

News Release

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TTUHSC Recognized as a Hispanic-Serving Institution *Strengthening the Culture to Create an All-Inclusive Foundation*

Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center (TTUHSC) President Lori Rice-Spearman, Ph.D., today (Feb. 24) announced the U.S. Department of Education has recognized TTUHSC as a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI). HSI status enables the university to strengthen its ongoing-efforts to recruit and support underrepresented students, grow a more diversified faculty and better serve its communities as a comprehensive health care institution.

TTUHSC is only the third health-related institution in the state of Texas to achieve HSI status. Rice-Spearman said the HSI status builds on the university's foundation to enrich the experiences of all underserved populations and train future health care professionals to serve a more diverse population.

"This recognition as a Hispanic-Serving Institution supports our vision to transform health care through innovation and collaboration," Rice-Spearman said. "The status expands opportunities to work collaboratively not only within our institution, but also with external community partners in all areas of academic medicine. As a result, we anticipate leading efforts where innovative contributions allow us to better serve all populations, establishing a culture that will serve as a model for others."

This accomplishment positions TTUHSC among the 569 institutions across the country that claim HSI status – which also makes available dedicated U.S. Department of Education Hispanic-Serving Institutions Grant Programs.

According to Best Colleges, in 1976, Hispanic students made up 4% of all college students; by 2019, they represented nearly 22% of college students. Today, Hispanic/Latino students rank as the second-largest ethnic group in higher education.

HSIs educate 66.8% of all Hispanic students in the United States. To receive HSI status, the U.S. Department of Education requires a Hispanic/Latino undergraduate student population of at least 25% in addition to other criteria. TTUHSC reported 27.83% of Hispanic undergraduate students in Fall 2019 and began the process of receiving this distinction.

HSI was established under Titles III and V of the Higher Education Act of 1965 to improve higher education accessibility for Hispanics and makes available grant funding through the U.S. Department of Education and other federal agencies. This will help the university leverage resources on a national level to support coursework, outreach programs and research opportunities to enhance the cultural experiences and environments for students, faculty, staff and patients said Rice-Spearman.

Other key quotes:

Texas Tech University System Chancellor Tedd L. Mitchell, M.D.

“Congratulations to President Rice-Spearman and her leadership team who have been instrumental in leading Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center to be recognized as a Hispanic-Serving Institution. As TTUHSC becomes the fourth institution in the TTU System to achieve HSI status, I am proud of our collective efforts and commitment to supporting and fostering a diverse student population in higher education and health care.”

TTUHSC Provost Darrin D’Agostino, D.O.

“This transformative achievement is due to the hard work of a team who lived the values of TTUHSC and their individual desires to create opportunities for future graduates from this great institution. Being a Hispanic-Serving Institution is a responsibility, and opportunity, for TTUHSC to innovate, grow and enhance the education of the future health care workforce in our communities. I am so proud of our institution and all we have achieved through the hard work of our faculty, staff and students!”

TTUHSC Vice President of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Jody Randall

“Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center’s recognition as a Hispanic-Serving Institution is significant and will assist us as we continue to transform health care. An inclusive, collaborative environment is the cornerstone to who we are as an institution and this recognition furthers our capacity to support our students from enrollment to graduation and beyond.”

TTUHSC Student Government Association President Bernardo Gonzalez

"Having moved from Mexico to America at eight years old, myself, I experienced first-hand many of the challenges Hispanic communities continue to experience and the barriers they encounter when seeking health care. It brings me great joy to see the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center continue to strive towards advancing the education and health care access to West Texas and beyond. Its newly acquired designation as a Hispanic-Serving Institution, serves as a significant milestone in its commitment to educate the next generation of diverse and culturally competent health care professionals."