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By NCTA News

Campus life busy for Aggie RA's

CURTIS, Neb. – All 12 student resident assistants at the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture are graduating from their home-away-from-home on May 7.

They leave as successful students and young adults, after helping students navigate campus and managing their own personal academic goals.

“We are very proud of this group of resident assistants, serving as reliable mainstays for our student population as the world faces unprecedented challenges,” said Jennifer McConville, NCTA associate dean.

“The RAs this year were a steadfast group of students and they did a phenomenal job in their duties,” says Erika Arambula, residence life manager. The 12 will be graduating in an online commencement ceremony.

Six of the women are headed into careers as veterinary technicians, with four RA's focused on agriculture production and two with dual majors combining livestock management and agribusiness.

“As an RA, I got to meet a lot of residents and work with some pretty cool people,” said Clayton “CJ” Monheiser of Hershey. The livestock management major was an RA for three semesters.

KayLee Rasmussen of Burwell served as an RA for four semesters, living in two different halls, West Traditional and Aggie Central.

“Each semester was different,” says Rasmussen, one of the two graduating in agribusiness and livestock management. “You never know what is going to come up.”

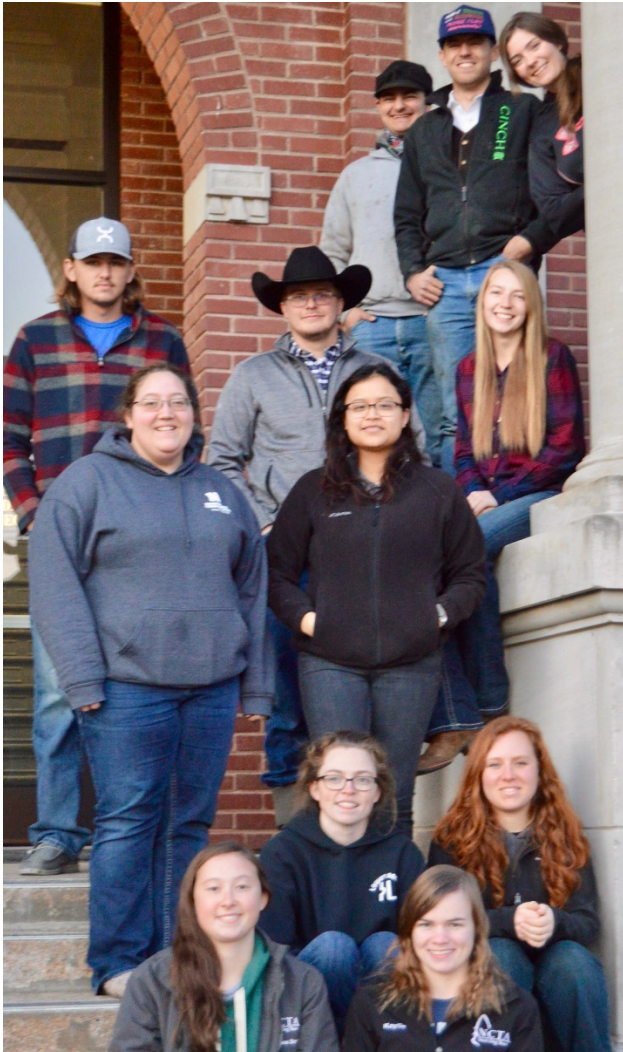
As many Aggie students left for spring break in early March, they returned to Curtis a week or two later to move home amid the viral coronavirus pandemic. NCTA courses shifted to remote technology.

Two RA's and about six students remained in campus housing as “essential” workers, serving in various capacities while continuing their remote courses.

Monheiser and fellow RA Damian Wellman of Prairie View, Kansas, were a pair designated essential as both continued as RA's while they worked for the NCTA farm, caring for livestock, feeding animals and assisting the “farm crew” with calving, branding and building fences and corrals.

Several vet tech students stayed on campus, too, responsible for animals in the teaching program of the veterinary technology program.

“Things were definitely different around campus and in the residence halls during April,” Arambula said, “I have greatly appreciated this team of RAs and the work they have done. I am proud of their accomplishments and their presence on-campus.”



All 12 resident assistants at the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture in Curtis will graduate May 7. (Arambula /NCTA photo)

Aggies who live on campus enjoy easy access to classes and resources such as the library, student union and fitness center. Parents say they appreciate the safe environment and having just one bill (internet, water, sewer, cable TV, etc.), plus a meal plan at Aggie Dining.

Studies have shown that students who live on campus are more likely to graduate on time and with a higher GPA, Arambula notes.

“Our goal is to help students achieve academic success and have an enjoyable college experience,” she added. “The RAs are here to help students achieve that success and enjoy the experience that comes with being part of the NCTA campus community.”

Students in the photograph are: Front row Breauna Derr, Friend; Kaytie Hendrickson, Norton Kansas; second row, KayLee Rasmussen, Burwell; Ashley Connell, Springview; third row, Alexis Penna, Holley, New York; Rosa Jurado, Omaha; fourth row Korbin Moore, Gothenburg; Jackson Taylor, Sargent; seated Joli Brown, Waverly; and back row CJ Monheiser, Hershey; Damian Wellman, Prairie View, Kansas; Emily Hubbell, Lexington. (Photo by Erika Arambula / NCTA)

“It’s a cool experience to be an RA,” said Monheiser. “You learn more responsibility, making sure that you are doing what you need to be doing as a student, as well as watching the other students.”

During his time at NCTA, Monheiser was active with student clubs and competed with the working stock dog team.

Rasmussen also enjoyed her duties in the residence hall. She was a two-year officer with the award-winning shotgun sports team and competed last year at national championships in Texas.

Learning to know everyone’s names, managing roommate conflicts, and addressing small or large concerns did not daunt her. “The bigger deal this semester was after spring break residents still wanted to go and hang out with friends or to convene in public place.”

Arambula is preparing housing programs for 2020-21. Although not yet announced, the RA’s will be a mix of second-year and third-year students.

Freshmen students are required to live on campus, which eases their transition into college as they meet classmates. Often, their dorm mates evolve into lifetime friends.

This month, Arambula mailed housing information to students. If they’ve not been able to visit campus yet, new students can take a customized virtual tour with an ambassador, Arambula or Associate Dean McConville.

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