

Department of Surgery News

May 2026



Letter From the Chair

Dear Colleagues and Friends of the Department,

May tends to be a very busy month for the department and this year is no exception. First and foremost, I would like to thank everyone for attending our 14th Annual Department of Surgery Research Symposium that was held at the Scripps Seaside Forum on May 12. This event is a highlight of the year for me as it brings to life our department's dedication to scientific inquiry through research presentations and celebrations from all of our divisions. We were honored to host keynote speaker David Hackam, MD, pediatric surgeon-in-chief and co-director of Johns Hopkins Children's Center who gave an inspiring presentation that covered his laboratory's work in developing novel treatments for necrotizing enterocolitis, a fatal condition that affects many prematurely born infants.

This month, we also sat down with Ian Glenn, MD, cardiovascular surgeon, to learn about his path to surgery. And the American Society of Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery highlighted a recent study by Jeffery Reeves, MD, pertaining to the increase in GLP-1 medications and the reduction in bariatric surgeries.

A number of other events permeated the month including the PanCAN PurpleStride fundraiser, which raises money to support pancreatic cancer research at UC San Diego. Pancreatic cancer research is a particular area of emphasis for the department and an area where we are finally beginning to see some real breakthroughs. Our Women in Surgery Committee also hosted a Devil Wears Prada 2 movie night to foster community and belonging among our female surgeons.

Lastly, I am excited to share that we now have a training program-specific donation page where alumni, friends and trainees can give directly to the program of their choice. Every gift, no matter the size, is crucial in advancing our vital missions, and I thank you for your support.



Bryan Clary, MD, MBA

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

Research Symposium



On Tuesday, May 12, 2026, the UC San Diego Department of Surgery hosted its 14th Annual Department of Surgery Research Symposium at the Scripps Seaside Forum in La Jolla, California. Faculty, trainees, students and staff in the department and beyond gathered to discuss impactful research that could transform surgical care.

[Read the symposium highlights](#)

Featured News

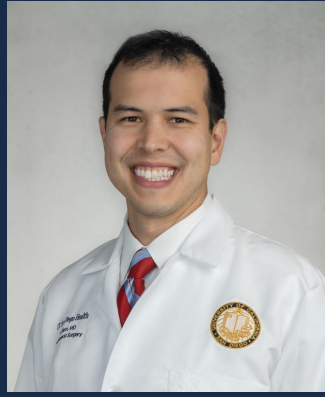


The newly opened McGrath Outpatient Pavilion (MOP) is bringing together multiple specialties, including surgery, to expand cancer care in San Diego.

[Read about the MOP's impact on cancer care](#)

Surgical Spotlight: Ian Glenn

Ian Glenn, MD, cardiotoracic surgeon, shares his path to cardiotoracic surgery, teaching perspectives and aspirations for the future of heart care at UC San Diego.



Support the Future of Surgery



The Department of Surgery now offers a dedicated **training program giving page** where alumni, friends and trainees can contribute directly to their specific training program. Every gift, no matter the size, is crucial in advancing our vital missions, and we thank you for your support.

[Donate to your training program](#)

Surveys for Doximity's 2026-2027 Residency Navigator are now open! If you are not familiar with Residency Navigator, it is a residency program directory used by medical students to explore over 4,000 residency programs, including our own, across 28 specialties.

Help us elevate our national reputation and ensure the continued impact of our residency program in three easy steps!

1. Log in to www.doximity.com or open the Doximity app.

2A. Current residents or recent graduates can search for the "Residency Navigator Satisfaction Survey" to rate their residency program. *Note: UC San Diego must be listed under "Education and Training" in your profile.*

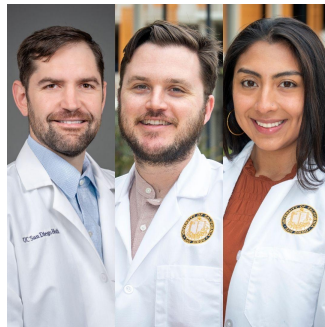
2B. Board-certified surgeons can search for the "Residency Navigator Nomination Survey" to nominate up to five outstanding residency programs.

3. Click submit. A confirmation will appear when your review is recorded.

[Vote on Doximity](#)

Science Discoveries and Recent Publications

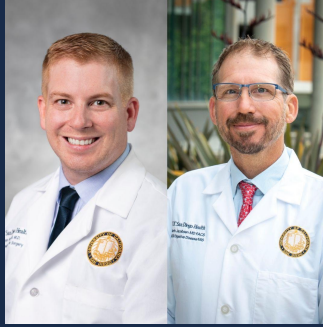
Our faculty are highly productive and actively disseminate new discoveries relevant to understanding and improving the management and treatment of surgical disease.



Jeffery Reeves, MD, Nicholas Neel, MD, and Ruth Laverde, MD, examined the rise of GLP-1 medications, the reduction of bariatric surgeries and how most people with severe obesity remain untreated despite multiple effective therapies. [Read about the study on GLP-1 use](#)

[Our publications](#)

Clinical News



Ryan Broderick, MD, and Garth Jacobsen, MD, recently completed nine surgical removals of the gallbladder (called a cholecystectomy) using CMR Surgical's Versius Plus robotic surgery system. The procedures mark the first time this system was used in the United States. UC San Diego continues to lead in surgical innovation by evaluating emerging surgical technologies to enhance surgeon precision and improve patient outcomes.

Research News



Division of Surgical Oncology participates in PanCAN PurpleStride fundraiser

Faculty, staff and trainees in the Division of Surgical Oncology raised money to support pancreatic cancer research in the labs of Andrew Lowy, MD, Herve Tiriach, PhD, and others at UC San Diego.



Division of Plastic Surgery Research Symposium

This event, held in conjunction with the 3rd annual Dr. Ralph E. Holmes Lectureship, gave researchers at UC San Diego the opportunity to present their research. Garrison Leach, MD, and Diamond Luong won best resident and student presentations, respectively.

Faculty News



Sonia Ramamoorthy appointed Chief Physician Experience Officer for UC Health

In this role, Sonia Ramamoorthy, MD, MBA, will expand her existing responsibilities as the chair of the

systemwide UC Physician Experience Collaborative to improve the professional experience of clinical faculty across the UC system.



Laura Haines speaks at Association of Women Surgeons seminar

Laura Haines, MD, joined a panel with two other women surgeons discussing what it takes to succeed in trauma surgery. The event was hosted by the Association of Women Surgeons and the American Association for the Surgery of Trauma Women in Trauma Surgery program.

Training News

This month, the **Center for the Future of Surgery** hosted a joint general surgery and anesthesia lab, as well as a trauma lab led by Allison Berndtson, MD. The center also gave the American Medical Student Association at UC San Diego a tour of the facility.



Alumni in Action



Katherine Lee, MD, MS, completed her general surgery residency at UC San Diego in 2022. She went on to complete both a palliative care fellowship at UCSF and colon and rectal surgery fellowship at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai. She is now an assistant professor of surgery at the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA. She holds dual faculty positions at Harbor-UCLA Medical Center in the Division of Colorectal Surgery and Section of Palliative Care.

“I’m proud to have trained with the UC San Diego Department of Surgery. My surgical training was top-notch and prepared me well to be a versatile surgeon, capable of open, laparoscopic or robotic surgery. I loved training in the environment where all the attendings inspired me and shared their tips and techniques. I’ve incorporated all that I learned into how I operate and teach. I’m especially grateful to the Division of Colon and Rectal Surgery for their mentoring and training to become the surgeon I am today. I still sing Dr. Sonia Ramamoorthy’s anastomosis jingle whenever I use the EEA stapler!

The department also supported me when I decided to pursue surgical palliative care as a research and clinical subspecialty. This pathway is still relatively uncommon, as there are only ~100 surgeons who are fellowship-trained in palliative care in the United States! I’m now leading surgical palliative care education and have a clinical practice in palliative care at Harbor-UCLA, in addition to being a colorectal surgeon.

Finally, the residency gave me great memories, including watching fireworks on the top floor of Hillcrest and the Oscars while on night float at Jacobs. I made lifelong friends whom I still text and see often. I feel lucky to have these people in my life.”



Compassion and the Gift of Life: A Day of Science, Practice and Human Connection

Join the REIMAGINE Center on June 18, 2026, for a Compassion in Medicine Symposium and a conversation with Thupten Jinpa, PhD.

[Register for Compassion and the Gift of Life](#)



REIMAGINE Design-a-thon pitch competition

This month, over 75 students came together to tackle one of healthcare's biggest challenges: living donation. Working alongside subject-matter experts, students developed applications, digital platforms and resources to bridge the living donor-recipient gap in the U.S.

Teams will present their final pitches at 4 p.m. on June 1, 2026, in The Basement at the Design and Innovation Building.



Women in Surgery movie night

The Women in Surgery committee hosted a viewing of The Devil Wears Prada 2 at The LOT La Jolla movie theater. Attendees enjoyed a night of food, refreshments and great company in style.



A conversation series that explores what it means to care, give and be transformed by our connections with others in the transplant community.

This month, listen to how the gift of organ transplantation ripples outward in ways you may not see.

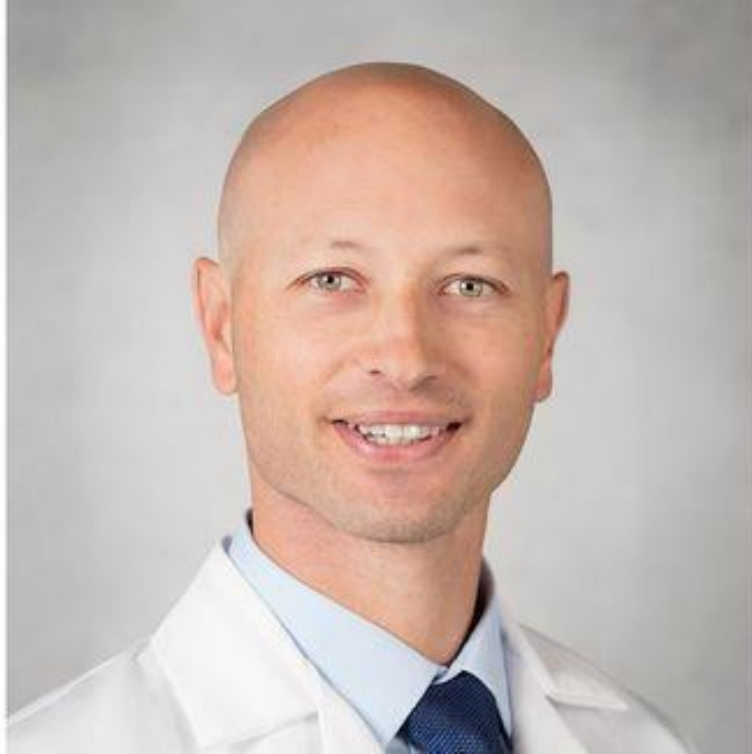
[Listen to the podcast](#)

As Seen on Social Media



Research Symposium highlights

We shared some of the highlights, including a beautiful ocean view, from our 14th Annual Department of Surgery research symposium. [Watch the symposium video](#)



World IBD Day

In honor of World Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD) Day, we spoke to Benjamin Abbadessa, MD, about his role in IBD treatment. [Read the World IBD Day post](#)

Recent Job Listings

- [Assistant, Associate, or Full Professor \(HS Clinical, Clinical X, In-Residence, Adjunct\) Pediatric Cardiothoracic Surgery](#)
- [Assistant, Associate, or Full Professor \(HS Clin, Clin X, In-Res, Adjunct\) Trauma, Surgical Critical Care, Burns, and Acute Care Surgery](#)
- [Assistant, Associate or Full Professor \(HS Clinical, Clinical X, In-Residence, Adjunct\) Colorectal Surgery](#)
- [Assistant, Associate or Full Project Scientist - Surgery](#)
- [Assistant, Associate or Full Professor \(HS Clin, Clin X, In-Res, Adjunct\) Thoracic Organ Procurement and First Assistant Surgeon](#)
- [Assistant, Associate or Full Professor \(HS Clin, Clin X, In-Res, Adjunct\) Transplant Surgery/Surgical Oncology](#)



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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