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UNIVERSITY OF
Nebraska
NCTA

NEBRASKA COLLEGE OF TECHNICAL AGRICULTURE
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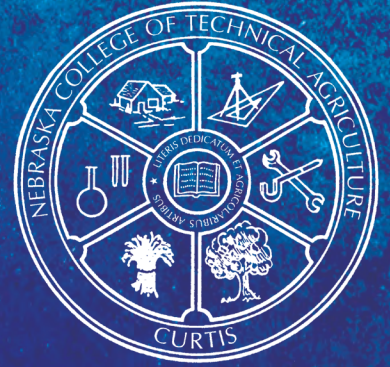
Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture

STRATEGIC PLAN

2014-2019
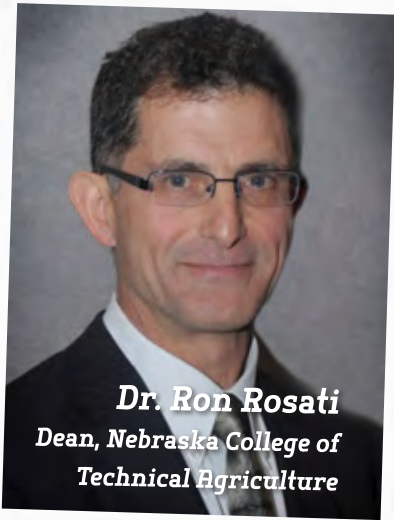
Dr. Ron Rosati
Dean, Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture

The Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture (NCTA) plays a unique role in the state's higher education system. With a statewide agricultural mission, NCTA is the only two-year college and the only open admissions college or university administered by the University of Nebraska Board of Regents. As a result, NCTA has an important role in providing opportunity and access — both financial and academic — to the University of Nebraska.

NCTA has reached a pivotal juncture in its history. A number of factors collectively are creating the potential for unprecedented development of the college and the industries it serves. Numerous assessment measures document the excellence of NCTA academic programs. An external industry group recently ranked the college's veterinary technology program among the top 10 programs in the United States. NCTA has a graduation rate that far exceeds the national average and is the highest of any two-year public institution in Nebraska. Graduate surveys show students are very satisfied with the education they receive at NCTA, and they are quite successful when they apply their education in agricultural industries. Statistics show NCTA fulfills its mission of providing an affordable college education. Over the past three years, 91 percent of NCTA students have received financial aid. In that period, the average grant and scholarship award received by Nebraska residents attending NCTA exceeded the cost of tuition and fees by $700 per year.

The agricultural industry served by NCTA is strong. Producers often earn profits that seemed unattainable only a few years ago. Exciting developments in biotechnology provide farmers and ranchers with tools that might have seemed like science fiction to previous generations.

Advancements in agriculture are coupled with challenges. A growing and increasingly prosperous world population will require quantities of foods significantly beyond that previously produced by agriculturalists worldwide. Agricultural literacy is vital so consumers better understand where their food comes from and how it is produced.

Simultaneously, higher education is undergoing its own revolution. In large part, information dissemination relies on digital technology, the Internet, mobile devices and ubiquitous computer systems. The quantity of information available to society is staggering, with more information being developed on a daily basis than ever before. Managing this information is an important task for students. Whether studying veterinary technology, animal science, agricultural mechanics, agribusiness, agronomy, horticulture or agricultural education, students are challenged with developing keen abilities to interpret, evaluate and synthesize this data.

Our 2014 to 2019 Strategic Plan is a roadmap designed to focus college initiatives and energies on NCTA's unique strengths. Thank you to those whose vision, hard work and wisdom guided this document. It will equip students from Nebraska and beyond for satisfying careers in agriculture and elsewhere as collectively we feed and clothe our world.
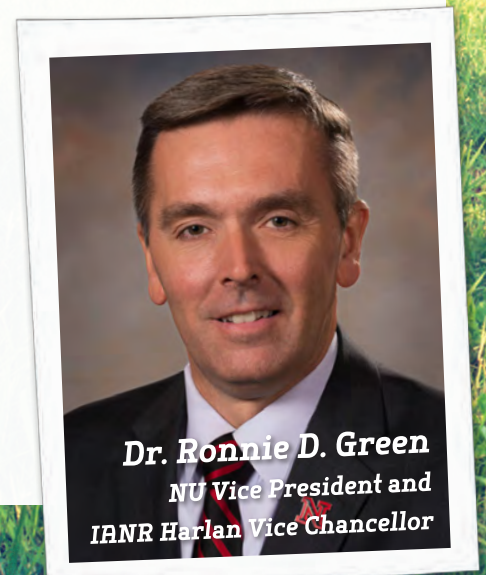
Dr. Ronnie D. Green
NU Vice President and
IANR Harlan Vice Chancellor

This section of the Strategic Plan consists of key imperatives, goals, strategies, measures of success and timelines identified as important priorities for keeping the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture on its trajectory toward nationally-recognized excellence. The key imperatives are broad categories of focus for the college over the next five years. Each imperative's goals are followed by specific strategies, a measure of success and a timeline for implementing the strategy. These imperatives are based on input from a broad cross section of the college community.

These are the key strategic plan imperatives and goals:

ACADEMIC QUALITY

A. Implement a system to identify and develop student academic success.
B. Hire and support quality faculty.
C. Expand flexibility in delivery of academic programming.
D. Develop close working relationships with industry partners and academic programs.
E. Implement initiatives to measure, support and advertise the growth and attainment of academic quality.
F. Implement appropriate practices to ensure successful reaffirmation of accreditation by the Higher Learning Commission.
G. Facilitate appropriate use of technology in NCTA teaching environments.
H. Explore the existing structure of academic departments and programs, and restructure, as needed, to best support student success.

CAMPUS CLIMATE

A. Ensure a friendly, nurturing and supportive college community.
B. Ensure a high degree of student satisfaction with NCTA campus life.
C. Develop a campus emergency preparedness plan and train the college community on its implementation.
D. Develop a college-wide system that organizes standard timelines, procedures and responsible individuals.

ENROLLMENT

A. Increase college enrollment through recruitment activities.
B. Increase college enrollment through increased student retention.

BUDGET

A. Increase college resource base.
B. Increase campus-wide understanding and participation in the budgeting process.

FACILITIES

A. Improve exterior campus aesthetics and landscaping.
B. Improve maintenance of campus facilities.
C. Renovate existing facilities or develop new facilities.
D. Increase collaborative facility use with the city of Curtis.

ACADEMIC QUALITY

Academic quality is defined as facilitating experiences that result in students achieving the appropriate learning outcomes leading to successful long-term employment.

A. Implement a system to identify and develop student academic success
1. By July 2014, assess student learning outcomes in every course and report in a summary. The results of that assessment will be used to improve class instruction in subsequent semesters.
2. By December 2015, develop a system to expand implementation of the 100 Beef Cow Ownership Advantage program, including student ownership of donated heifers.
3. By January 2016, have all academic programs work with an industry advisory council to identify appropriate program level student learning outcomes. These learning outcomes, which will be based on surveys of industry partners, will be assigned to a course or educational activity.
4. By January 2016, develop a ladder-like system allowing students with various goals and academic abilities to achieve success, academic credentials and career preparation skills.
5. By May 2016, support student transfers by having 10 percent of students per year transfer to a baccalaureate program.
6. By September 2016, increase student involvement so that 60 percent of students will have the opportunity to be members of an appropriate professional organization.
7. By December 2016, include in the general curriculum information, if needed, important life skills needed for student success such as financial literacy, communication skills, problem-solving skills, computational skills, work habits, ethics and civic engagement.

B. Hire and support quality faculty
1. By August 2014, develop and implement a new faculty orientation program.
2. By January 2015, develop and implement a system to support faculty acquisition of a terminal degree.
3. By December 2015, have four faculty approved as UNL professors of practice.
4. By January 2016, identify industry credentials or experience to be achieved by the faculty in their discipline in each academic program.
5. By January 2016, evaluate and modify, as necessary, a faculty professional development program allowing the allocation of funds and associated release time.
6. By January 2017, evaluate and modify, as necessary, a faculty promotion process, including raises associated with promotion.
7. By January 2017, develop a system to support faculty who wish to be involved in applied research.
8. By January 2017, have 70 percent of faculty holding active memberships in their professional organizations.
9. By January 2017, develop a system for measuring faculty workload; 80 percent of faculty will be in compliance with standard workloads.
10. By January 2018, develop a plan to bring the average nine-month faculty salary to the 75th percentile as reported by NCES/IPEDS for public, two-year, rural, small colleges.
11. By May 2019, have 80 percent of the faculty in each unit have appropriate industry experience or credentials.
12. By January 2020, have 50 percent of the full-time faculty have appropriate terminal degrees.

C. Expand flexibility in delivery of academic programming
1. Beginning with the 2014 summer session, have summer course offerings grow by 10 percent per year.
2. Beginning with the 2014 summer session, offer more than two summer camps per year.
3. By September 2014, facilitate the UNL Bachelor of Applied Science degree on the Curtis campus. Target enrollment is five students at startup.
4. Beginning with the 2014-2015 winter session, implement a Winter Intersession.
5. By January 2015, offer 10 online courses per academic year.
6. By January 2015, offer on-campus dual enrollment programming for local high schools.
7. By 2016, offer pilot programs in North Platte and Omaha to explore the development of programming in other geographical areas.
8. By August 2016, have two online programs (certificates or degrees) through the University of Nebraska Online Worldwide program.
9. By August 2016, explore the development of dual enrollment face-to-face programming for high school students who are not residents of Curtis by hiring adjunct faculty in the high school community.

10. By August 2016, evaluate procedures for continuing education and explore the possibility of facilitating growth of the NCTA continuing education programs.
11. By August 2016, explore the development of agricultural academies in high schools.
12. By August 2017, offer two courses in the University of Nebraska High School catalog.
13. By January 2018, have five programs (certificates or degrees) completely online; by January 2020, have 10 programs completely online.

D. Develop close working relationships between industry partners and academic programs

1. By August 2015, identify a campus employee to serve as director of alumni affairs to increase alumni involvement in campus academic and social activities.
2. By August 2016, develop opportunities for student internships for 80 percent of academic programs.

E. Implement initiatives to measure, support and advertise the growth and attainment of academic quality

1. By May 2015, develop metrics for programmatic quality and student success; implement a system for assessing those metrics; and develop protocols for identifying and removing barriers to achieving goals.
2. By August 2015, send three student teams per year to compete in national academic competitions, such as NACTA (North American Colleges and Teachers of Agriculture) competitions.
3. By June 2017, develop a plan for achieving disciplinary accreditation where available and maintain current accreditations.

F. Implement appropriate practices to ensure successful reaffirmation of accreditation by the Higher Learning Commission

1. By April 2014, develop a detailed plan for achieving reaffirmation of accreditation, including resource allocation, personnel and procedures.

G. Facilitate appropriate use of technology in NCTA teaching environments

1. By May 2014, develop a system for updating and maintaining the computer system.
2. By August 2015, develop a campus technology plan prioritizing teaching and operational technology needs, budgets and the timeline for technology implementation.
3. By September 2015, develop a pilot scale trial of voice recognition software for student use in composition classes.

H. Explore the existing structure of academic departments and programs and restructure as needed to best support student success

1. By May 2015, propose the development of these new academic departments or programs:
   a. Agronomy and horticulture
   b. Animal science and agricultural education
   c. Veterinary technology comparative medicine certificate
   d. Additional certificate programs as needed
   e. Campus-based support for the bachelor of applied science degree
   f. An academic program incorporating farmers markets, urban agriculture and community gardens
2. By May 2016, implement a system to evaluate the potential development of new academic programs. Consider:
   a. An academic program focusing on geographical information systems such as variable-rate technology, GPS, agricultural drone technology, etc.
   b. An academic program focusing on wildlife conservation biology.

CAMPUS CLIMATE

A. **Ensure a friendly, nurturing and supportive college community**
   1. By March 2014, incorporate regular (monthly) listening sessions with the Dean, faculty, staff and students.
   2. By May 2015, ensure a high level of employee satisfaction and morale by developing an instrument and protocol for annual assessment of customer service and campus climate, including assessment of all units and key personnel.
   3. By May 2015, include steps in the annual planning and/or evaluation cycle to facilitate improvement of customer service and campus climate based on assessment results.
   4. By January 2015, explore development of a program to provide employees with the opportunity to secure a degree through NCTA. Consider optional release time and tuition waiver if making satisfactory progress toward a degree.
   5. By January 2016, develop a system of target customer service ratings and protocol to support the improvement of customer service ratings as needed.
   6. By May 2016, assess demonstration of integrity and professionalism of all college personnel during the completion of work activities as part of personnel evaluations.
   7. By January 2017, evaluate and modify, as necessary, a staff promotion process, including raises associated with promotion.
   8. By January 2017, evaluate and modify, as necessary, a staff professional development program allowing the allocation of funds and associated release time.

B. **Ensure a high degree of student satisfaction with NCTA campus life**
   1. By May 2014, develop an instrument and protocol for annual assessment of student perception of campus life, including campus comfort and aesthetics.
   2. By May 2015, include steps in the annual planning cycle to further facilitate improvement of students' perceptions of campus life, including academic activities and facilities, residence halls, meals and college activities.
   3. By May 2016, evaluate the development of student counseling services.
   4. By May 2017, explore the acquisition and use of electronic identification cards, including electronic debit capability for meals and other on-campus purchases. Consider allowing faculty and staff to use identification cards as debit cards for meal purchases and campus functions.

C. **Develop a campus emergency preparedness plan and train the college community on its implementation**
   1. By May 2014, evaluate and improve, if necessary, campus-wide access to all buildings by emergency personnel.
   2. By May 2014, evaluate and improve, if necessary, the campus fire and 911 alarm system.
   3. By September 2014, plan implementation of the campus-wide alert system such as a siren, email alert or other similar system.
   4. By August 2015, develop an emergency preparedness plan.
   5. By January 2016, implement the required components of the emergency preparedness plan, including access to the required community resources such as emergency vehicles, EMT personnel, backup generators, communication devices, emergency housing, and food and water supplies.
   6. By August 2016, conduct two training sessions on campus emergency preparedness.

D. **Develop a college-wide system that organizes standard timelines, procedures and responsible individuals.**
   1. By May 2014, evaluate the college's calendaring process and, if necessary, distribute to the college community an annual calendar (available in both Outlook and hard copy) outlining standard college deadlines, responsible individuals and links for additional information, where appropriate.
   2. By May 2015, evaluate and improve, if necessary, metrics for timely college-wide processing of standard college functions such as employee evaluations, grades and travel reimbursements.

ENROLLMENT

A. **Increase college enrollment through recruitment initiatives**
   1. By January 2014, implement a Dean's scholarship program; by August 2014, enroll 40 students in the program.
   2. By January 2014, implement the Collegebound Nebraska program; by August 2014, enroll five students in the program.
   3. By March 2014, develop a welcome center dedicated to student services and success.
   4. By April 2014, implement an out-of-state recruitment initiative.
   5. By May 2014, improve media relations and dedicate additional staff time to this responsibility; by August 2014, develop a plan for increased media exposure.
   6. By August 2014, grow out-of-state enrollment to 50 students and continue to grow enrollment by 15 percent per year.
   7. By August 2014, increase dual enrollment of high school students to 100 and continue to grow dual enrollment by 5 percent per year after this goal is reached.
   8. By January 2015, develop a student ambassador program.
   9. By August 2015, grow to 500 full-time equivalent students.
   10. By August 2017, increase enrollment of international students to 20; by August 2016, secure visa authorization.
   11. By August 2018, develop an approved NCTA brand.

B. **Increase college enrollment through increased student retention**
   1. By May 2014, measure retention in each program area and develop a system to encourage improved retention, if needed.
   2. By May 2015, develop and implement appropriate living and learning communities.
   3. By August 2016, explore the development of block scheduling and implement a pilot program as appropriate.

BUDGET

A. **Increase college resource base**
   1. By March 2014, implement a limited capital campaign; by January 2018, secure gifts and in-kind contributions totaling $500,000.
   2. By June 2014, implement a program to develop industry support for increased state appropriation.
   3. By August 2014, secure access to grant writing skills through IANR.
   4. By June 2015, secure industry support for a special lease agreement for a combine, tractor and planter of the same brand that possess common communication and GPS capabilities.
   5. By August 2015, increase dual credit tuition to 50 percent of residential tuition.
   6. By August 2015, decrease senior citizen tuition to 25 percent of residential tuition.
   7. Beginning with the 2016 state legislative session, develop and implement a plan to increase the permanent state appropriation by $1 million.
   8. By May 2017, secure funding through the 309 process for an air-conditioning system in the Student Activities Center, a roof for the agricultural mechanics building, a roof for the veterinary technology building and an upgraded utility infrastructure for Agriculture Hall.

B. **Increase campus-wide understanding and participation in the budgeting process**
   1. By March 2014, evaluate the tie between the college's budgeting system and planning.
   2. By April 2014, begin a dialogue with UNL/IANR to review the annual 5 percent overhead allocation from the University to NCTA auxiliary operations, e.g., dorm operations, food services, parking.
   3. By April 2014, document a system to improve understanding of the budgeting process and the opportunity for college-wide input into the budgeting process.
   4. By May 2014, disseminate documentation outlining procedures for three-, nine- and 12-month budgets, and detailing how academic departments access summer budgets for teaching and ongoing departmental activities.

FACILITIES

A. **Improve exterior campus aesthetics and landscaping**
   1. By August 2014, develop and implement a system facilitating the maintenance of campus grounds and external aesthetics.
   2. By September 2015, explore the development of an Aggieland picnic, recreation and horse riding area.
   3. By December 2016, explore the development of additional aesthetic, information and safety items for campus grounds. Consider:
      a. Lighting around buildings
      b. Lighting around feedlot

   c. Blue phones/security cameras
   d. Outdoor cameras/virtual tour
   e. Improvement of campus maps

B. **Improve maintenance of campus facilities**
   1. By April 2014, hire maintenance technical support staff for preventive maintenance campus-wide, including newly constructed buildings.
   2. By August 2014, develop and implement a system for the regularly scheduled maintenance of campus facilities, including the allocation of resources sufficient to maintain functionality of facilities.

C. **Renovate existing facilities or develop new facilities**
   1. By May 2016, develop a facilities master plan outlining the development or renovation of potential new facilities. Include methods to ensure handicap accessibility for campus facilities. Consider these potential facilities:
      a. Distance education classrooms
      b. Biomass facility development
      c. Interactive conference room development
      d. Meats lab
      e. Equine center
      f. On-campus housing for student horses and dogs
      g. Dining services
      h. Library
      i. Truck plug-ins and hookups for RVs and horse trailers
      j. Permanent alumni center
      k. EdMedia print station
      l. Fitness center
      m. Community garden
      n. Convert one residence hall apartment to a Dean's residence for guests

D. **Increase collaborative facility usage with the city of Curtis**
   1. By August 2014, develop a signed umbrella memorandum of understanding outlining the relationship between NCTA and the city of Curtis.
   2. By January 2015, explore the development of agreements for collaborative usage of additional facilities, including:
      a. Shooting range
      b. Mill Park rodeo facilities
      c. Community garden and farmers market

VISION

The Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture will be an effective and nurturing student-centered learning community with a national reputation for producing graduates who are in high demand by cutting-edge industries.

MISSION

The Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture is devoted to a statewide mission of preparing students for successful careers in agriculture, veterinary technology, food and related industries. The college provides open access to innovative technical education resulting in associate degrees, certificates, diplomas and other credentials.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

Important and distinctive features of the NCTA experience:

- Practical, applied, experiential educational activities
- Career-applied technical education
- Programs relevant to job attainment and career development
- Dedicated and caring faculty and staff
- Low student-to-faculty ratio
- Accessible land and animal resources for hands-on learning
- Interaction and support from agricultural industries and employers
- Close working relationship with the UNL Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources (IANR) and the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources (CASNR)

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