



Dec. 1, 2020

Wrapped in opportunities

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

Aggie students are wrapping up their final week of classes for the 2020 fall semester. They will have a few final exams or semester projects to complete before they adjourn for the year on December 11.

I'm sure we can all agree it has been quite a year, and not just for college students and our campus community here at the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture.

Fortunately, the pandemic has not halted education. Collectively, with administrative guidance from university, state, local and regional levels, NCTA has been able to successfully provide in-person classes on campus this semester.

After going to remote learning toward the end of March and through April, NCTA was then able to navigate a full 8-week summer session as a "trial" period of sorts. With two dozen veterinary technology students coming to campus in early June, a safe, COVID-19 educational environment was designed.

Credit for the logistics of the class and laboratory sessions is due to the careful planning by the college's leadership. Veterinary Technology Systems program Chair Barbara Berg and her faculty team worked closely with NCTA Interim Dean Kelly Bruns and Associate Dean Jennifer McConville in mapping out each detail, from logistics in physical distancing to creating innovative methods for teaching.

The University of Nebraska leaders and the Southwest Nebraska Public Health District were integral, certainly, in providing guidance and resources for the grand pilot project of in-person educational opportunities.

As I officially became the NCTA dean in mid-June, the summer session was underway. It took immense teamwork from everyone involved during those summer months. Thank you to the students, staff, faculty, administrators, and the Curtis community.

More than once, we've said aloud, "We're all in this together." And we still are as the semester wraps up.

Aggies in Action

Our student body has made extra effort to be engaged in their college experience. NCTA is a place full of opportunities, with hands-on learning in technical skills and direct work with resources.

While our academic mission is foremost, one aspect of a college campus is for individuals to become part of groups or programs outside of the classroom.

A weekly Bible study started early in the semester and is each Tuesday night. For students staying on campus over the weekends, social activities such as movie nights or watching a football game have been hosted at a residence hall.

Clubs such as Collegiate FFA and 4-H shared some fun in decorating gingerbread houses for a contest this week by the Women in Ag club.

Student Senate hosted a “brain break” evening away from hitting the books where students could come and go at The Barn student center for snacks, conversation or watching a movie.

Also, over the past two weeks, students are part of giving to the community. The Agribusiness Club has been collecting contributions to the Toys for Kids holiday project in partnership with the Medicine Valley Chamber of Commerce. New toys were gathered which will be distributed to children in several communities in Frontier County.

Some of our staff and students participated in global effort called Operation Samaritans Purse Pack a Shoebox. Supplies in the box are sent to needy children around the globe.

On campus, the agribusiness department also keeps The Cupboard supplied with items which are donations to students who may need a helping hand with food, clothing, or supplies such as laundry detergent.

These experiences add up to making memories and uniting in some campus opportunities for the holidays. And, for a handful of students who are ending their NCTA career this semester, we join in applauding their hard work in achieving a significant milestone in life.

Well done, Aggie students. I wish each of you the very best in your final exams and upcoming careers!

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.

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Online article: <https://go.unl.edu/pawx>