

STRATEGIC PLAN

for

University of Nebraska
NEBRASKA COLLEGE OF TECHNICAL AGRICULTURE



2005 Strategic Master Plans

Introduction

Within the University of Nebraska system the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture (NCTA) is recognized as a premier provider of agricultural educational opportunities. The college is a national leader in agricultural post secondary education. As such, NCTA has an essential responsibility for shaping Nebraska's role as a leader in the 21st century in the areas of agribusiness, agricultural production, animal health, information technology and horticulture.

Through quality teaching, NCTA is committed to provide all students with the opportunity, knowledge, skills and characteristics of an educated person. NCTA will provide an outstanding associate level undergraduate experience where the leading object shall be quality instruction in agriculture and related fields. Contemporary and future needs of students will be met by fostering student learning through excellent teaching, advising and outcome assessment. Students will be offered the opportunity to develop new interests, intellectual curiosity and a love of learning.

The college has a long tradition of providing exemplary, hands-on, agricultural and human development programs. NCTA continues to prepare men and women for agricultural careers and to provide continuing educational opportunities to those already involved in the industry of agriculture. In order to meet student needs however, the educational opportunities of the college should be broadened. This document is a preview of that perspective.

NCTA Mission

“As an institution of higher learning, the mission of the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture is to serve the people of Nebraska by providing an outstanding associate-level undergraduate experience in agriculture and related fields.”

The mission of NCTA is enhanced by a symbiotic relationship between the Institute of Agriculture & Natural Resources, University of Nebraska-Lincoln and Mid-Plains Community College. Coordinated scholarship, teaching and extension efforts contribute to the development of a highly skilled and educated work force necessary to the economic well being of Nebraska. The underlying objective of the educational program at NCTA is to develop an individual with the ability to provide enlightened judgment in professional, personal and social activities.

To that end NCTA has identified the following outcomes:

- Acquire professional development through a strong academic background in agricultural sciences, business and information technology with specific programs, majors, options and electives that will prepare students for a suitable and satisfying career.
- Gain general knowledge and breadth of understanding through the supporting areas of science, business, leadership, communication, practical experience and application.
- Realize personal development by participation in classroom experiences, student organizations and extra-curricular activities that will encourage professional, oral and ethical growth as well as social and cultural awareness.
- Gain career preparation through acquiring a solid goal orientation, interpersonal and team building skills, critical thinking and problem solving skills, global awareness and a sense of responsibility for oneself and for others.

Academic Agenda

The primary objective of the curricula at NCTA is to prepare students to have a successful career in a highly technological and dynamically changing environment. The challenge over the next five years is repositioning NCTA curricula and educational offerings to meet the needs of a dynamic, transforming, technology based society.

- A commitment to academic and instructional excellence is the cornerstone of the college. The college will remain committed to providing a high quality academic environment for students at NCTA.
- The college will strive to restore and maintain fulltime faculty. Those needed are Agribusiness Management Systems, Plant Science, Agriculture Production Systems, and Veterinary Technology.
- The college will emphasize educational outcomes that will propel students to achieve a higher level of lifelong success. Those outcomes include: a solid goal orientation, interpersonal and team building skills, critical thinking skills, global awareness, sensitivity to others with diverse backgrounds, high ethics and moral character, an acceptance of responsibility for oneself and for others and a commitment to be a lifelong learner.
- The college will provide assessment based programming and tutorial assistance for students in math, science and communicative skills; thus enhancing student retention, awareness and career success.
- The college will provide a technology based learning environment that emphasizes technology, state-of-the-art information systems, hands on learning, a socially appropriate environment, distance education enhanced with industry internships, and extracurricular activities.
- The college will continue to upgrade existing curricular offerings and develop new educational programs.
- In order to make sure the college is aligned with the needs of industry the college will maintain active instructional program (industry) advisory councils.

Academic Action Plan

TECHNICAL ASSOCIATE PROGRAMS:

- The college will develop additional industry technical support instructional areas including:
 - Precision Agriculture Technology
 - Irrigation Technology
- The college will initiate the development of degree opportunities delivered through experiential learning and distance education.

ASSOCIATE MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS:

- The college will develop additional management based instructional areas including equine industry management and grazing systems management.

BACCALAUREATE TRANSFER PROGRAMS:

- NCTA will continue to maintain and enhance current transfer programs for students wishing to obtain traditional baccalaureate degrees including “Veterinary Science”.
- The college will expand the development of baccalaureate capstone programs including “Equine Industry Management”.
- The college will study the advisability and potential of participating in the development of on-line “Agricultural Business” baccalaureate degrees.

INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY:

- The college will increase its emphasis on basic and natural science instruction.
- The college will, over the next 5 years, develop a computerized instructional campus complete with student laptop availability, 100% classroom terminal availability and distance learning capability.
- The college will provide the opportunity and encouragement for faculty to develop and implement research programs with a special focus on student involvement.
- The college will continue to develop partnerships and program collaborations with other institutions of higher education.
- The college will sustain an “embrace change” instructional philosophy.

Marketing Agenda

NCTA will effectively market the opportunities that are available to student and graduates of the college. The focus will include traditional high school graduates, non-traditional students and the agriculture industry.

- The college will conduct studies to examine/determine the college's image among selected audiences and determine why students select NCTA.
- The college will expand the marketing program designed to enhance the college's image.
- NCTA will expand the recruiting program to encompass a six state area and utilize two recruiters on the road.
- The college will develop and revise as needed a new retention program called Learning Communities.
- The college will provide additional opportunities for students from multicultural and diverse backgrounds.

Marketing Action Plan

- The college will provide resources necessary to aggressively market the programs at NCTA.
- NCTA will develop tracking systems to better meet the needs of our customers.
- NCTA will expand recruiting efforts outside of the traditional high school and career fair setting to include industry and other recruiting opportunities.
- The college will redesign its existing web page and dedicate adequate resources to keep it current.
- NCTA will enhance its high school agriculture teacher and industry contacts and utilize groups such as the Nebraska Agriculture Educators Association, the Nebraska Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Counselors, the Agriculture Builders of Nebraska, the South Platte United Chamber of Commerce and other industry association groups as potential recruiters.
- The college will actively recruit students from multicultural and diverse backgrounds.
- The college will develop and build a student life center complex including new housing, student union, cafeteria, and fitness center.
- NCTA will make an attempt to visit every high school agriculture program in the state of Nebraska and participate in (a minimum of 50) career fairs within Nebraska and surrounding states.

Technology Agenda

NCTA will embrace the ever-increasing rate of change in technological advances and provide cutting edge educational opportunities.

- NCTA will develop strategies to prepare and train individuals in highly technological programs.
- NCTA will be committed to sustaining state-of-the-art program technology in the existing agriculture technical programs.
- The college will anticipate an accelerated rate of technological change and implement relevant curricula using state-of-the-art instructional technology.

Technology Action Plan

- The college will provide students cost effective opportunities to purchase/lease personal computer technology.
- The college will update student computer labs:
 - Review student computer lab locations for the best usage by students
 - Update student computers on a 3-5 year rotation
- The colleges technology committee will:
 - Develop standards guidelines for the purchase of new technology
 - Establish a 3-4 year equipment replacement cycle
- The college will improve technology infrastructure:
 - Increase bandwidth through the acquisition of additional T-1 lines
 - Install wireless LAN connectivity in the Learning Resource Center (lab and library) and Ag Hall
 - Install wireless LAN connectivity to the residence hall lounges and cafeteria eating area
 - Upgrade security by providing a reliable antivirus software
 - Improve data storage, backup and printing resources
 - Enhance the Student Services Database
 - Install a new PBX telephone System
- The college will update faculty and staff computers.
- The college will develop agreements with IANR and CIT to establish, save and secure Internet and network computing for the NCTA campus.
- The college will provide training to faculty and staff by use of short seminars and workshops.

Facilities Agenda

Located on a 90-acre campus supported by a 570-acre land laboratory in Curtis, Nebraska, the college will need additional resources to fulfill its 21st century mission. Older buildings that are 50 to 90 years old are currently essential to the operation of the campus, but will need to be replaced or require substantial maintenance and renovation. In order to meet its mission, NCTA will require the construction of new facilities, land laboratory expansions, and improvement of existing facilities.

- Elements of the 2001 long-range master plan that need to be implemented in the 2004-2006 era include the Education Center and Student Life Center.
- The college will aggressively pursue and support instructional facility and infrastructure upgrades.
- In order to remain technologically current, the college must expand and improve its instructional land laboratory.
- To fully utilize all existing buildings and facilities NCTA must improve access by meeting ADA requirements for use of facilities.

Facilities Action Plan

- The college will pursue expanding the existing heating system steam line to the Livestock Teaching Center, improving the existing internal electrical systems, replace/repair roofs on several buildings including the Learning Resource Center and the Greenhouse and replace windows in several older buildings.
- The college will continue to pursue construction of apartment style housing.
- The college will pursue funding to construct new calving and hay storage facilities, purchase state-of-the-art irrigation equipment and other water resource development.
- NCTA will improve campus accessibility in the next 2 years with the development and hard surfacing of roads, sidewalks and access points.
- The college will continue to pursue funding for a new Education Center.

Operating Agenda

With on-going technological changes occurring, NCTA will continually reevaluate its operating priorities.

- The college will aggressively seek endowments, partnerships and other external sources of funding.
- NCTA will launch an enhanced program to encourage and support professional development for administration, faculty and staff.
- The college will seek industry advice, collaboration and partnerships.
- NCTA will support and positively effect community and economic development in Nebraska.
- The college will expand its use of contracted professional services.
- The college will initiate a fund drive for housing.

Operating Action Plan

- In cooperation with the UN Foundation, NCTA will initiate a campaign drive for a Student Life Center.
- In cooperation with the UN Foundation, NCTA will continue to solicit scholarship funds.
- NCTA will launch an enhanced program to encourage and assist professional development opportunities including the implementation of individual professional development programs for each faculty member.
- NCTA will maintain individual program industry advisory councils. Additionally there will be a Statewide Advisory Council consisting of leaders and significant constituents who have a vested interest in the programs at NCTA.
- The college will participate in activities that enhance economic development in Nebraska through liaisons with the Nebraska Rural Development Commission, the South Platte United Chamber of Commerce, Ag Builders of Nebraska, the Medicine Creek Chamber of Commerce, the Medicine Creek Economic Development Association and other appropriate organizations.