

# Lori Rice-Spearman

## How did the school of Nursing change the University?

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So about 40 plus years ago, we had an opportunity to address some critical healthcare shortages out here in West Texas. As you know, our School of Medicine came to us 50 years ago. And we knew that by bringing physicians to the area that we also needed to grow, the next critical area within access to health care, and nursing made sense for us to add nursing quickly, it has had a tremendous impact. If you were to walk into health care facilities and clinics, all across West Texas, and now even into the east side of the state as well, you're going to you're going to come across graduates and alum from the Texas Tech School of Nursing. And so we're very proud of our School of Nursing.

## Was the impact felt immediately from the School of Nursing?

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Oh, yes, our stakeholders tell us that, within two to three years, it really made a positive impact in access to health care here in the West Texas area. And that's exactly what we were created as a university to do. Our school of nursing has been very innovative and creative in the areas of simulation and interprofessional education, and 40 years, we're just getting started. There's many more wonderful things to come.

## How has the School of Nursing been a leader in innovation for the University?

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Through the COVID pandemic, our School of Nursing was at the forefront in the response to COVID. Some of the examples that the School of Nursing did to support the university as they have long been in the online arena as far as education goes. And so they were very quickly able to pivot and then help our other schools also pivot quickly to online learning. This was tremendous for our university. Another area is their innovation. They quickly rolled up their sleeves and started solving problems about how could we ensure that our students were going to have similar experiences that they would if they were here with us in the sim center. And so they did wonderful things like sim in a box, and boxes were created. They were sent out to students, we did simulation experiences with them at home with the simulation centers, practicing things like IVs, and intubation. And so they really have been one of the core areas within our pandemic response.

## What puts the School of Nursing among the best in the state and the nation?

02:31

We're very fortunate. Employers tell us and employer surveys, they highly rank the quality of our students. And in fact, it's one of the reasons that so many communities reach out to us and want to collaborate with us because they recognize the quality and preparation of our students. Our programs, our state and nationally ranked both our online and our traditional face to face programs. And really, it goes back to the tremendous leadership and faculty and staff in that school.

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Do you have a message for the newest graduates?

03:06

Never has it been more important for these graduates to enter the healthcare environment. We are at a crossroads in healthcare, and I believe that nursing is going to be critical on how we move forward in transforming healthcare through innovation and collaboration.