

Department of Surgery News

November 2025



Letter from the Chair

Dear Colleagues and Friends of the Department,

I hope this Thanksgiving finds you in the midst of warm and meaningful times with family and friends. Gratitude is more than a feeling, but instead a deliberate act of reflection and acknowledgement for the good in our lives, even when we seem overwhelmed by difficult circumstances and the many challenges that are part of living and the human condition. It is not hard to look around and see obvious manifestations of our imperfect environments and, for some, the past year has been truly difficult with illnesses, challenges at

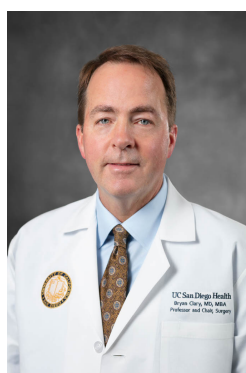
home and other substantive matters. Notwithstanding, it is healthy and important to take the time to focus on and celebrate the blessings that do exist in our lives with a hope, determination and expectation that next year will yield even more.

In this context, the department has much to be grateful for as it seeks to meet the needs of our communities and positively impact the care of patients beyond our walls. In the past year, we've opened transformational new facilities (the McGrath Outpatient Pavilion and the Chancellor Park Vascular Surgery Clinic) to care for our patients; sent out well-equipped graduates who will care for the sick; and brought forth important innovations and new insights that will change the way we treat tomorrow's patients. I am very grateful for your partnership in this important work and for your encouragement of our teams.

In this month's newsletter, I am excited to introduce you to three new division chiefs. Laura Haines, M.D., Garth Jacobsen, M.D., and Gabriel Schnickel, M.D., M.P.H., share why they decided to become division chiefs and how they plan to shape their divisions for the future. For our monthly Q&A, we spoke with Kyle Thompson, M.D., from the Division of Pediatric Surgery. He discussed his work on pediatric esophageal surgeries and how he plans to develop his clinical practice.

I am also excited to draw attention to a number of important awards and recognitions of our faculty and staff, as well as the many ways in which members of our department impact their communities by supporting important causes, including "Ride the Point" and "Miles for Merak," both of which raise funds to support our faculty and cancer research. We also hosted a departmental Thanksgiving potluck and heard from faculty and trainees about what they're thankful for on social media.

Lastly, I would like to invite you to donate to our Department of Surgery Excellence Fund. Your generous support enables us to invest in cutting-edge research, attract and retain top-tier faculty, and provide critical resources and training for our next generation of surgical leaders. Again, I am very grateful for your partnership in elevating the mission of our 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



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.

[DONATE](#)

Feature Article: Leading the Way



Recently, the Department of Surgery promoted three new division chiefs to the leadership team: Laura Haines, M.D., Garth Jacobsen, M.D., and Gabriel Schnickel, M.D., M.P.H. Learn about how they plan to shape their divisions for the future.

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Featured News



UC San Diego Today highlighted the 2025 REIMAGINE Symposium, where experts, patients and donor families gathered to discuss how innovation and collaboration could increase organ donation and improve the allocation process.

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Q&A: Kyle Thompson

Kyle Thompson, M.D., is an assistant professor in the Division of Pediatric Surgery in the Department of Surgery in the School of Medicine at UC San Diego. He performs surgeries to treat a congenital condition where babies are born without a section of their esophagus, called esophageal atresia.



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Clinical News

McGrath Outpatient Pavilion Ribbon Cutting

Multiple clinics at the McGrath Outpatient Pavilion celebrated their official opening at last month's ribbon cutting ceremony.





Research News



Mahmoud Malas Accepts J. Bradley Aust Award from the Western Surgical Association

This award is given to the best presentation by a new member at the preceding year's meeting. Division Chief Mahmoud Malas, M.D., M.H.S., received this award for his presentation at the 2024 Western Surgical Association annual meeting last November.



Jason Sicklick Receives APOLLO-10 Sarcoma Grant Subaward

Jason Sicklick, M.D., is leading a group of physicians and scientists to study the genomics, transcriptomics and proteomics of soft tissue and bone sarcomas over the course of three years. Their goal is to advance our understanding of the biology of sarcomas and precision oncology care for sarcoma patients.



Division of Anatomy Grand Rounds

Visiting Scholar Martin Lhuire, M.D., Ph.D., M.Sc., from the Division of Anatomy, gave a grand rounds presentation on the surgical application of thigh perforators.



Welcome Tan Family Visiting Scholar Ting-Chun “Tina” Kuo

Ting-Chun "Tina" Kuo, M.D., Ph.D., is an endocrine and hepatopancreatobiliary surgeon and associate professor of surgery at National Taiwan University Hospital. She is spending six months at UC San Diego as a visiting scholar in the Division of Surgical Oncology, observing clinical care and collaborating on research in the laboratory of Michael Bouvet, M.D.

Faculty News



Bryan Clary Speaks at the University of Oklahoma Department of Surgery Research Symposium

The G. Rainey Williams Research Symposium, held annually, celebrates surgical research at the University of Oklahoma. Keynote Speaker Bryan Clary, M.D., M.B.A., chair of the UC San Diego Department of Surgery, spoke on, "The Wonder, Privilege and Necessity of Surgical Research."



Benjamin Massenburg Elected to International Society of Craniofacial Surgery (ISCFS) New Young Surgeons Council Seat

This newly created position is given to ISCFS resident, registrar or fellow members, or associate members who have been in practice for less than four years. Benjamin Massenburg, M.D., is the first to hold this position and will serve in this seat for the next two years.

Staff News



Brittany Fair Speaks at Strategic Corporate Communications - West Conference

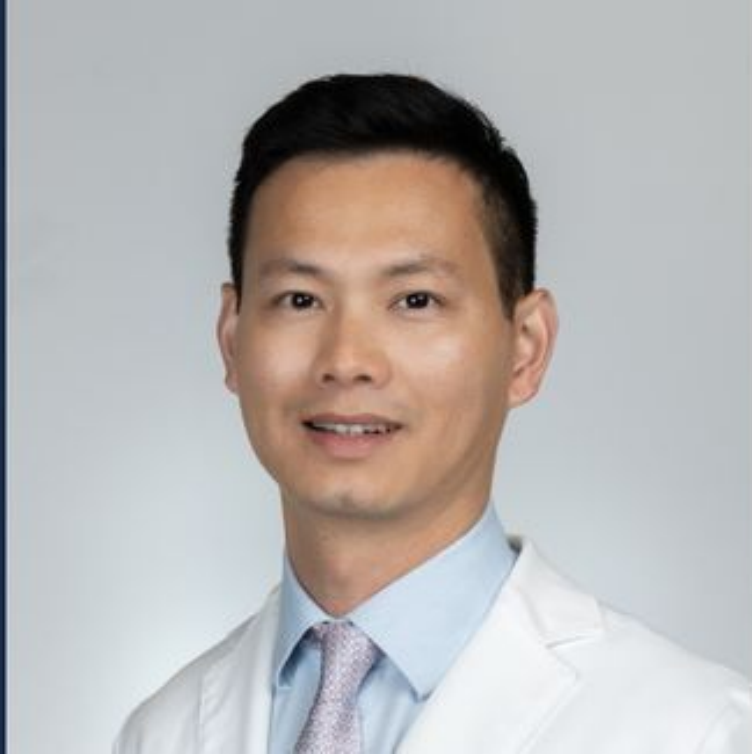
Brittany Fair, M.S., director of communications for the Department of Surgery, spoke on a panel about building trust through communications to strengthen relationships, reinforce values and drive alignment across an organization.

Division of Surgical Oncology Participates in 12th Annual Ride the Point Jim Krause Memorial Ride

This bike ride celebrates the memory of Point Loma Rotary Club fellow Jim Krause, who passed away from pancreatic cancer in 2012. The event raises funds for pancreatic cancer research at Moores Cancer Center at UC San Diego Health, where Krause received care. Michael Bouvet, M.D., and Kathryn Trulock from the Division of Surgical Oncology participated in the event!



Training News



Division of Plastic Surgery Partners with Atkinson Physician Assistant (PA) Education Program

The PA Student Plastic Surgery Program, led by Jay Xue, M.D., offers clinical rotations to UC San Diego PA students at the McGrath Outpatient Pavilion and Jacobs Medical Center at UC San Diego Health. The program will officially begin in January 2026.

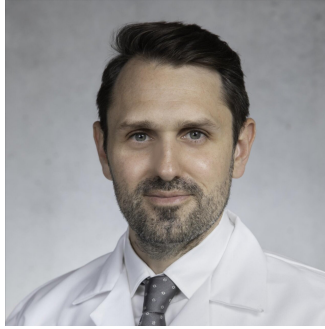


Division of Plastic Surgery Hosts Visiting Professor Adeyiza Momoh

Adeyiza Momoh, M.D., is the vice chair of network strategy at the University of Michigan. Momoh led a microsuturing workshop at the Center for the Future of Surgery and gave a presentation on mastectomy and reconstruction.

The **Center for the Future of Surgery** hosted a Society of American Gastrointestinal and Endoscopic Surgeons (SAGES) course. Led by Ryan Broderick, M.D., this course focused on fluorescence-guided imagery in surgery. 36 fellows and 12 faculty from across the country, including fellows in the Division of Minimally Invasive Surgery, were in attendance.





Jarrett Santorelli, M.D., completed his surgical critical care, acute care surgery and burn surgery fellowships at the UC San Diego Department of Surgery. He is now an associate professor in the department's Division of Trauma, Surgical Critical Care, Burns and Acute Care Surgery. He is also the medical director of acute care surgery and the program director of the Acute Care Surgery Fellowship.

“My time training at UC San Diego helped shape my career. UC San Diego has an extraordinary legacy in trauma and acute care surgery, a program that has trained many of the leaders who built and continue to shape our field. Being part of that lineage was both inspiring and motivating. What I appreciated most was the rigorous clinical exposure paired with mentorship from attendings who combined technical excellence with true dedication to teaching and to patients.

Some of my clearest memories come from long nights in Hillcrest, managing complex trauma with faculty who made even the most chaotic cases feel structured. My greatest takeaway was learning how to make decisive, evidence-based decisions under pressure and how to lead with both confidence and purpose.

Training at UC San Diego gave me the skill set, judgment and resilience I rely on every day, and it's an honor to now serve in the department that trained me.”

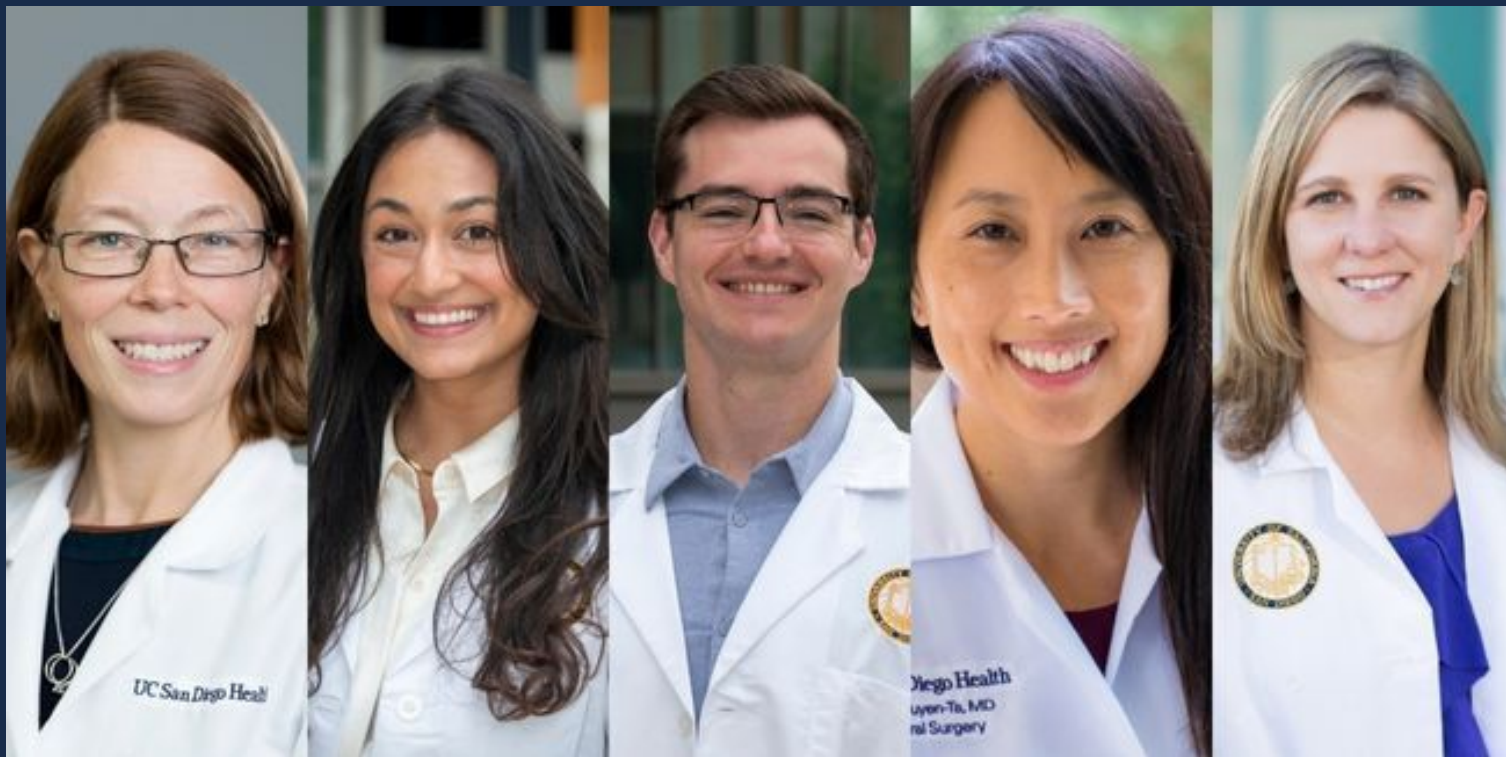
As Seen on Social Media



National Nurse Practitioner Week

In honor of National Nurse Practitioner Week, Karrie Driscoll, a nurse practitioner in the Division of Colon and

Rectal Surgery, spoke about her work at the UTC Digestive Diseases Clinic. [Watch here](#)

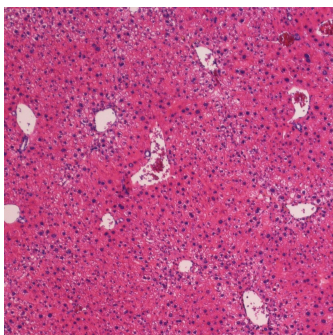


Department of Surgery Thanksgiving Video

With Thanksgiving approaching, we asked members of the Department of Surgery what they are thankful for this year. [Watch here](#)

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.



Chronic liver injury can increase the amount of fibrous scar in the liver, called liver fibrosis. Now, **Tatiana Kisseleva, M.D., Ph.D.**, and team have examined the role of specific transcription factors (proteins that control gene expression) in liver stellate cells of mice and human liver spheroids, which mimic "livers in a dish." They found that transcription factor ETS1 was related to genes that prevent liver fibrosis, suggesting ETS1 may be a potential target for liver fibrosis therapies in the future. [Read more](#)

[READ OUR LATEST PUBLICATIONS](#)

Events



Bryan Clary, M.D., M.B.A., and Jason Sicklick, M.D., joined the **Miles for Merak** 30-day virtual movement challenge by taking a lunchtime walk around the UC San Diego Health, La Jolla campus with Debra Melikian. From **Nov. 2 to Dec. 4, 2025**, raise funds for gastrointestinal stromal tumor (GIST) research in memory of Merak Melikian Hatounian. Every step supports life-changing research.

[JOIN HERE](#)

Recent Job Listings

- [Assistant, Associate or Full Professor \(HS Clin, Clin X, In-Res, Adjunct\) Thoracic Organ Procurement and First Assistant Surgeon](#)
- [Philanthropic Officer - Surgery - 135682](#)
- [JPF04307 Assistant, Associate or Full Professor \(HS Clinical, Clinical X, In-Residence, Adjunct\) Vascular and Endovascular Surgery](#)
- [JPF04346 Assistant, Associate or Full Professor \(HS Clin, Clin X, In-Res, Adjunct\) Transplant Surgery/Surgical Oncology](#)



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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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