



NEBRASKA COLLEGE OF TECHNICAL AGRICULTURE

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By NCTA News

NCTA greets larger freshmen class

CURTIS, Neb. – The freshmen class of students arriving this fall at the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture in Curtis increased 20% from a year ago with 102 new, fulltime freshmen.

They join a doubling of fulltime transfer students who now number 20, along with 96 returning second- and third-year Aggies for a total of 218 fulltime students seeking an associate degree.

Nebraska residents comprise 80% of the NCTA enrollment. The University of Nebraska's sole two-year campus started August 24 with in-person classes instead of virtual courses and saw a 5% decline in fulltime students.

"We were quite encouraged when more freshmen and transfer students chose to become NCTA Aggies," said Larry Gossen, NCTA dean. "As educators, it's rewarding for faculty to have students back on campus and in classrooms this fall."

More freshmen and transfer students who will graduate from NCTA in 2022 or 2021 join the overall University of Nebraska system increase of 1%, reported Tuesday. Systemwide, the NU campus enrollments hit 51, 704.

Colleges across the U.S. shared concerns due to the economic upheaval and uncertainty of a global coronavirus pandemic.

"Students who wanted to attend college with in-person classes that are closer to home, and have the Nebraska Promise to assist them financially, may be more comfortable here at NCTA with a less densely-populated area," said Jennifer McConville, associate dean. "It was great to welcome this big of a freshmen class!"

The more significant drop occurred in dual credit and part-time students, some who are high school juniors and seniors with one class. Typically, dual credit planning begins in the spring and summer. Dual credit numbers declined from 88 to 51. While fulltime student count was higher for college freshmen, transfers, and the small class of freshmen-turned-sophomores, NCTA saw fewer part-time and non-credit students enroll for a 14% overall decline.



The Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture at Curtis began classes August 24. Academic groups such as the Student Technicians of Veterinary Medicine Association reorganized for the 2020-21 school year. They were able to assemble outdoors since NCTA is in the Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department's Phase 4 status. (Student photo by Jordan Ramsdell)

“When the pandemic forced colleges to remote learning and virtual programs, I believe some of our Aggie students in production agriculture, especially, returned to their farming and ranching operations or went directly into the workforce as wage earners,” McConville said.

This summer, during an 8-week session, NCTA provided in-person courses and laboratories for 25 fulltime veterinary technology students. Veterinary Technology and the Animal Science/Agricultural Education areas have the greatest enrollments this fall at 96 and 74 students, respectively.

Workforce development through experiential programs is a hallmark of the rural campus which features livestock, large and small animals for teaching programs in animal health and veterinary technology, and a 550-acre campus farm and field laboratory.

Gossen said increased interest is evident in the Agricultural Mechanics and Agronomy programs with increased enrollment in both areas, particularly in beginning and advanced welding.

In June, NCTA was recognized by Nebraska education entities for its workforce development initiatives, and to agricultural mechanics program delivered by Dan Stehlik.

Last month, WalletHub.com ranked NCTA as the No. 1 two-year program in the nation for graduate and career outcomes, based on earnings and costs of education. NCTA topped all public, community colleges in Nebraska for overall affordability, educational outcomes, and career/earnings success for alumni 10 years post-graduation.

The college continues student outreach with virtual recruiting and information sessions this month and next, and hosts campus Discovery Days for prospective students on Oct. 6 and Nov. 10.

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/rgix>

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