

NCTA, UNL announces 4-year online degree at Curtis campus

Written by Wauneta Breeze

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Two college agriculture curriculums will provide greater degree and educational opportunities for students studying in the University of Nebraska system – whether at NU in Lincoln, or at the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture (NCTA) in Curtis.

In 2014, online courses will pave the way for technical agriculture sophomores completing their two-year studies in Curtis to earn a Bachelor of Applied Science (BAS) degree by taking online courses from UNL for two additional years, administrators announced last week.

“While working on their bachelor’s degrees, students can remain residents in Curtis and have full access to the standard support services available to NCTA students, such as the ability to live in the residence halls, access college advising and financial aid assistance, use NCTA library services, access computer services and participate in campus athletic activities,” said Dr. Ron Rosati, NCTA Dean.

During their junior and senior years of the program, students will take some NCTA courses but most will be online from the College of Agricultural Science and Natural Resources (CASNR) at UNL, where they will pay UNL tuition and fees.

“Students can remain on the NCTA campus and benefit from the mentoring of NCTA faculty,” noted Dr. Steve Waller, CASNR Dean. “This innovative relationship provides another pathway for students in agriculture to pursue their educational and professional aspirations.”

Rosati said some upperclassmen in the BAS program might assist NCTA faculty with freshman and sophomore level academics and team activities. NCTA faculty will teach selected support courses, adding guidance and technical assistance for the BAS degree.

“An important part of the mission of NCTA is to provide access to higher education services,” Rosati added. “We do that by providing an extremely supportive, friendly and nurturing campus environment. We have small class sizes where faculty and staff know students by their first names.”

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Deans Ron Rosati and Steve Waller joined Dr. Ronnie Green, NU Vice President and Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources (IANR) Harlan Vice Chancellor, in signing the cooperative agreement Oct. 3

A second program, called the “Reverse Transfer” agreement, is designed to streamline a degree or certificate from NCTA.

“It’s common for students to transfer credits from a two-year college, such as NCTA, to a four-year university, such as UNL. Many students, however, leave two or four-year institutions without having completed the requirements for earning any degree,” Rosati said.

“The reverse transfer enables students to more easily transfer credits from UNL’s CASNR to NCTA, to receive an academic credential,” he added. “We are working creatively to help the state of Nebraska reach its goal of increasing the number of citizens with higher education degrees.”

Faculty and students are looking forward to the new venture, Waller said.

“Students who pursue a baccalaureate degree, either online or by transferring to UNL, can now be guaranteed they can complete both their Associate of Science degree and the baccalaureate degree,” said Waller. “These two agreements are indicative of the exciting times that lie ahead for our students at both institutions.”

Details are available for the UNL Online Bachelors of Applied Science (BAS) program at <http://appliedscience.unl.edu/online-bachelors-degree-completion> .

Rosati added that affordability of NCTA courses is important and recently announced data to support that claim.

“We keep our costs low so that economics don’t prevent students from having access to higher

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education. Over the past three years, 91% of our students have received financial aid,” Rosati noted. “On average, for Nebraska residents receiving financial aid, the grant and scholarship awards have exceeded the cost of tuition and fees by \$700 per year.”

Students can then apply that toward books and living expenses, he added. More information about NCTA and UNL is available at 1-800-3CURTIS or at NCTA.unl.edu, and www.UNL.edu.