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UC San Diego

Department of Surgery News

November 2024



Letter from the Chair

Dear Colleagues and Friends of the Department,

Earlier this month, we turned our clocks back for daylight savings time, but the Department of Surgery is always moving forward! Mark Onaitis, M.D., was featured in an article by UC San Diego Today for his treatment of David Katz, an early-stage lung cancer patient. Onaitis, like many of the faculty and staff in our department, is dedicated to the comprehensive and unwavering care of our patients.

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We also spoke with Michael Bouvet, M.D., one of our surgical oncologists who specializes in endocrine and gastrointestinal cancers. Bouvet's research interests involve "lighting up" proteins for cancer imaging and more precise surgeries. He recently received several grants to further his work in cancer detection and treatment.

As we enter the season of thanks, we would like to extend gratitude to everyone who supports our department. Thank you for your dedication to our community's health and our pursuit of knowledge that advances surgery.

We wish you a Happy Thanksgiving.



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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Feature Article: Life-Saving Lung Cancer Treatment



UC San Diego Today featured Mark Onaitis, M.D., for his work in treating lung cancer. Onaitis removed a cancerous lung tumor from patient David Katz, who is now two years cancer free.

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Q&A with Michael Bouvet, M.D.

Michael Bouvet, M.D., is a surgical oncologist who specializes in endocrine and gastrointestinal cancers. His research interests involve using cancer imaging for more precise surgeries. Bouvet recently received several grants to further his work in cancer detection and treatment.



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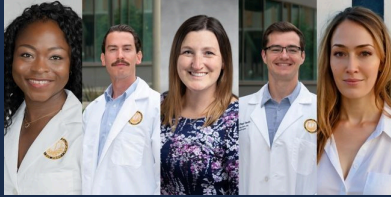
Featured News



In an article in SDNews.com, Andrew Lowy, M.D., explains the importance of early detection of pancreatic cancer and how the work that he and Diane Simeone, M.D., are doing in the field will improve patient care.

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Research News



UC San Diego Surgery Presents at Clinical Congress 2024

Elsie Ross, M.D., M.S., Louis Perkins, M.D., Hannah Hollandworth, M.D., Graham Spurzem, M.D., and Miriam Becker presented their recent research findings at the American College of Surgeons meeting in San Francisco.

Faculty News



Mahmoud Malas Receives 2024 J. Bradley Aust Award from the Western Surgical Association

Mahmoud Malas, M.D., M.H.S., chief of the Division of Vascular and Endovascular Surgery, received the award for his paper and presentation on comparing different techniques to treat blocked carotid arteries. This award recognizes the best paper authored by a new association member.



Congratulations Tatiana Hurtado De Mendoza

Tatiana Hurtado De Mendoza, Ph.D., was promoted to assistant professor in the Division of Surgical Oncology. She completed her Ph.D. in biology at UC San Diego and has since worked at the Salk Institute and Sanford-Burnham Medical Research Institute. Her research focuses on immunotherapy for solid tumors using strategies that redirect pre-existing immunity against tumors.

Staff News



Department of Surgery Potluck

In honor of the upcoming holiday, our department held a Thanksgiving potluck. We continue to be grateful for our immensely talented faculty and staff.

Training News



Sina Zarrintan Receives Scholarship to Attend 2025 American Venous Forum

Sina Zarrintan, M.D., M.S., M.P.H., postdoctoral scholar in the Division of Vascular and Endovascular Surgery, will present his work on vein repairs under the mentorship of Mahmoud Malas, M.D., M.H.S. The scholarship includes his registration and lodging for the event, which takes place in Atlanta, Georgia in February 2025.



Study by Mohammed Hamouda Featured in Vascular News

Mohammed Hamouda, M.D., is a postdoctoral fellow in the Division of Vascular and Endovascular Surgery. The study highlights the potential of using arm veins in lower extremity bypass surgery, demonstrating promising results in reducing the risk of amputation. [Read more](#)

The Division of Plastic Surgery held a workshop at the Center for the Future of Surgery where they reviewed head, neck, breast and extremity flaps with visiting professor Gordon Lee, M.D.



Alumni Spotlight

Mark Zhao, M.D., M.A.S., completed his general surgery residency in 2022 at UC San Diego Health, where he also completed his biomedical informatics

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graduating, Zhao completed his colon and rectal surgery fellowship at the Barnes-Jewish Hospital at Washington University in St. Louis. He is currently an assistant professor of surgery at UCSF.

"As I sat down to write a reflection on my time as a general surgery resident at UC San Diego, I decided to draw inspiration from previous alumni. As I clicked through the newsletters, I found that the most frequently quoted highlight of UC San Diego was the people.

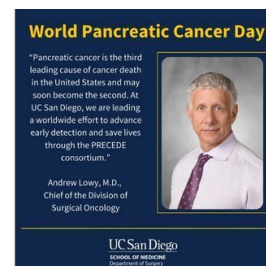
Upon discovering this, I wanted my reflection to be different. I hoped to highlight the training in diverse clinical settings, the cutting-edge research, the perfect weather, and, in my biased opinion, the best Mexican and Thai food (though perhaps not combined). Despite these intentions, I confess that the true highlight of my training at UC San Diego was indeed the people. My fellow residents, the nurses, the operating room staff and the administrative staff — not to mention the attendings, my mentors and now colleagues — have taught me everything I know. I owe them a tremendous debt of gratitude and feel incredibly fortunate to have trained at UC San Diego."

As Seen on Social Media



Diane Simeone Meets with San Diego American Indian Health Center Leaders

This meeting focused on cancer prevention and treatment for Indigenous communities in San Diego.



World Pancreatic Cancer Day

Andrew Lowy, M.D., spoke on his work to advance the early detection of pancreatic cancer.



National Nurse Practitioner Week

Vincent Genna, N.P., and Isaac Meyer, N.P., reflected on their experiences as nurse practitioners in the Department of Surgery.



Elsie Ross Attends 2024 AI for Patient Safety Summit

Ross pictured here with ophthalmologist and comedian William Flanary (@Glaucomflecken) and members of the UC San Diego Health Leadership Academy class of 2024.

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.



An UC San Diego observational study found that continuous peripheral nerve blocks (used for pain control) did not cause an increase in infection risk in burn patients, when compared with other groups. [Read More](#)

[READ OUR LATEST PUBLICATIONS BY DIVISION](#)

Recent Job Listings

- [Assistant, Associate or Full Professor \(HS Clinical, Clinical X, In-Residence, Adjunct\) Vascular and Endovascular Surgery](#)
- [Assistant, Associate or Full Project Scientist - Vascular & Endovascular Surgery](#)
- [Assistant, Associate or Full Professor \(Clinical X, In-Residence\) Burn Surgeon](#)
- [Assistant, Associate or Full Professor \(HS Clinical, Clinical X, In-Residence, Adjunct\) Vascular and Endovascular Surgery](#)
- [Associate or Full Professor \(HS Clinical, Clinical X\) Chief, Division of Trauma, Surgical Critical Care, Burns and Acute Care Surgery](#)

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- [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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