



FACTA NON VERBA :: DEEDS, NOT WORDS

Our School of Nursing Veteran to BSN (VBSN) program marked a milestone with its first graduating class earning degrees during the school's inaugural December graduation. I'm proud of the fact that the first seven students to graduate from this program also passed their licensing exams on the first attempt and are now employed as registered nurses in Texas.

The VBSN program credits prior military health care experience and applies it toward a BSN degree, cutting the time for some veterans to receive their degree in 12 months. Our program was the first of its kind in the state, and when it launched in the spring of 2016 was the only such initiative sponsored by the Texas Workforce Commission.

I had the privilege to share our students' success and to represent the Texas Tech University System earlier this summer at a roundtable discussion in Washington, D.C., which focused on improving the quality of education for student veterans and veterans' initiatives. This roundtable event preceded impending updates to the current GI Bill.

We have stepped up our game here at TTUHSC in support of veterans. We now have an office dedicated to serving the men and women who have served our great nation. As educators, it is our purpose to help them with their transition from being a soldier to a civilian student.

Veterans face many obstacles when transitioning from the military back into civilian life. Age, family status and education levels are among them. What's more, experiences and skills gained during their time of service often don't carry the same value as a college degree in some career fields, according to a survey of post 9/11 veterans published in Forbes magazine in 2016.

The success of the VBSN program demonstrates that many of these skills are transferable and, as shown in nursing, should count for something. I'm proud that our faculty developed this educational model that awards college credit hours for military health care experience, based on knowledge and skills.

We have another group of veterans, 60 of them, who also received their degrees from TTUHSC during this last academic year—22 of those earned graduate degrees. Additionally, there are a number of other students who are currently enrolled or who earned degrees while continuing their military service.

Patrick Henry once said, "The battle is not to the strong alone; it is to the vigilant, the active, the brave." I applaud the men and women who have chosen to serve our nation, and I'm proud we have a way to help those who have chosen nursing as a second career.

Tedd L. Mitchell, MD
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TRANSFORMING THE FUTURE OF HEALTH CARE AND EDUCATION

Since becoming the fourth university in the Texas Tech University System in 2013, hundreds of our students, residents and fellows have gained valuable and unique experiences in emerging technologies, academic innovations, cultural immersion and collaborative partnerships; and our university is quickly becoming the national model for addressing the health needs of diverse border populations.

What started as just 40 medical students in 2009 has since evolved into more than 600 students on campus pursuing careers in medicine, nursing or biomedical sciences. That amounts to a 1,400 percent increase in our student population.

Under TTUHSC El Paso's strategic plan for growth, we expect this trend to continue in the coming years. By enhancing online programs and adding a Master of Science in Nursing, we are already on track to increase enrollment in the Gayle Greve Hunt School of Nursing to more than 600 by 2020.

Thanks to a new agreement with The Hospitals of Providence, and the recent grand opening of the nation's newest teaching hospital, TTUHSC El Paso will expand graduate medical education with up to 100 new residency slots. Plans to expand the residency programs at Texas Tech Physicians of El Paso clinics and El Paso's VA Medical Center are also in the works.

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board has given the university a green light to conduct feasibility planning for the proposed Woody L. Hunt School of Dental Medicine, which has already garnered \$31 million in philanthropic support from the El Paso community.

Richard Black, DDS, MS, has been named interim dean. He is a native El Pasoan who has led the local dental society, the Texas Dental Association, and now is a trustee of the American Dental Association (ADA)—one of only 17 members elected nationally to lead the 160,000 member organization. Black has already visited schools in Utah, North Carolina, Texas, Oklahoma, Arizona and California to speak with some of the top dental educators across the country as we begin to develop what will be the newest and most innovative dental school curriculum.

Victor Sandoval, DDS, MPH, who has served on the ADA's Commission on Dental Accreditation and was past president of the American Dental Education Association, has been recruited to assist with accreditation of the dental school.

Our goal of expanding educational opportunities for students, including cutting-edge medical research, is also underway. In May, the university broke ground on an \$83 million Medical Sciences Building. Read more about the opportunities the MSB II will bring on Pages 20-22.

TTUHSC El Paso is also on target for receiving independent institutional accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges for the first time since becoming a freestanding university.

We have come a long way in a short amount of time and plan to continue to set a standard of excellence in the coming years.

Richard Lange, MD, MBA
TTUHSC El Paso President



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