

What drew you to TTUHSC and the various positions you've held?

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I came to TTUHSC as a student, and really sought the opportunity for education that wasn't available for me in my hometown. I grew up in West Texas. And so when the Health Sciences Center was created in Lubbock, it really afforded an opportunity for those of us, West Texans to seek Health Sciences Center education, outside of where we were raised and where we grew up, so I came here, I found out very quickly that the mission of this university is very aligned to my own personal mission, and the mission that I experienced as a child growing up in West Texas, and that was lack of access to quality health care. And really, really bought into the mission of the university as a student and left the university for a short period of time to work elsewhere. And then was invited to come back to the university and it felt like coming home, coming back to a place that I was aligned with their values I was aligned with the mission, and it really answered for me the question of why I wanted to be in health care and pursue a career here at the HSC, and that has been a motivating factor throughout my opportunities here within the HSC is another leadership position that allowed me to fulfill the mission of the university and really, really expand that access to good health care across all of West Texas.

How does it feel to be named President of TTUHSC?

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I'll be honest with you, it's still a little bit surreal. For me, I walk through the halls, and they're the same halls I walked in in 1983. When I came here and so it's it's been a little bit surreal but very honored to serve in this role. I know that there's a great deal of responsibility that comes with this role and I am committed to the faculty, the staff and the students but mostly to the people of West Texas. And what we're going to be able to bring to them what we've already brought to them and I think we will continue to bring to them that very highest level of care. And really, research, research has really grown from this university that's having an impact, not just in Texas, but across the nation. So it's very exciting to be part of the history of the university, but more importantly part of the future of the university.

Describe the transition from Interim to President

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So I was very fortunate to follow a very strong leader, in in our chancellor Tedd Mitchell. He really was able to create an environment of growth and possibilities. And so to come into this role, we really had wonderful momentum. When I became the interim, and I know one of the focuses that both the chancellor and I had during this interim period was maintain that momentum, keep our university moving forward. We have so many great things happening here we don't want a leadership change to make us hit the pause button and not continue, and even despite some of our challenges we've had with COVID-19. I think we've been able to continue to move the university forward. We've very much looked at COVID, as an opportunity for our university to continue to have an impact and really pivot and do some really special things as a University.

What did you learn about the people of TTUHSC while leading them through a pandemic?

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So, what I learned it really wasn't what I learned what it validated, and that is we have an extraordinary group of people here. You know there's that saying when you take ordinary people, and put them on a team and they begin working as a team, they begin to do extraordinary things, and that's exactly what happened, not just within our own university, but then we also began partnering with our sister universities and the communities in which we serve, which really allowed us to do things we've never done before, and particularly in the area of collaboration. We are collaborating. I like to use the term that doors have been thrown open and barriers have come crashing down, and we are doing things in the area of collaboration that we've never done before.

How do you keep momentum going forward?

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So we, the vision the future that I see for this university and I think it aligns with what our faculty and our staff and our students hope to see our university become in the next decade. And that is transformational telehealth, we feel like we are poised across all of our campuses to be a leader in telehealth delivery across all of our schools. Second, we believe that we have the opportunity to continue to be leaders in innovative academic programming. Already, our institution was very strong, in online learning and online programs, and we believe this has given us an opportunity to explore how programs typically done face to face can be done online and done in a very quality, and a value added way. We think there's a lot of opportunity in that space of how we can meet our learners where they are, or where they want to be to get their education. And then the third area is again to build on this concept of collaborations and what we can do to make sure that we have an infrastructure in place as a university that really highlights and supports innovation and working across all disciplines across all universities in the communities we serve.

On being the first female president in the TTU system

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And there's also a responsibility that comes with that. I think our university was ready to have a very diverse set of ideas, at our leadership table, but not just at our leadership table, across all of our our campuses. We as a university are starting to see the value in having very diverse perspectives. When we make when we're making decisions that impact our university and I think I'm just one example of a diverse perspective that's coming to the table and I'm honored to serve in that role. I think it's important that we continue to mentor, all leaders despite their background, and I'm very sensitive to diversity and inclusion, and making sure that our leadership teams, our faculty, our staff and our students represent that diversity across all of our campuses.