

Marking A MILESTONE

TTUHSC El Paso to Celebrate its Fifth
Year as a Stand-Alone Institution

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PHOTOS PROVIDED BY TTUHSC EL PASO EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

On May 20, 2013, Texas Gov. Rick Perry made it official: the TTUHSC El Paso campus would become a freestanding institution, charting its own destiny as the fourth university in the Texas Tech University System.

Five years later, TTUHSC El Paso is preparing to celebrate its stand-alone status in May. It remains the only health sciences center on the U.S.-Mexico border.

Let's take a look back.



2013: MOVING FORWARD AS AN INDEPENDENT UNIVERSITY

The Liaison Committee on Medical Education granted the Paul L. Foster School of Medicine (PLFSOM) full accreditation in February 2013, a reflection of the quality of education provided by the school and a fulfillment of state board requirements.

In May, the medical school graduated its 40-member inaugural class, which began studies in 2009 while the school was under provisional accreditation.

“This passage not only represents the achievements of our new physicians, but also validates the power of a shared vision from the community, for the overall good of our community,” said Jose Manuel de la Rosa, MD, MPH, (Medicine ’84) the Paul L. Foster School of Medicine’s founding dean (now vice president for outreach and community engagement).

Also in May, the Gayle Greve Hunt School of Nursing (GGHSON) received full accreditation of its baccalaureate degree program from the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education. Three months later, El Paso officials broke ground on a new building for the school.

In December, 65 nurses from the GGHSON’s inaugural class graduated in a ceremony at the Plaza Theatre in downtown El Paso.

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2014: WELCOMING NEW LEADERS

The year brought a wave of new leadership for the university. The Texas Tech University System Board of Regents selected Richard Lange, MD, MBA, as the founding president of TTUHSC El Paso and dean of the PLFSOM.

At an event welcoming him to the university, Lange shared his vision of TTUHSC El Paso becoming an essential part of the surrounding region.

“Our goal as a health sciences center is to achieve excellence in patient care, education and research and to lead our communities’ efforts,” Lange said. “We are most likely to achieve this by forging a healthy and supportive relationship with our hospital partners; forming a vibrant relationship with our community physicians; and fostering community support and participation.”

Peter Rotwein, MD, who specializes in endocrinology, was also selected as the university’s vice president for research.



Peter Rotwein, MD, above, and Richard Lange, MD, MPH, are welcomed to TTUHSC El Paso.

2015: A NEW HOME FOR THE SCHOOL OF NURSING

In February, the university officially opened the doors to a new home for the Gayle Greve Hunt School of Nursing, thanks in part to a \$10 million gift from the Hunt Family Foundation. Located directly across from the medical school, the new building offers 34,000 square feet of overall space; 12,000 square feet of simulation labs; four classrooms; and several collaborative learning spaces.

The Helix Garden installation, created by artists Elizabeth Billings and Andrea Wasserman, was unveiled in 2015 outside the Gayle Greve Hunt School of Nursing. It symbolizes the science of nursing and the art of caring for the El Paso community.



2016: MAKING REGIONAL HISTORY

The year brought a history-making announcement for health care in the Borderland. Thanks to a \$25 million gift from the Woody and Gayle Hunt Family Foundation and an \$8 million donation from the Paso Del Norte Health Foundation, approval for a study to establish the first dental school in Texas in nearly 50 years was granted to TTUHSC El Paso. The future Woody L. Hunt School of Dental Medicine will help alleviate a severe shortage of dental professionals in West Texas. According to the Texas Department of State Health Services, El Paso has only one dentist for every 5,000 residents, about half the state average of one per every 2,760.

TTUHSC El Paso President Richard Lange, MD, MBA; donors Gayle and Woody Hunt; and Board of Regents Chairman Rick Francis and Chancellor Robert Duncan celebrate the announcement of the Woody and Gayle Hunt Family Foundation's \$25 million gift in support of a dental school for West Texas.

In May 2017, TTUHSC El Paso broke ground on the \$83 million Medical Sciences Building II. The five-story, 219,000-square-foot facility will more than double the campus' research capacity.

2016-17: BUILDING THE RESEARCH BACKBONE

The university's education and research mission got a boost in 2016 when the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board approved the addition of a third school to the campus: the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences. Students in the Master of Science in Biomedical Sciences program participate in hands-on research related to prevalent diseases along the U.S.-Mexico border.

The groundbreaking for the Medical Sciences Building II was another recent milestone, with completion slated for 2019.



2018 AND BEYOND

When TTUHSC El Paso marks its fifth year as an independent university in May, the health sciences center will have much more to celebrate. Enrollment has grown steadily each year, from 40 students in 2009 to a record 670 in fall 2017. Combined with its 265 medical residents and fellows, TTUHSC El Paso is educating nearly 1,000 health professionals this academic year alone.

With every graduating class, with every interaction between patient and provider, the Texas Tech University System's vision for improved access to health care and the focus on treating and curing diseases affecting the region's population becomes clearer and clearer.

"The Texas Tech University System is known for identifying and addressing issues facing our state and nation," said Chancellor Robert Duncan. "Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center El Paso epitomizes this ethos with the unprecedented patient care, education and research they offer on the U.S.-Mexico border."

The foundation set firm, expect many more future physicians, dentists, nurses and health researchers to put down roots in El Paso and across the Borderland.

At five years, the history of TTUHSC El Paso has just begun. 