

Nov. 30, 2017

Dean's Column by Ron Rosati, PhD

NCTA is into Business

I would like to feature our award-winning academic divisions of the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture during the next four editions of the NCTA Dean's Column.

We will start this week by featuring the programs, faculty and student organizations associated with Agribusiness Management.

The Agribusiness Management Systems (AMS) academic major supports the college mission by striving to develop students into competent citizens through general education and by promoting financial skills, management ability, entrepreneurship, character, and integrity.

Agribusiness Management graduates pursue careers in agricultural finance and at farm cooperatives; as office managers in various agricultural companies and as partners or owners of production agriculture businesses.



Graduates will have completed 72-73 credit hours for an Associate of Applied Science degree. Some NCTA students seek a double major and add a third year of studies to secure an agribusiness management degree in addition to a degree in another area such as agricultural production systems.

Our AMS faculty is comprised of two fulltime members - Mary Rittenhouse, associate professor and AMS chair, and Jeremy Sievers, associate professor. Dave Jibben is a long-serving employee at the college who currently teaches as a part-time lecturer in Agribusiness Management Systems.

Core classes for all AMS students include an internship, seminar, accounting, microeconomics, concepts in management, business statistics (or college algebra) and critical thinking. Details of courses are outlined at: <https://ncta.unl.edu/agribusiness-management-systems-0>.

One example of NCTA's strong experiential learning program for our students is the "Cup of Joe on the Go" student coffee shop. This fall semester, 18 students in Management Concepts are finding an ideal opportunity to test their skills as small business owners and managers.

Students divide into groups to concentrate on marketing, accounting, finance, purchasing, operations, human resources, and sales – all skills which a local banker says every potential small business owner could use before starting a new venture.

Professor Rittenhouse, who also serves at the coffee shop's CEO, shared an observation recently which is testament to NCTA students and the agriculture industry.

“They are all about what epitomizes agriculture. You rarely hear them grumble about the early morning set up (at 6:30 a.m.), the last minute changes, or the need to be proactive of what needs to be done ... they just do it. “

Another measurement of success for NCTA students is how well they do in agribusiness competitions with their peers from other campuses. Each spring, NCTA sponsors students in a variety of individual and team events at the conference of North American Colleges of Teachers in Agriculture (NACTA).

Earlier this year, at the 2017 NACTA events in Manhattan, Kansas, the NCTA Aggies captured the championship in the multidisciplinary “Knowledge Bowl” among 2-year colleges. Two of the five team members were double majors who also represented the AMS division.

The next day, the academic divisions included three contests for AMS students from NCTA:

- Computer Applications: Alyssa Novak, Eldorado, 1st place individual, and 2nd place team.
- Agribusiness Management: Alyssa Novak, 2nd place individual, and 3rd place team.
- Ag Communications: 3rd place team, and Rachel Dather, Verdigre, 5th place individual.

The AMS faculty prepares the students for the competitions. Jeremy Sievers and Mary Rittenhouse will accompany the students to NACTA in 2018 where events are hosted by Northeast Community College in Norfolk, Nebraska.

Additionally, AMS students will be participating at the Phi Beta Lambda State Leadership Conference in Kearney on March 2, 2018. Students will be competing with 2-year and 4-year institutions in events that range from accounting to economic analysis.

Throughout the school year, many NCTA students are active on campus in extracurricular clubs and organizations. At AMS, the primary club is the NCTA Business Club which is compiling a cookbook and will use proceeds to assist in supporting scholarships and AMS program events for students.

For additional information, contact Mary Rittenhouse at (308) 367-5275 or mrittenhouse2@unl.edu.

NCTA week ahead:

30 – Intramural Volleyball, 5:30 p.m., Community Center

Dec. 2 – “Bring Home the Bacon Trap Shoot,” 10:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., Curtis Gun Club

Dec. 4 – Intramural Volleyball, 5:30 p.m. Community Center

Dec. 6 – Teammates Training session, 6:30 p.m., Ed Center

NCTA Mission:

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

Find this article on-line at: <https://go.unl.edu/2wnt>

#