



NEBRASKA COLLEGE OF TECHNICAL AGRICULTURE

Dec. 7, 2021

Success breeds success

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

I love to eat. Let me be more specific. I love to eat good food. While there are many types of food I do NOT care for, I do love Cajun food.

So, when I had the chance last week to go to New Orleans for a national conference, I started dreaming about all the Cajun delicacies I would have the chance to try out. I was not disappointed.

Now the reason I went to NOLA wasn't for the food, that was just a fringe benefit. The reason Associate Dean Jennifer McConville, Ag Mechanics instructor Dan Stehlik, and I went to NOLA was to attend the awards ceremony for Dan to receive the Outstanding Postsecondary Agricultural Program Award from the National Association of Agricultural Educators (NAAE).

Watching Dan and his Ag Mechanics program get recognized in front of more than 700 of his peers in agricultural education from across the nation was quite exciting. He represented NCTA well. Soon, we will have a link to the presentation video at ncta.unl.edu.



Dan Stehlik is congratulated by NCTA Associate Dean Jennifer McConville and NCTA Dean Larry Gossen after receiving the 2021 Outstanding Postsecondary Agricultural Program Award from the National Association of Agricultural Educators. (Courtesy photo)

Lifetime educator

Dan's path to this award was a lengthy one that started over a year ago with an application to the awards committee of the Nebraska Agricultural Educators Association (NAEA), the state association for teachers in agriculture. He was recognized as a state winner in June 2020, during the NAEA virtual conference. After submitting a nomination to the NAAE Region 3 awards committee this spring, Dan was notified in early August he'd been declared a regional winner.

Dan has been a member of NAEA or KAAE (Kansas Association of Agricultural Educators) for his entire teaching career, nearly 29 years. Consistently, Dan has served in district and state leadership roles plus won several significant awards.

I, too, have been a member of NAAE and its Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTE) and with the organizations in the states where I've resided for the past four and half decades. Membership in professional organizations is an important aspect of an educator's professional development. I am proud that every NCTA faculty member belongs to one or more professional organizations, based on their teaching assignments or personal interests.

Building careers

Nationally, NAAE is part of the Agricultural Education component of ACTE, a national group which "provides educational leadership in developing a competitive workforce. ACTE strives to empower educators to deliver high quality CTE programs that ensure all students are positioned for career success."

You might note, the ACTE mission is very similar to NCTA's mission of preparing Aggie students for successful careers in agriculture, veterinary technology and related industries.

Career and Technical Education (CTE) is comprised of affiliated programs including health occupations, family and consumer sciences, business and marketing, and others. The Nebraska Department of Education (NDE), CTE division, recognized NCTA as its Outstanding Postsecondary Program for 2020 during a virtual Nebraska Career Education conference. A second big award for NCTA last year!

So how does all this tie together? Trust me, it's all interconnected. Dan's NAEA (state) and NAAE (national) awards, and NCTA's CTE award from NDE, were both instrumental in the application that allowed us to receive the \$100,000 Perkins ReVISION grant last October. Our primary item made possible by the grant was a robotic welder for the NCTA welding lab.

Cycle of success

"Success breeds success" is something I've said for years, and I believe to this day. Classroom success leads to success in awards. Recognition leads to successful grant writing. Success with grants enhances classroom resources. Improvements in the classroom and laboratory stimulate further success in awards and competitions, and the circle continues.

This same philosophy applies to every segment of the Aggie campus. Our desire for success for NCTA students will result in successful alumni. Successful alumni are the best recruiters we have in attracting new students to campus.

Just as dining options in NOLA were a fringe benefit to my trip, NCTA gains benefit by the success of our planning and hard work. We are doing what needs to be done to make students successful. Even Dan's award is a fringe benefit for a job well done in the classroom, focusing first on students.

During this season, when we continue to be thankful for our many blessings and look forward to times with friends and family to celebrate traditions during the holidays, let us focus on doing the right things for the right reasons. Then we can celebrate the benefits of our efforts.

NCTA Campus Events:

Dec. 10: NCTA Fall Semester Classes Complete

Dec. 10: Kelly Popp Memorial Service, 3 p.m., NCTA Education Center (livestream from Berean Bible Church)

Dec. 11-12: NCTA/Outback Kelly Popp Memorial Stock Dog Trial, 8 a.m. daily, LTC Arena

Dec. 13-16: NCTA Fall Semester Final Exams

Dec. 15: FFA District 11 LDE at NCTA

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 article: <https://go.unl.edu/t9zu>