

UC San Diego

Department of Surgery News

October 2025



Letter from the Chair

Dear Colleagues and Friends of the Department,

I hope this newsletter finds you well as we settle into fall, prepare for Halloween, and get ready to turn our clocks back one hour this Saturday night. This month's newsletter has more delightful offerings than a bucket of Halloween candy, if that is even possible.

Recently, the UC San Diego Center for Research, Education, Innovation and Transformation in Organ Donation (REIMAGINE) hosted its second annual symposium, convening thought leaders from across the

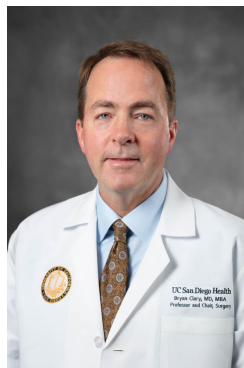
country to envision the future of organ donation and allocation. Three-time Paralympian and kidney transplant recipient Amy Purdy delivered an inspiring keynote address, sharing her remarkable journey through kidney transplantation and double-leg amputation. The successful event is a testament to the transformative work of the REIMAGINE Center, guided by Executive Director Gabriel Schnickel, M.D., M.P.H., Managing Director Leila Adler, M.A., and Associate Director Aleah Brubaker, M.D., Ph.D.

Numerous faculty members were recognized at national and local levels this past month, including Division Chief Sonia Ramamoorthy, M.D., M.B.A., who was named Healthcare Provider of the Year by the Crohn's and Colitis Foundation's San Diego Chapter, as well as Diane Simeone, M.D., who was elected to the Association of American Cancer Institutes (AACI) Board of Directors. We are also proud to recognize the 13 Department of Surgery faculty members who were honored in San Diego Magazine's 2025 "Top Docs" issue. The "Top Docs" list reflects their peers' recognition of their commitment to exceptional patient care.

We are also delighted to welcome new faculty member Jeff Reeves, M.D., to the Division of Minimally Invasive Surgery. Reeves recently completed our general surgery residency and minimally invasive surgery fellowship programs, during which he completed specialized training in perioperative administration, quality and informatics. In addition to his regular faculty activities, Reeves will serve as the department's inaugural Director of Special Initiatives, where his unique analytical and quality improvement skills to address challenges across all three of our missions.

Lastly, I wanted to draw your attention to the high level of engagement with our social media channels. Over the past two months, our Instagram account received nearly 1.5 million views. We had the privilege of going on a video tour with Division Chief Anne Wallace, M.D., and Vince Genna, N.P., of the new Barbara Parker, M.D., Breast Center at the McGrath Outpatient Pavilion in Hillcrest. In addition, we joined Division Chief Geoffroy Noel, Ph.D., for a day in the life of his summertime global anatomy seminar in Paris, France. I invite you to follow us at @UCSDSurgery to stay informed about departmental highlights, achievements and upcoming events.

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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Feature Article: REIMAGINE 2025



The 2025 UC San Diego Center for Research, Education, Innovation and Transformation in Organ Donation (REIMAGINE) Symposium brought innovative minds from around the country together to imagine a new future for organ donation. Filled with inspiring speeches and discussions, including a powerful talk from Keynote Speaker Amy Purdy, three-time Paralympian and kidney transplant recipient.

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Featured News



In San Diego Magazine's annual "Physicians of Exceptional Excellence" survey, local doctors nominated their peers as "Top Docs" in the San Diego region. Over 100 UC San Diego physicians were nominated, 13 being from the Department of Surgery.

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Romeo Ignacio, M.D., professor in the Division of Pediatric Surgery, spoke to FOX 5 News about the importance of e-bike safety.

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The Organ Donation and Transplantation Alliance wrote about their partnership with the UC San Diego Health Center for Transplantation and the UC San Diego REIMAGINE Center.

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Division Chief Sonia Ramamoorthy, M.D., M.B.A., spoke on UC San Diego Health receiving the American Medical Association's "Joy in Medicine" recognition, a prestigious distinction awarded to organizations dedicated to reducing physician burnout.

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First Kidney Transplant After Whipple Procedure at UC San Diego

Andrew Lowy, M.D., chief of the Division of Surgical Oncology, used the Whipple procedure to remove patient Bruce Paul Allen's precancerous pancreatic tumor, allowing Jennifer Berumen, M.D., to successfully donate Allen's kidney. Lowy and Berumen were the first at UC San Diego to perform these dual procedures.

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UC San Diego Breast Cancer Survivorship Program

Anne Wallace, M.D., chief of the Division of Breast Surgery and director of the Comprehensive Breast Center at UC San Diego Health, spoke about the significance of the Breast Cancer Survivorship Program, led by Kimberly Podsada, M.S.N.

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Research News



UC San Diego Department of Surgery Presents at American College of Surgeons 2025 Clinical Congress

The Clinical Congress provides individuals with a wide range of learning opportunities and activities for professional development. Several faculty and trainees from the department presented on their research.

Faculty News



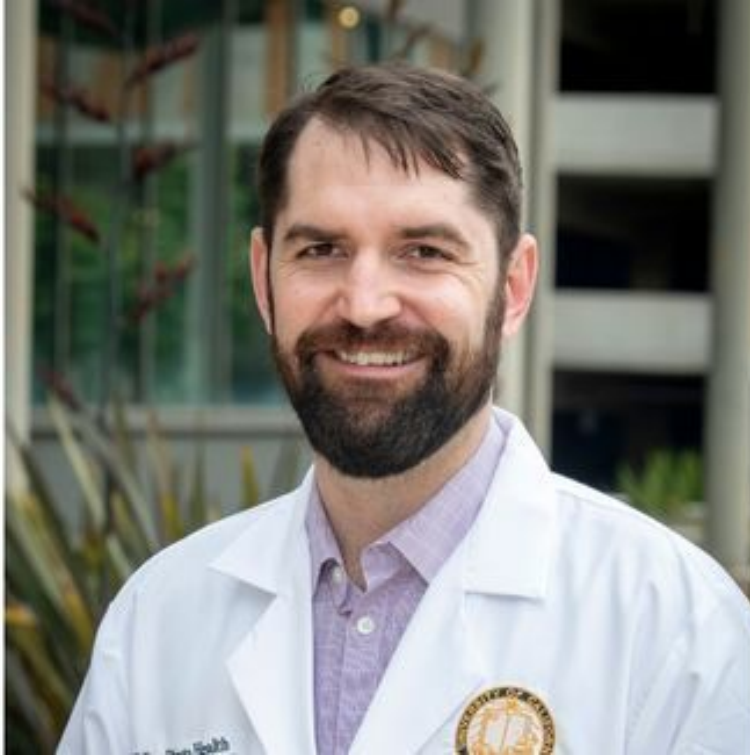
Diane Simeone Elected to Association of American Cancer Institutes (AACI) Board of Directors

The AACI represents over 100 premier academic and freestanding cancer centers in the United States and Canada. As a member of the board, Diane Simeone, M.D., professor in the Division of Surgical Oncology and director of Moores Cancer Center at UC San Diego Health, will help advance discovery, expand access to care, and strengthen academic cancer centers.



Sonia Ramamoorthy Named Crohn's and Colitis Foundation San Diego Chapter 2025 Health Care Provider of the Year

Division Chief Sonia Ramamoorthy, M.D., M.B.A., was given this award for her compassion, expertise and dedication to patient care, touching countless lives in the inflammatory bowel disease community. She was celebrated at the Crohn's and Colitis Foundation's Champions of Hope Gala.



Jeff Reeves Joins the Division of Minimally Invasive Surgery

Jeff Reeves, M.D., joins the division as an assistant professor after completing his minimally invasive surgery fellowship at UC San Diego earlier this year. He attended Geisel School of Medicine at Dartmouth for medical school and completed his general surgery residency at UC San Diego. Reeves is interested in leveraging process improvement methodologies, big data and innovative technology such as artificial intelligence to enhance the quality, safety and efficiency of perioperative health care systems.

Staff News



Gary Lysch Joins the Division of Plastic Surgery

Lysch joins the division as the executive assistant for Division Chief Amanda Gosman, M.D. He holds a degree in economics and international business from New York University and has been a part of UC San Diego for over 21 years in the Departments of Psychiatry and Pediatrics.

Training News

The Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery Interest Group, led by Christopher Reid, M.D., met for a lab at the Center for the Future of Surgery to practice microsuturing with Afaaf Shakir, M.D. This group educates medical students and exposes them to opportunities in the field of plastic and reconstructive surgery through talks, panels and educational workshops.



This month, the **Center for the Future of Surgery** hosted several general surgery labs, as well as an Advanced Trauma Operative Management (ATOM) course, hosted by Allison Berndtson, M.D.





Sarah Stringfield, M.D., graduated from the UC San Diego general surgery residency program in 2019. She went on to complete a colon and rectal surgery fellowship at Baylor Scott & White Health and now works as an attending physician at Baylor University Medical Center. She is also an adjunct associate professor at Texas A&M College of Medicine.

“I am proud to be a graduate of the UC San Diego general surgery residency program. I think the program did an excellent job of teaching us how to treat very sick and complicated patients. The department is very innovative — we were able to experiment with new techniques and technologies and learn the surgical skills needed to help us succeed in whatever type of practice or specialty we chose. The faculty in the Division of Colon and Rectal Surgery were especially great mentors and continue to be a great source of support in my early career. I have enjoyed continuing these relationships by collaborating on research projects and working on national committees.

As residents, we worked hard and received a great education, but the relationships I formed with my co-residents will be what I remember and value the most. Doing puzzles in the Hillcrest resident lounge between trauma surgeries, operating together at the VA, or going on walks around the hospital were my most fond memories. I feel lucky to have lived and worked in such a beautiful city for seven years.”

As Seen on Social Media



Tour of the Barbara Parker, M.D., Breast Center

Division Chief Anne Wallace, M.D., and Nurse Practitioner Vince Genna gave us a tour of the new Barbara Parker, M.D., Breast Center at the McGrath Outpatient Pavilion. [Watch here](#)



World Anatomy Day

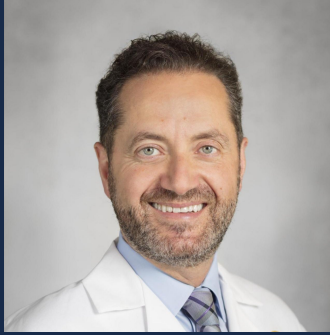
In honor of World Anatomy Day, Professor and Division Chief Geoffroy Noel, Ph.D., shared a day in his life teaching his global anatomy seminar in Paris, France. [Watch here](#)

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.



Learning how to inject local anesthetics to numb nerves in the head and neck for pain relief is difficult due to the lack of simulation-based training tools. Now, **Geoffroy Noel, Ph.D.**, and colleagues demonstrated the feasibility of using augmented reality to overlay images of complex anatomy in real-time to teach these skills. [Read More](#)



Medications that lower blood pressure are often withheld before surgery to avoid complications. Now, in a national study led by **Mahmoud Malas, M.D.**, and Pooria Nakhaei, M.D., patients who continued taking their blood pressure medications — ACE inhibitors or ARBs — before thoracic endovascular aortic repair (to treat aneurysms in the thoracic aorta) were more likely to have their breathing tube removed the same day and spent less time in the ICU and hospital. The study also found no correlation between these medications and a higher risk of kidney problems after surgery. [Read More](#)

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Events



The Women in Surgery Committee, led by Sarah Blair, M.D., and Lisa Parry, M.D., held a screening of 1001 Cuts, a documentary highlighting the challenges that women in medicine, particularly surgery, face. After the film, attending faculty and trainees discussed how to address systemic barriers in the surgical field.

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](#)
- [JPF04318 Assistant, Associate or Full Professor \(HS Clinical, Clinical X, In-Residence, Adjunct\) Minimally Invasive Surgery](#)
- [JPF04346 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.

9500 Gilman Dr.
La Jolla, CA 92093

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