

Brae Foust (00:05):

Hello everyone, and thank you so much for coming back to the I Am WT podcast where we discover the stories behind some of West Texas A&M University's donors, alum, faculty, staff, and students. My name's Brae Foust and with me is my co-host Tearanee' Lockhart. We just got back this week from a study abroad trip in Cape Town, South Africa. How you feeling?

Tearanee' Lockhart (00:27):

I'm feeling good. I'm ready to get back into the swing of things, but I definitely do miss South Africa still.

Brae Foust (00:35):

Still jet-lagged though?

Tearanee' Lockhart (00:35):

Yes, I'm still a little jet-lagged, but-

Brae Foust (00:39):

It's been like two days for you.

Tearanee' Lockhart (00:40):

Yeah, it's felt like I've been back for a month, but it's okay. We're powering through.

Brae Foust (00:45):

Well we are glad you are back.

Tearanee' Lockhart (00:47):

Yes, I'm excited to be back with you guys. So today we're going to have a very fun podcast. We are super excited to have some guests with us today from the nursing department. So I'm going to go ahead and let them introduce themselves.

Jackie Jimenez (01:00):

Hi, yes, I am Jackie Jimenez and I am a senior one level nursing student here at WT.

Holly Jeffreys (01:07):

And I am Holly Jeffreys and I'm the Director for Nursing for West Texas A&M University.

Brae Foust (01:12):

Well, so glad to meet you two and we appreciate you stopping by and joining us on the podcast. First thing though, how did each of you end up in the nursing program here at WT?

Jackie Jimenez (01:22):

Yeah, well I'm a non-traditional student. I am one of the older students in the nursing programs. I transferred actually from California and did most of my pre-reqs there and when I moved here to Texas, I was excited cause there was no more like five year wait list there is in California. I chose WT because

it's a BSN program and I worked so hard and I did all my BSN pre-reqs already and I was like, "Why wouldn't I go there? And I will try." And I applied and I got in and I'm so excited and it's just a great program.

Brae Foust ([01:58](#)):

And Holly, what about you?

Holly Jeffreys ([01:59](#)):

So I have a little bit different story than that. I grew up in the Texas Panhandle, so I'm from here. So I got my bachelor's from WT and then also worked in the local facilities and went back and got my master's from here as well. Have just been part of the Texas Panhandle pretty much my whole life.

Tearanee' Lockhart ([02:15](#)):

You guys, we have the Harrington Academic Hall in Amarillo at the Amarillo Center and that's been around since about fall of 2021. So how is that facility and how is it like working at that facility?

Holly Jeffreys ([02:29](#)):

I'll start with that one because I love it. It's great to have all of our faculty in one place. We still have our graduate faculty of course on campus in Canyon, but it's really nice to have all our undergraduate faculty in one place. We see each other down the halls. The students have a really awesome place to hang out. They have a really nice lounge area. The classroom center is great downstairs and it's been very nice.

Brae Foust ([02:55](#)):

What about a student or a nurse?

Tearanee' Lockhart ([02:56](#)):

Yeah, student perspective?

Brae Foust ([02:57](#)):

How about that? How's your perspective on that?

Jackie Jimenez ([02:59](#)):

Oh yeah. So I was actually part of the first class to go to that campus. So it's the only campus I know. When I started WT I was online because it was during COVID and everything. So I went from online to straight to the new Amarillo campus and it's beautiful. Everything is state of the art. The nursing lab is something I've never seen and there's plenty of spots for us to all hang out and study and it has computer... It's just everything you need to be successful is there. It's great.

Brae Foust ([03:36](#)):

So talking about the Harrington Academic Hall and the staff there, what type of growth have you seen in the nursing program since the fall of 2021 or since the COVID outbreak that happened? So what kind of growth have you seen?

Holly Jeffreys ([03:51](#)):

Well, we've seen some great growth. We've really doubled our number of graduates that we've had since I began then at that time. So we're full. The building that we have, we take every nook and cranny in there and we use it.

Tearanee' Lockhart ([04:07](#)):

I know you guys have gotten a lot of support from the One West campaign with helping build the building and all of that kind of thing. So what does the campaign mean to you and mean to the nursing program?

Holly Jeffreys ([04:19](#)):

So the one West campaign and everything that's gone along with that, with the building of the Harrington Academic Hall and the nursing floor, has been amazing. We couldn't have done it without all of our donors and the supporters that we had in that. I think my most proud moment is probably honestly the student lounge because they have their own place to hang out. It's so cool. They have their own fridge and microwave and we've never had anything like that for students before. And so just making it their home and making it, kind of like Jackie said, they have everything they need and we're not kind of improvising in there and making due. We really have a great facility and we could not have done that without our donors. So we're just so appreciative of that and we make sure we tell the students that as well. Like, "Hey you guys, this is because of people in the Panhandle who really wanted to see you succeed."

Tearanee' Lockhart ([05:09](#)):

Yeah. So Jackie, how has getting to use that equipment, how has that helped with your educational career?

Jackie Jimenez ([05:17](#)):

So having a background in CNA back home in California, I was able to compare the Sims lab. I can't even put into words just how cool it is. I don't know if this is the right word. The dummies. The little mannequins. Yes. I was like, I know there's a better term. The mannequins, they are connected to an iPad and they can talk, they have heartbeats, you can feel like the breathing. It's the future of nursing school I feel like.

Brae Foust ([05:49](#)):

So more than just like a CPR dummy that you see in high school?

Jackie Jimenez ([05:53](#)):

Oh yeah.

Brae Foust ([05:54](#)):

It feels like a real... Wow. Okay.

Jackie Jimenez ([05:56](#)):

So it was super cool to see that. It's not lost on me, just how special that is. I feel like it's so cool to be in the nursing program at this time and WT is just so generous with what they've given us.

Brae Foust ([06:10](#)):

Jackie, when did you come into WT again?

Jackie Jimenez ([06:13](#)):

I started in fall 2020.

Brae Foust ([06:16](#)):

Okay. Fall 2020. All right. So we're now in the fall of 2022 now, if I remember correctly. It's been a long semester. Do you mind sharing a story about your time here at WT to us and the listeners, maybe some awesome experience that you had while in the nursing program that not many people might not know about?

Jackie Jimenez ([06:35](#)):

It's hard to pick just one, just because nursing is such a... There's academics. There's the clinical setting. I've made so many friends. So I think for me what sticks out the most is just the growth, from where I started when stepping onto the hospital floor, being scared to give a little Lovanox shot to a patient, to now having been in the ICU this semester and doing vent care and hanging meds, just, it all feels kind of like a story, if that makes sense, of just progression.

Brae Foust ([07:12](#)):

Yeah, no, absolutely. Holly, do you have a nursing story that you want to share with us, something memorable to you that nobody knows about?

Holly Jeffreys ([07:22](#)):

Oh man, we don't have time for that, but if we did have time... I'm going to kind of get off of what Jackie said. I just told somebody this morning I can barely ever get through penning because when students come in that first year, some of them haven't even set foot in a hospital yet. To me it's so amazing that in four semesters they come in as babies, really, in nursing. And then by the time they leave, they're doing exactly what Jackie said. They're hanging critical drips. They're taking care of critical patients key. They're key. They're just not a student in that role observing. They're actually doing and taking care of these patients.

([07:58](#)):

And by the time they leave, they're competent, proficient. It just still amazes me that their brains are so good and they're so talented that they do so well in those things. And I have to say that they wouldn't be able to do that without awesome faculty. Our faculty, we have great nurse faculty who are really compassionate about the kids, our students I should say, not kids. Although she's saying she's old and it makes me feel like, oh my gosh, if she's old then I shouldn't be here. So anyway, I get teary-eyed every time I start talking about it. And when I see them go to penning and graduation, I can barely control myself.

Brae Foust ([08:36](#)):

I understand, I understand. Well, we have a lot more to discuss, definitely going into more detail with the Rural Nursing Education Consortium. But before we do that, we're going to take a quick PSA break. So we will be right back with Dr. Holly Jeffreys, Jackie. This is I Am WT.

Speaker 5 ([08:54](#)):

Donors to West Texas A&M University give more than their material support. They devote time, expertise, and commitment. WT would not be what it is today without individuals dedicated to our forward progress.

Brae Foust ([09:24](#)):

Welcome back ladies and gentlemen to I Am WT. We're here joined with Dr. Holly Jeffreys and Jackie, a nursing student here as well.

Tearanee' Lockhart ([09:31](#)):

Before we get into a little bit of what it's a rural nursing student, what is it like for students being in the nursing program and trying to get in the nursing program? Well, can we explain that from a nursing student side and then from more of a director's side? So we'll start with Jackie.

Jackie Jimenez ([09:47](#)):

Getting into the program is an accomplishment all in of itself. You have to take quite a few classes to even be eligible. You have to do well in your classes and be competitive, but WT gives you every opportunity to be successful in that.

Tearanee' Lockhart ([10:06](#)):

And then what is it like being in the program itself?

Jackie Jimenez ([10:08](#)):

Being in the program is a whirlwinds. It just goes so fast. Be ready to learn. I would say that. You are going to learn so much. You will surprise yourself, though, how much you can retain and do well on tests. You really can. They give you all the tools. So it's fun. It's hard. It's fast, but it's fun.

Tearanee' Lockhart ([10:30](#)):

For you, what is it like on the director side working with the students? How is that nursing program?

Holly Jeffreys ([10:37](#)):

Well, I always tell students when they come in, one of my favorite books is What Got You Here Won't Get You There. And so Jackie is so right. It is an accomplishment just to get into the program. We do have a lot of requirements and we really try to take students who are really ready for that challenge that nursing school gives because it is a lot of information and where other areas you might can sometimes get it right, sometimes get it wrong. This is dealing with people's lives, so we always get it right. That's our goal. And so we really work on that. And so I tell them, "You may have never done anything like this before that's been so taxing to you and a little bit stressful, creates a little bit of anxiety." But we understand that and we're really trying to help them with coping skills, getting through that, but also encouraging them.

([11:26](#)):

And you can do it. You got here. You're going to get there. And then once you get there, there's going to be somewhere else you're going to go and we're going to help you get there. So again, it's just so rewarding to see them go through that. And it is, at times, very stressful as well if something goes wrong

for them or they're not having as good of time as they thought. But some of the things that they've done in the past were maybe parts of groups or they're hanging out and doing some fun stuff, sometimes, has to go on the back burner during nursing school.

Tearanee' Lockhart ([11:54](#)):

So what are some of the requirements?

Holly Jeffreys ([11:57](#)):

So we have a general requirement of a GPA of 3.0. Most of our graduates are 3.5 and above. And then of course all the pre-reqs that come with that and the time commitment. So while others could probably go to school maybe in the evenings or just kind of like that, we basically take their life. We're in class two days a week and then we're in clinical the other two days a week. And on the rest of the days they're studying or prepping.

Brae Foust ([12:26](#)):

Gotcha. Okay. So I wanted to discuss more on the Rural Nursing Education Consortium. Basically just wanted to understanding of what is exactly the Rural Nursing Education Consortium and who all is included in the consortium itself.

Holly Jeffreys ([12:40](#)):

So the Rural Nursing Education Consortium consists of the educational entities like Frank Phillips College in rural college and then of course WT. And then there are also five rural hospitals associated with that. So those rural hospitals are throughout the Texas Panhandle and we kind of just come together to provide nursing education at all levels, so beginning levels up through... Honestly we're working right now on making sure that they could get graduate degrees and those students could perhaps educate other students in their own communities.

([13:15](#)):

And so the preface of the whole program is that students can get that education by staying in their rural communities, providing those communities with nursing. The students may be part of their Rural Nursing Education Consortium, they just don't know they are. One of the semesters that we do is called community service. So in the community we send them out to different places. And so Jackie may have had experiences going out of town and different things, but we go to Dumas and Dalhart and Pampa and Hereford and just kind of all over the region. And so some of the students maybe don't connect that with the whole consortium, but we do want to make sure we give them experiences outside of one facility.

Brae Foust ([13:54](#)):

Gotcha. Okay. So Jackie, for you, why would you consider rural experience critical rather than an urban experience? Why rural experience is more critical?

Jackie Jimenez ([14:04](#)):

This semester, taking our classes called populations, we learn that rural communities are most at risk of the disadvantages that... Social determinants of health, the rural communities are the most affected by that, by lack of healthcare, lack of access, not as much access to even education and money. It's a little harder. So it was cool though. I got to go to the Panhandle Family Clinic. The Panhandle's extremely

generous, just not from being here in Texas. I've been actually really blown away by all the resources everyone works so hard to provide. It's really cool.

Tearanee' Lockhart ([14:47](#)):

So I know you mentioned a little bit earlier you were from California and then now you're studying here. So do you have plans on staying here and if so, why is it important for WT nursing students to stay here?

Jackie Jimenez ([15:00](#)):

Yes. We bought a house, so we are here to stay.

Brae Foust ([15:03](#)):

Let's go.

Jackie Jimenez ([15:03](#)):

I'm here. My husband has a great job here. Our daughter's doing great in school, so I feel like this is a great place to raise a family and work. I already work at BSA Hospital, so I will be proud and happy to stay there. I think it's important if you already live here in the Panhandle, why not? The cost of living goes way up anyways the more exciting city you live in. And Amarillo's, I feel like, on a really ground floor kind of opportunity. There's so much coming to Amarillo and I think it's going to be kind of competitive with the bigger cities at some point. And they pay well. They pay nurses well here. So I think why not stay?

Brae Foust ([15:51](#)):

Yeah, definitely Amarillo, I consider to be a big little town is what I like to call it. A hundred thousand, not too big, but not too little.

([15:58](#)):

Holly, going more into that with nursing students, how many nursing students typically stay in the Texas Panhandle rather than going off to other parts of the country? How many typically stay in this general area?

Holly Jeffreys ([16:11](#)):

I would say it varies from semester to semester when we graduate students of course, but I can always safely say between 70% to 80% of our graduates will stay in the Texas Panhandle. We really do do a good job their last semester of their nursing program, putting them in an area that they feel like they would like to pursue and hopefully connecting them with that. I can tell you 100% of our students always have jobs, if they want one, right, when they graduate. And we've had that issue for years where 100% of our students are always connected with some position or opportunity that they wanted.

Tearanee' Lockhart ([16:49](#)):

Yeah. That's a great problem to have.

Brae Foust ([16:50](#)):

Yeah, a great problem to have.

Tearanee' Lockhart ([16:53](#)):

So what do you think is next for WT nursing?

Holly Jeffreys ([16:56](#)):

I think our growth has been wonderful. We are just kind of streamlining that growth. We are trying to get used to our new facility, which we've done well. It's been awesome. We haven't had really any issues there. And I think just one of the particular goals I have for our students, I want at least half of our graduate students with the BSN to come back for their MSN. Now I'd like all of them too, but I know that's not in everybody's desires. But we really want to continue training our students to come back and be future faculty and help us out, train more students so that we can continue a growth pattern in that, as well as we need to take care of the Panhandle. With graduate degrees they can come out and be leaders in their communities and that is our biggest thing, is to really recruit nurses to stay, work, lead.

Brae Foust ([17:48](#)):

And Jackie, what's next for you after your WT degree has been awarded to you this May?

Jackie Jimenez ([17:57](#)):

I will stay here. I do plan on working at BSA where I currently work. I want to get experience. I feel like I'm ready to graduate, but I'm also just foreseeing the new grad kind of panic. So I would love to work in the ER or possibly like the med-surg unit and just get my skills down, get my experience down. And I would love to come back though and get my master's here at WT. I'm sure I will. I actually am a tutor, under seeing tutor, so teaching is potentially a pathway for me as well.

Brae Foust ([18:34](#)):

Yeah.

Tearanee' Lockhart ([18:35](#)):

So I guess our last question for today is what does WT mean to you?

Jackie Jimenez ([18:39](#)):

WT is everything right now for me. It's what's going to give me a career. I want my daughter to come here. It's like a family at this point. It's my second home, the nursing program, like Dr. Jeffreys was saying. WT is a huge part of my life and I'm just so grateful to have access to such an awesome university here in the Panhandle.

Holly Jeffreys ([19:07](#)):

WT means a lot to me because several reasons. Actually, I went on the first date with my husband to a bonfire at WT and so we've been married 30 years, so that's awesome. I met him here. And then I of course got my bachelor's and master's here, so it feels like family and I'm so close to many of the former faculty that taught here who I still consider friends. Actually I'm a director over some of the people who taught me and I taught some of the faculty that are there. So it's kind of a cool relationship there. And then of course I have children myself who have graduated from WT and I have one still here. So it is a family thing and it's a local community and I'm proud of WT and I'm really, really proud of our leadership. I think we have really strong leadership and I think that our mission and vision is very compelling and I'm directly in line with that.



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Brae Foust ([19:58](#)):

You say you have kids as well?

Holly Jeffreys ([19:59](#)):

I do.

Brae Foust ([20:00](#)):

You both do. You want to say hi to your kiddo right here real quick?

Holly Jeffreys ([20:03](#)):

Yes. Hey kids. They're all adults, so they'll probably think this is really-

Brae Foust ([20:08](#)):

Oh, it's fine. I'm still a baby boy to my mom and I'm 20 years old, so that's fine.

Holly Jeffreys ([20:12](#)):

Hey, Casslyn and Keldon, Callahan and Claire.

Brae Foust ([20:15](#)):

Jackie, you want to say hi to your little one?

Jackie Jimenez ([20:17](#)):

Hi, hope.

Brae Foust ([20:19](#)):

All right. Well, before we sign off, I just want to say thank you to the two of you for joining us today, sharing your stories and telling us more about the WT nursing program. It's nice to have a director's perspective and a student's perspective. Do you have anything more Tearanee'?

Tearanee' Lockhart ([20:35](#)):

I do not. We really appreciate you guys. Thank you so much for coming.

Brae Foust ([20:39](#)):

Well, Dr. Jeffreys and Jackie, it has been an absolute pleasure. And to you, listener, we appreciate you stopping by and make sure to stay tuned for future episodes of I Am WT. Until next time.