

Jason Jones

What is a willed body program?

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A willed Body Program is governed by the state anatomical Board of Texas. It is an entity within an entity that is an avenue for individuals that want to donate their body to science for medical education and research. So, our willed body program was established in order to provide for the needs of the medical school and the medical students for their education. So we are now here in 2020. So our program has been in existence for 50 years and serving the West Texas and panhandle region.

How many students are assigned to care for one cadaver?

00:48

When they begin class, the student groups per cadaver student groups average between four and five students that utilize that particular donor. And then about midway through their course, they will alternate and go to a different donor at a different tank or group.

Can students learn from other cadavers?

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The students have access not only to the donor in which they are currently assigned, but they have the ability to study and look at structures and anatomy on all 32 bodies that are currently in use during their course. So they're able to see a wide range of donors and anatomy, which is important because not everybody has had the same medical conditions, the same medical disorders, maybe they have had a certain disease or disorder that is not like the one in which the donor that was assigned to the group. So it's important for them to see all of that, so that they can see the variances in the human body where we're all anatomically the same. But we're not all anatomically correct. So it's important to see those anomalies, because this is one of the courses that the students will revert back to in their mind when they're actually palpating or dealing with a patient. And knowing how some of these diseases and disorders can make their way through the body can help them be a better provider of care for an individual in their care, that they may be treating that has some similar characteristics.

Why is learning from a real human body so important?

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To me, the gross anatomy is a more effective way to learn the anatomy of the body, because it is a very hands on approach. And that tends to sink into your mind a little heavier than just looking through a book or looking at a digitized image. We're not against the use of technology, because technology is a great tool. There's many areas of anatomy that technology has assisted and improved treatments and surgeries. However, without a deep understanding of the anatomy to begin with the use of that tool is could be, you know, potentially worthless to the operator, because they don't know how to set up that piece of equipment to be more effective in their treatment or in their surgical skills.

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What separates the TTUHSC willied body program from others in the state?

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We cover a larger geographic area than most of the other programs. They're concentrated in higher, more dense populated areas, the Dallas, Fort Worth, Houston, San Antonio area where we cover an area that if you drew a line in the state of Texas from Wichita Falls basically south to the Rio, we cover everything west of that region.

Anything to say to people who are considering donating their body to the program?

03:51

For anyone who is thinking about donating their body to science, know that those of us that are here on the receiving side of your generous gift, including the students do consider it a gift and the highest respect and dignity is treated to those donors and their families. And the gift is greatly appreciated. I always say that somehow those individuals that are willing their body to science have kind of come up with the way to live on even after their passing because what is learned from that individual by that student is going to be carried with that student throughout their career and use to help and treat their patients that they come in contact with.

How are students impacted by this experience?

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You see the change in our students from the first day of class, to the final day of class and they go through a walk. It's a transformation. It's a journey that they're taking beyond their educational aspect, because the donor is their first patient and they'll never forget it.