



NEBRASKA COLLEGE OF TECHNICAL AGRICULTURE

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Olympic spirit at Aggie Store

By Mary Crawford, NCTA News

An international flair arrives this month in the Aggie Store of the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture.

Winter Olympics bingo and a word puzzle, along with coffee and hot chocolate, are among the fun promotions shoppers will find when they visit the student-run store.

Stocking caps, scarves, mittens, holiday-themed socks or warm gear are on popular. So are gifts for Valentine's Day.

And hospital scrubs (tops and pants) which are required attire for veterinary technology students in lab courses. Along, common school supplies.

"We are getting new stock in every day, it seems," said Mary Rittenhouse, faculty sponsor and academic lead for NCTA's Agribusiness Management Systems.

The retail shop in Ag Hall is located just across the hallway from Nebraska Extension-Frontier County.

Sarai Reed is a part-time student studying Ag Business. She is one of two student employees.

"I enjoy advertising the products on social media and making plans with Mary (Rittenhouse) for how to get students and everyone who comes to NCTA to come into the store," says Reed.

A native of the country of Peru, Reed and her spouse, Eric Reed (General Education professor), and their two children are residents of Curtis.

Last semester, Sarai decided to pursue a degree program.

"I am learning how to operate the cash register and create inventories and marketing plans," said Reed.

She generally works a few hours each day, Monday through Thursday. The store's atmosphere helps break the ice for a non-traditional student.

"I like interacting with the students when they come into the store. My first language is Spanish, so I am getting to work on my English as well."



Sarai Reed enjoys promoting the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture and merchandise in the Aggie Store on campus. (George Hipple Photography / NCTA)

Hands-on learning

Professor Rittenhouse engages the Business Club and other Aggie students to help determine what items to stock. Unique apparel and merchandise sporting the official NCTA logo are most popular.

Devry Bellomy, a diversified agriculture major from Keyes, Oklahoma, also is a student worker. James Lee, Business club president from Sutherland, volunteers through a service project in Human Relations.

Before she graduated in December, Rylie Borgerding of Blue Rapids, Kansas, created a t-shirt design while a student worker. No surprise that the animal science major chose the face of a bovine female (a beef heifer) for the logo.

“Everybody loves cows, don’t they?” asks Borgerding, who is now working toward a bachelor’s degree in agriculture education at Kansas State University.

Jackets, t-shirts and button-ups were popular last fall as freshmen and transfer students arrived at campus. Ball caps and hoodies are in strong demand.

“By working at the Aggie Store, I was able to tie it in with my Accounting I class,” Borgerding said. “The student workers created accounts, recorded transactions and arranged the merchandise. I enjoyed getting to see all the students roll through and interact with them.”

Due to its small size and fluid turnover in merchandise, the store does not have online shopping. Right now, it’s small steps in growing the business.

Olympic level enthusiasm, however, prevails for the business students and Professor Rittenhouse.

Currently, the Aggie Store is open each morning, Monday through Thursday. The public is invited to shop on campus, too. Inquiries can be directed to mrittenhouse2@unl.edu.

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.

Online article at: <https://go.unl.edu/rqdb>

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