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## How a Small, Rural College Strengthened Student Success Through Caring Campus

**LONG BEACH, CA** – As one of the smallest Caring Campus institutions, Ranger College in Texas has intentionally cultivated a culture of care that removes barriers, builds trust, and strengthens student success. In doing so, the college demonstrates how faculty and staff can create meaningful change regardless of size or geographic location.

That commitment to implementing Caring Campus principles and strategies is reflected in everyday moments. Meetings often begin with stories of Random Acts of Kindness witnessed on campus – whether it be faculty members helping students navigate unfamiliar spaces, staff stepping up beyond their job descriptions, or acts of generosity that extend into the surrounding community.

“These are direct results of Caring Campus,” Ranger College President Dr. Derrick Worrels said. “People are going out of their way to help others, and you can feel it. Sometimes people just can’t believe how wonderful things are and how quickly the culture has shifted.”

Ranger College’s dedication to fostering a caring environment is also reflected in practical, student-centered changes. The college replaced the term “office hours” with “student help hours” to remove unintended barriers for students seeking assistance. It also relocated mainstream student support services closer to where students live, making help more accessible.

“You really notice our culture of care when you come onto our campus,” Worrels said. “Once you experience it, you start recognizing it elsewhere.”

Worrels said he experienced one such moment during a recent trip to another Texas community college, where he immediately sensed a similar environment of care. After asking a staff member, he confirmed his instinct: the college was also a Caring Campus.

As a [silver-certified Caring Campus](#), [Caring Campus Network member](#), and attendee of the first-ever Caring Campus Conference in November 2025, Ranger College has fully embraced the resources available to deepen its impact.

“We wanted to pursue Certification because it’s something our community, faculty, staff, and students need to see,” Worrels said. “Not just that we’re talking about caring, but that we’re actively trying to get better at it. We want to be gold-certified next. We want to be the pinnacle of a Caring Campus.”

Since implementing Caring Campus, Ranger College has experienced record enrollment year after year.

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"Our students need to know they're cared about more than anything," Worrels said. "Students come to people they know they can trust. Once that trust and care is established, it removes a barrier, especially for first-generation and marginalized students who may already feel hesitant or uncertain. It's vital to exude care."

Ranger College was able to fund its implementation of Caring Campus through a grant from the Greater Texas Foundation.

"Ranger College is a shining example of how any college, regardless of size or location, can go all-in for its students," Caring Campus CEO and founder Dr. Brad Phillips said. "Their work demonstrates what's possible when care is treated as a foundational element of student success."

#### **PHOTO CAPTIONS:**

**IEBC\_RANGER1:** As one of the smallest Caring Campus institutions, Ranger College has intentionally cultivated a culture of care that removes barriers, builds trust, and strengthens student success.

**IEBC\_RANGER2:** As a silver-certified Caring Campus, Caring Campus Network member, and attendee of the first-ever Caring Campus Conference in November 2025, Ranger College has fully embraced the resources available to deepen its impact.

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