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News Release

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Lori Rice-Spearman Appointed President of Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center

Rice-Spearman, a native of Odessa, Texas, becomes the ninth president of Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center and the first female president in the Texas Tech University System.

The Texas Tech University System [Board of Regents](#) and Chancellor [Tedd L. Mitchell, M.D.](#), announced today (June 5) the official appointment of [Lori Rice-Spearman](#), Ph.D., as the ninth president of [Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center](#) (TTUHSC).

Rice-Spearman, a native of Odessa, Texas, becomes not only the first female president in TTUHSC's 51-year history, but also in the history of all four universities within the TTU System.

"It is an honor and a privilege to welcome Dr. Lori Rice-Spearman as the next president of Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center," Mitchell said. "Lori is widely respected for the empowering and collaborative leadership abilities that she has displayed throughout her career. She also is a valued and trusted member of the university community and intently lives its values.

"TTUHSC has grown to become a comprehensive health university, comprised of five schools on five campuses with five institutes and 20 centers, and I believe Lori is the ideal person to elevate the institution's academic profile, develop and promote student success, and further the mission of expanding access and improving the quality of health care in Texas."

Rice-Spearman joined TTUHSC in 1987 and has since ascended through the ranks, serving as dean of the School of Health Professions and associate provost. In October 2019, she was named provost and chief academic officer of the institution. She was appointed interim president of TTUHSC in November 2019 following Mitchell's decision to close his tenure as president and focus solely on his position as chancellor.

"I am a product of this great university, and to serve as its ninth president is an opportunity to pay forward what it has given to me: first and foremost an outstanding education that has allowed me to serve the people of West Texas," Rice-Spearman said. "West Texas is my home, and I was well-aware of the excellent reputation that comes with a degree from TTUHSC. But,



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TTUHSC has also been a gift to our region in addressing the shortage of health care professionals and delivering quality health care backed by expert research.

“I’m grateful to those whose extraordinary leadership have positioned TTUHSC as a national leader in academic health education and patient care. To continue that momentum, leading this great university into its next chapter, is an honor.”

With Rice-Spearman as provost and interim president for the past seven months, TTUHSC received reaffirmation of its accreditation from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). The university also announced the completion of its first-ever capital campaign, raising \$102.5 million, meeting current needs in research, education and patient care. More recently, Rice-Spearman has led the university’s response to the coronavirus pandemic, earning statewide and national praise for the institution’s efforts and community partnerships.

“I’d like to thank the presidential search committee for conducting a very thorough and successful process to select the next president of Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center,” Board of Regents Chairman [Christopher M. Huckabee](#) said. “Dr. Rice-Spearman’s career achievements along with her unwavering service to the university and West Texas region have prepared her well to serve as our next president. I congratulate her on this appointment.”

While serving as a dean, Rice-Spearman strategically guided TTUHSC’s [School of Health Professions](#) to becoming the largest health professions school in Texas and one of the largest in the nation in relation to the breadth of programs and the number of enrolled students and graduates.

During Rice-Spearman’s tenure, the School of Health Professions added several new areas of study and received numerous national awards recognizing the success of its now 20 accredited academic programs – five of which are “first-in-the-nation.”

Prior to serving as dean, Rice-Spearman held various positions within the school, including associate dean for Learning Outcomes and Assessments and chair of the Department of Laboratory Sciences and Primary Care.

The search committee conducted a national search for the presidential position. The Board of Regents voted to unanimously select Rice-Spearman as the sole finalist on May 14 after interviews were conducted with candidates and a recommendation was made from Mitchell. This appointment follows state statute requiring that, for a president of a public higher education institution in Texas, public notice of the name of the finalist must be given at least 21 days before the date on which final action is taken to employ the person.

Rice-Spearman is an alumna of TTUHSC’s first class of the Clinical Laboratory Sciences program. She has also earned a Master of Science from the Texas Tech University Graduate



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School and received a Doctor of Philosophy from the College of Human Sciences also from Texas Tech University.

What they are saying about Dr. Lori Rice-Spearman:

Walt Cathey, Lubbock Region CEO, Covenant Health

“We are thrilled to see Dr. Rice-Spearman take the reigns as president of Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center. Dr. Rice-Spearman has shown her commitment for the health and safety of our communities and proven her dedication to the education of our future health care leaders. Covenant is excited to work with Dr. Rice-Spearman and further strengthen the bond between our two organizations.”

Mark Funderburk, President & CEO, UMC Health System

“On behalf of UMC Health System, I am honored to welcome Dr. Lori Rice-Spearman as the new president of TTUHSC. Lori has been a great friend to UMC and to the entire health care community. UMC and TTUHSC have enjoyed a mutually dependent partnership that will undoubtedly strengthen under her leadership. And serving as the primary teaching hospital for the TTUHSC School of Medicine, we especially appreciate our shared past and look forward to a bright future, together.”

Marcus D. González, President, TTUHSC Student Government Association

“As the new SGA president, I’m very excited for the opportunity of working with Dr. Rice-Spearman this upcoming year. Her leadership during the coronavirus pandemic has been admirable. She has done an excellent job advocating for student safety and wellness while maintaining the utmost transparency and constant communication. On behalf of the TTUHSC SGA, I’d like to congratulate Dr. Rice-Spearman on her permanent appointment as the TTUHSC president and wish her the best as she continues to make student success a priority.”

Brad Holland, President and CEO, Hendrick Health System

“I am so excited that Dr. Lori Rice-Spearman has been selected to be the next president of Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center. As the president of Hendrick Health System, a hospital partner of the Texas Tech University System, I understand the importance of stable and committed leadership. With more than 33 years of service to the Texas Tech University System and a proven track record for success and growth, I look forward to partnering with her to bring the same level of vision to the greater Abilene market. As a native of West Texas as well, I look forward to working with her to build on the legacy of those great visionary leaders that have come before both of us to continue to develop a health care partnership that will benefit generations to come. Congratulations, Lori!”

Ginger Nelson, Mayor of Amarillo

“Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center is an important partner in our community and our future. I look forward to Dr. Lori Rice-Spearman’s leadership and the impact it has on our region.”



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Charles Perry, State Senator (TX-28th District)

“Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center had a formidable task in replacing Dr. Tedd Mitchell with his advancement to chancellor of the Texas Tech University System. Lori Rice-Spearman is a qualified scientist, proven leader and most importantly, a life-long West Texan. Her roots are grounded in grit, hard work and common sense. The Board of Regents has chosen well. Congratulations to my friend and President Lori Rice-Spearman. Her appointment is well deserved, and the Texas Tech community can rest assured that the Health Sciences Center is in good hands.”

Dan Pope, Mayor of Lubbock

“As a member of the Presidential Search Committee and as someone who has worked directly with Dr. Lori Rice-Spearman, I fully support her selection as the new president of Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center. Health care and education are foundational and important to the future of Lubbock and the university. Dr. Rice-Spearman has the knowledge, experience and leadership skills to further move TTUHSC into the forefront of medicine, research and the delivery of health care. I look forward to working with Dr. Rice-Spearman.”

Russell Tippin, CEO, Permian Regional Medical Center

“What great news for West Texas and TTUHSC. Dr. Rice-Spearman is a West Texan and her selection is a huge win for the Permian Basin. Medical Center Health System is proud of Dr. Rice-Spearman and we look forward to a great relationship with her. We are better together!”

About the Texas Tech University System

Established in 1996 and headquartered in Lubbock, Texas, the [Texas Tech University System](#) is a \$2 billion higher education enterprise focused on advancing higher education, health care, research and community outreach. Consisting of four universities – [Texas Tech University](#), [Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center](#), [Angelo State University](#) and [Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center El Paso](#) – the TTU System collectively has approximately 55,000 students, 17 campuses statewide and internationally, more than 300,000 alumni and an endowment valued at over \$1.3 billion.

During the 86th Texas Legislature under the leadership of [Chancellor Tedd L. Mitchell, M.D.](#), legislative funding and authority was provided to establish a new Texas Tech University veterinary school in Amarillo and a new dental school at Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center El Paso. This will be the state’s first veterinary school in more than a century and first dental school in over 50 years. The addition of these two schools makes the TTU System one of only nine in the nation to offer programs for undergraduate, medical, law, nursing, pharmacy, dental and veterinary education, among other academic areas.

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