures, masks are required, and chapter members will not be mingling with others outside of their school population.

The schools unable to travel to the campus may be participating virtually, to provide engagement in career development events. We look forward to ensuring a successful and safe day for everyone.

One health measure we've taken is to offer COVID testing on campus through TestNebraska. We look forward to providing a second opportunity.

Always, our goals are to keep every visitor and person at NCTA healthy and safe, and to continue providing in-person classes and educational opportunities through the remainder of the semester.

NCTA will proceed to adjourning students on December 11. If, however, we need to revise the schedule, procedures are in place.

I appreciate the cooperation from our immediate and extended campus community and the families of our students and staff. Follow health agency recommendations to avoid the 3 C's and follow the 3 W's:

- The 3 C's: Avoid Crowded places, Confined spaces, Close contact situations.
- The 3 W's: Wear your mask, Watch your distance, Wash your hands.

Thank you for supporting our Aggie students. Be safe and well!

NCTA Events:

Nov. 11: Salute to America's Veterans

Nov. 12: District FFA CDE, 8:30 a.m.-2 p.m., NCTA

Nov. 13: District 9 FFA Contest, NCTA

Nov. 24: District FFA Leadership Development Event, NCTA

Nov. 26-27: Thanksgiving break, campus offices closed

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 article: <https://go.unl.edu/i0ue>