

Department of Surgery News

December 2024



Letter from the Chair

Dear Colleagues and Friends of the Department,

I hope the holiday season finds you with plans for good times with family and friends and an opportunity to be refreshed. This season, the department has had a number of opportunities to celebrate each other and reflect on the gift of being able to serve our communities. One important celebration, unrelated to the holiday season, occurred at the Center for the Future of Surgery, where we unveiled an extraordinary \$8 million facility upgrade that included over 240 pieces of new, state-of-the-art equipment. It is hard to put into words how striking and functional these enhancements are and how they will facilitate the development and adoption of new technologies that will transform our field.

In recognition of this monumental event, we sat down with Santiago Horgan, M.D., former chief of the Division of Minimally Invasive Surgery and director of the Center for the Future of Surgery, for our monthly Q&A. We discussed the history of the center, including the institution's initial aspirations and how it has evolved over time.

We are also delighted to share some photos from the department's Mardi Gras-themed holiday luncheon, which was filled with lively performances, delicious treats and, best of all, each other's company.

Finally, I would like to thank all of the team members in the Department of Surgery for the incredible work they do every day on behalf of our patients and each other. It is truly a gift to come to work and be amongst the company of truly exceptional people. I will certainly take time over the holidays to reflect on the incredible extended family that is the Department of Surgery.

Thank you and happy holidays!



Bryan Clary, M.D., M.B.A.

Marshall J. Orloff Family Endowed Chair
Professor and Chair, Department of Surgery
UC San Diego Health Sciences
Surgeon-in-Chief, UC San Diego Health

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The Department of Surgery relies on the financial support of our alumni and friends to conduct groundbreaking research and train the next generation of surgeons. We invite you to partner with us by contributing to the Department of Surgery Excellence Fund. Every gift, no matter the size, is crucial in advancing our vital missions.

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Feature Article: UC San Diego's Center for the Future of Surgery Completes \$8 Million Upgrade



UC San Diego's Center for the Future of Surgery recently completed an \$8 million facility upgrade, including over 240 pieces of new, state-of-the-art equipment. The higher-definition imaging and enhanced usability of these upgrades will enhance training at the center, the goal being to improve patient care.

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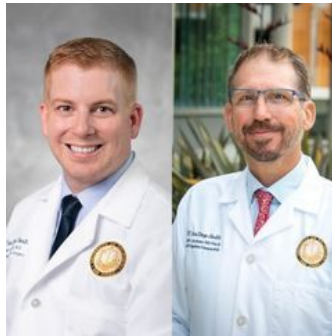
Q&A with Santiago Horgan, M.D.

Professor Santiago Horgan, M.D., is the former chief of the Division of Minimally Invasive Surgery, vice chair of business development in the Department of Surgery, director of the Bariatric and Metabolic Institute and director of the Center for the Future of Surgery. Horgan was the founder and driving force of the center, which is now one of the largest surgical training centers in the world. Now, he is stepping into a new role — vice president of medical and surgical advancement at Stryker Corporation.



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Featured News



Ryan Broderick, M.D., and Garth Jacobsen, M.D., surgeons in the Division of Minimally Invasive Surgery, were the first physicians to use the Dexter Surgical Robot to complete a hernia repair surgery.

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Jason Sicklick, M.D., executive vice chair for research, was interviewed about the science of cancer genomics and precision medicine on "The Science Of..." This podcast aims to connect science to everyday life and encourage students to pursue careers in STEM.

Staff News



Welcome Lauren Botta

Lauren Botta, nurse practitioner, joins the Division of Surgical Oncology after holding various nursing roles at UC San Diego Health. Botta completed her doctorate of nursing practice at the University of San Diego.

Department Holiday Events

The department held many holiday events, all of which were filled with holiday cheer, delicious treats and good company.





Training News



Center for the Future of Surgery Hosts Fluorescence-guided Surgery Course

Led by the Society of American Gastrointestinal and Endoscopic Surgeons (SAGES), this course was attended by research fellows from across the country and Canada.

Alumni Spotlight



Alpina Soni, M.D., completed her general surgery residency at UC San Diego in 2009. She later went on to complete a research fellowship at MD Anderson and has now been a partner at the Permanente Medical Group in Northern California for 13 years. Soni also is the lead of diversity, equity and inclusion for the Regional Surgery Group and heads the Kaiser Permanente Napa-Solano lifestyle medicine program.

"I recall my first weekend on trauma call as an intern. It was Labor Day weekend, the trauma resuscitations were pouring in and I had no idea what I was doing. My senior residents realized I was under water and were so kind. They took me aside and helped divide up what needed to get done. They had so much compassion and helped me learn and grow. It was only upwards from there!

I am grateful for the UC San Diego experiences that shaped me today, whether they be rounding with Marshall Orloff, M.D., and watching him pull out his famous felt-tipped black pen or gaining surgical pearls with Abdool Rahim Moossa, M.D. I also had many outstanding women role models as I advanced through my training. The majority of my class of surgical interns at UC San Diego were women, which I see as nothing short of groundbreaking. Diverse departments are advantageous for trainees, patients and surgery as a whole, making me better appreciate this aspect of UC San Diego."

Crohn's and Colitis Awareness Week

"In my research, I am interested in treatment methods for perianal Crohn's disease. UC San Diego is the only hospital that performs the stem-cell fat grafting technique to treat Crohn's disease, making us a pioneer in the field. We hope that this work will improve our understanding of this disease and, ultimately, improve patient outcomes."

Samuel Eisenstein, M.D.
Division of Colon and Rectal Surgery

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Crohn's and Colitis Awareness Week

Samuel Eisenstein, M.D., associate professor in the Division of Colon and Rectal Surgery, highlights novel treatments in Crohn's Disease.

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT
MARK ZHAO, M.D., M.A.S.

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Alumni Spotlight: Mark Zhao

Mark Zhao, M.D., M.A.S., assistant professor of surgery at UCSF, reflects on how the UC San Diego Department of Surgery community impacted his career.

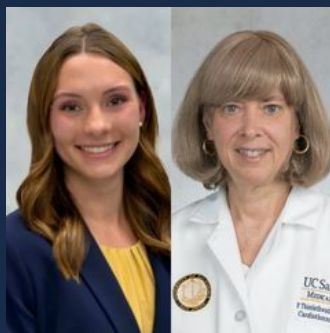


Humans of Surgery: Thomas Handley

Humans of Surgery has returned! Thomas Handley, M.D., general surgery resident, speaks on his decision to become a surgeon.

Science Discoveries and Recent Publications

Our diverse faculty are highly productive and actively disseminate new discoveries relevant to understanding and improving the management and treatment of surgical disease.



A team led by Patricia Thistlethwaite, M.D., Ph.D., and first author Cassandra Besse from the Division of Cardiovascular and Thoracic Surgery analyzed 13 clinical trials and found that drugs that inhibit the Delta-like 4 protein, used for cancer treatment, can also cause pulmonary hypertension. [Read More](#)

[READ OUR LATEST PUBLICATIONS BY DIVISION](#)

Recent Job Listings

- [Associate or Full Professor \(HS Clinical, Clinical X\) Chief, Division of Trauma, Surgical Critical Care, Burns and Acute Care Surgery](#)
- [Associate or Full Professor \(Ladder/In-Residence\) Chief, Division of Trauma, Surgical Critical Care, Burns and Acute Care Surgery](#)
- [Assistant, Associate or Full Professor \(HS Clinical, Clinical X\) Transplant Surgery](#)
- [Assistant, Associate or Full Professor \(HS Clinical, Clinical X, In-Residence, Adjunct\) Breast Surgery](#)



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About the Department of Surgery

The Department of Surgery at UC San Diego prides itself on delivering state-of-the-art, nation-leading clinical care to the diverse communities of Southern California and beyond. We are dedicated to transforming the lives of future patients through groundbreaking research and shaping the next generation of surgeons and leaders through our exceptional training programs. These training programs are a key reason UC San Diego Health hospitals rank among the top twenty nationwide and why our School of Medicine is recognized as a leader in research and medical education.

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