

UC San Diego

Department of Surgery News

March 2025



9:00 AM

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Details

Where did you match?

I matched at the UC San Diego Department of Surgery!

Letter from the Chair

Dear Colleagues and Friends of the Department,

Spring is in the air, and it is one of the most exciting days of the year as the results of the “Match” have been made known. The “Match” is a coordinated process that pairs senior medical students with their future residency training programs. It marks the end of a long season of applications, interviews and difficult ranking decisions for both residency programs and students. To give some perspective, our general surgery residency program had more than 1,500 applicants and interviewed 87 candidates to fill seven slots.

The “Match” is a highlight of the year for the department as we meet the new faces who will bring energy, new ideas and fresh experiences to our patients and our program. In this month’s newsletter, we are excited to announce the results of our four primary residency programs — cardiothoracic surgery, general surgery, plastic surgery and vascular surgery. We could not be more excited to welcome these exceptional students into our family and are thrilled about their futures in our department.

A theme of renewal and rejuvenation runs through the rest of this month’s newsletter. This includes our Q&A with Laura Haines, M.D., associate professor in the Division of Trauma, Critical Care, Burns and Acute Care Surgery, who walks us through the vital process to renew the division’s Level One Trauma Center verification. Haines explains what this designation means and why this process is critical. Other features include a significant national quality achievement in the Division of Vascular and Endovascular Surgery, research awards and department leadership transitions.

As always, we thank you for your continued support and engagement with the department.



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

SUPPORT THE FUTURE OF SURGERY



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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Welcome New Residents

Today is Match Day! We would like to welcome our new residents from every specialty to the Department of Surgery family. We are confident that you will achieve great things at UC San Diego.



Nicolas Chanes
 Cardiothoracic Surgery
 University of Colorado



Alexis Nichols
 Cardiothoracic Surgery
 Baylor University



Brandon Bellen
 General Surgery
 University of Colorado



Natalie Kessler
 General Surgery
 University of Virginia



Georgia Kirn
 General Surgery
 UCSF



Jacob Kotlier
 General Surgery
 Tufts University



Kelsey Ogomori
 General Surgery
 UCSF



Cristian Puerta
 General Surgery
 Universidad Autónoma
 de Baja California



Celina Thomas
 General Surgery
 University of Maryland



McKay Reese
 Plastic Surgery
 UC San Diego



Sina Zarrintan
 Vascular Surgery
 University of Tabriz

Q&A with Laura Haines, M.D.

Laura Haines, M.D., is an associate professor of surgery in the Division of Trauma, Surgical Critical Care, Burns and Acute Care Surgery, the Trauma Medical Director, Medical Director of the Surgical Intensive Care Unit (ICU) and Program Director of the Surgical Critical Care Fellowship and Acute Care Surgery Fellowship. Laura Haines recently oversaw UC San Diego's Level One Trauma Center verification, a process that ensures trauma centers are providing quality patient care.



Featured News



The Society for Vascular Surgery's Vascular Quality Initiative (VQI) awarded UC San Diego Health a three-star designation, the highest possible award. Led by Mahmoud Malas, M.D., M.H.S., chief of the Division of Vascular and Endovascular Surgery, and Ahmed Abdelkarim, M.D., VQI quality officer, this effort highlights the division's commitment to quality patient care.



Rebekah White, M.D., was featured in an article by UC San Diego Health for performing a tumor removal surgery on Danny Boitano, a former Major League Baseball player.

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A report by Clarivate ranked UC San Diego as eighth in the world among universities powering global innovation. The Department of Surgery's research contributed to this achievement.

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Javier Bravo Receives Society of Surgical Oncology 2025 Top-Rated Abstract Podium Award in the Endocrine Category

Javier Bravo, M.D., under the mentorship of Michael Bouvet, M.D., received this award for his paper on fluorescence imaging of thyroid cancer. Bravo will present this research at the Society of Surgical Oncology annual meeting in Tampa, FL.



Society Meetings

These included the Western Trauma Association Meeting, held in Whistler, British Columbia, and the American College of Surgeons Cancer Conference, held in Phoenix, AZ.

Faculty News



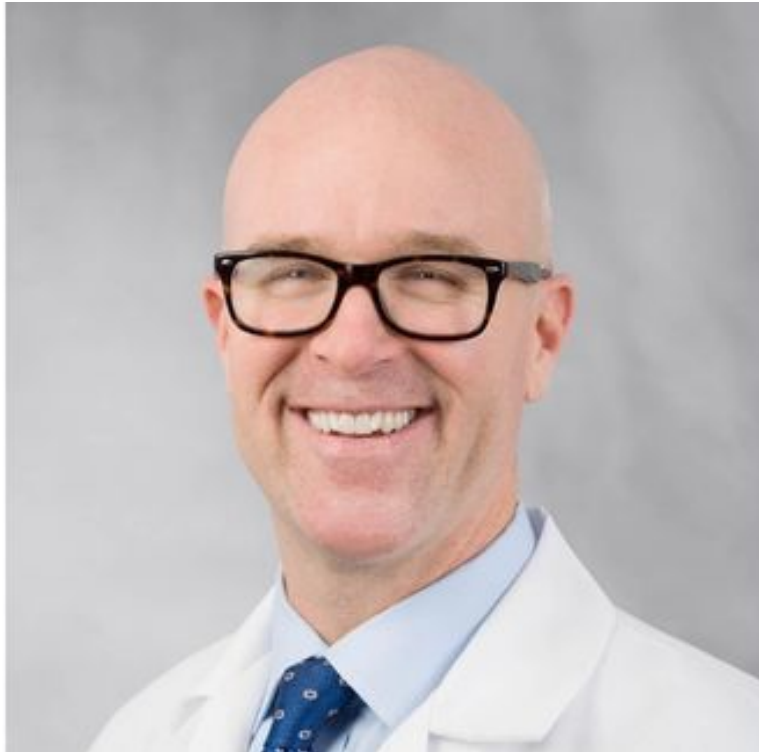
Tatiana Hurtado de Mendoza Receives Curebound Grant for Breast Cancer Research

Tatiana Hurtado de Mendoza, Ph.D., received this grant in collaboration with Christopher Benedict, Ph.D., of the La Jolla Institute for Immunology. Curebound will direct \$250,000 towards their work in breast cancer immunotherapy treatments.



Jason Sicklick Presents at 2025 GIST Summit

This summit, held in Houston, Texas, aimed to share gastrointestinal stromal tumor (GIST) research and clinical trials updates with patients and caregivers. Jason Sicklick, M.D., executive vice chair for research in the Department of Surgery, shared his work on developing new approaches for treating SDH-deficient GIST.



Gabriel Schnickel Appointed Interim Chief of the Division of Transplantation and Hepatobiliary Surgery

Gabriel Schnickel, M.D., M.P.H., is currently a professor in the Division of Transplantation and Hepatobiliary Surgery. He is also the Executive Director of the Center for Research, Education, Innovation and Transformation in Organ Donation (REIMAGINE).

Staff News



Welcome Leila Adler

Leila Adler joins the Division of Transplantation and Hepatobiliary Surgery as Managing Director for the UC San Diego Center for Research, Education, Innovation and Transformation in Organ Donation (REIMAGINE). Adler previously worked as the director of Foundation and Research Relations at UC San Diego.

Training News



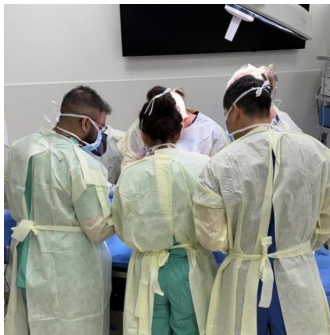
Center for the Future of Surgery Hosts Residency Transition Course

This course, led by various Department of Surgery faculty, aimed to expose fourth year medical students to different surgical specialties.



Department of Surgery Hosts Student Clerkship Reception

This event, held quarterly, encourages medical students to meet and network with Department of Surgery faculty, residents and fellows.



The **Center for the Future of Surgery** hosted various labs this month, including a vascular surgery lab, led by Ann Gaffey, M.D., M.S., assistant professor in the Division of Vascular and Endovascular Surgery.

Alumni Spotlight



Andrea Munden, M.D., is an alumnus of several programs in the Department of Surgery. She completed her

medical school degree, general surgery residency, surgical critical care fellowship and burn fellowship at UC San Diego. Munden is currently an assistant professor in the Division of Acute Care Surgery and the associate program director of the burn surgery fellowship at the University of Florida.

“When I reflect on my time as a general surgery resident, I find my thoughts are most often of my co-residents. This group of strangers quickly became my friends and family because of our shared experiences. No one will better understand the highs and lows of residency like your co-residents. They are your companions, confidants, support system and, in some cases, lifelong friends. I would not have made it through residency without them.”

As Seen on Social Media



Thank a Resident Day

On Thank a Resident Day, we showed our appreciation for our residents and fellows at the Department of Surgery with lunch and stickers.



World Kidney Day

On World Kidney Day, we spoke to Jennifer Berumen, M.D., associate professor in the Division of Transplantation and Hepatobiliary Surgery, on kidney health, treatment and transplants.

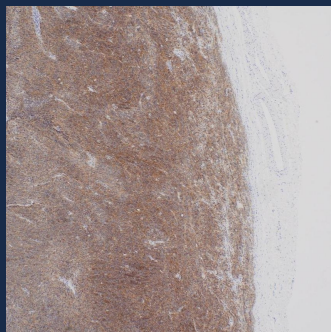


Humans of Surgery

This month, we highlighted Katharine Hinchcliff, M.D., assistant professor in the Division of Plastic Surgery, and Carmina Maridueno, M.S.N., R.N., C.A.P.A., clinic manager for UTC Digestive Diseases.

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 study resolved an ongoing debate in the gastrointestinal stromal tumors (GIST) field with definitive evidence that NTRK fusions occur in GIST and are targetable with drugs that specifically target the NTRK fusion protein. [Read More](#)

[READ OUR LATEST PUBLICATIONS BY DIVISION](#)

Recent Job Listings

- [Assistant, Associate or Full Professor \(HS Clinical, Clinical X, In-Residence, Adjunct\) Minimally Invasive Surgery](#)
- [Assistant, Associate or Full Professor \(HS Clinical, Clinical X, In-Residence, Adjunct\) Surgical Sciences](#)
- [Associate or Full Professor \(Ladder Rank/In-Residence\) Surgical Sciences](#)
- [Assistant Professor \(Ladder Rank/In-Residence\) Surgical Sciences](#)
- [Assistant, Associate or Full Professor \(HS Clinical, Clinical X, In-Residence, Adjunct\) Breast Surgery](#)
- [Assistant, Associate or Full Professor \(HS Clinical, Clinical X\) Transplant Surgery](#)



UC San Diego

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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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