



SCHOOL OF
MEDICINE
DEPARTMENT OF SURGERY

Newsletter

Issue 9 - SPRING | April 2023



[CHAIR UPDATE](#)

[DEPARTMENT UPDATES](#)

[EDUCATION](#)

[RECOGNITION](#)

[GIVING BACK](#)

[CONTACT US](#)



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

JOHN MAREK, MD
INTERIM CHAIR, DEPARTMENT OF SURGERY

Hello and welcome to the Department of Surgery Spring 2023 Newsletter:

Spring is finally officially arrived although wintry weather continues in the state of NM. Snow storms and cold and windy weather have replaced the usual blue sunny skies in our state. Many of us are still enjoying the record snowfall and winter activities such as skiing, snowboarding, snow shoeing or relaxing at a hot springs resort.

While COVID continues to be a part of healthcare, we at UNM have refocused on decreasing our record high census levels especially as the federal public health emergency will finally expire on May 11th, 2023. The end of the public health emergency will impact UNM with needing to decrease our inpatient census as well as potential budget effects of decreasing mandatory Medicaid coverage for many patients, and eliminating federal coverage for free vaccinations, testing and some treatments. This pandemic has been a great challenge to all of us personally and professionally as the multiple waves of the COVID-19 global pandemic have affected our patients, friends, family and ourselves as healthcare providers. Provider and hospital staff well being and peer support remain more important than ever to helping each other through this recovery period.

The department of surgery continues to grow with new faculty members being recruited across many of our institutions and department divisions. New faculty now growing their practice include Dr. Trent Burgess in general surgery at SRMC, Dr. Morgan Sellers and Dr. Erin Howell in Acute Care Surgery, Dr. Jacob Kahane in neurotology, Dr. Nathan Reeves in general ENT and rhinology, Dr. Alycia Spinner in pediatric otolaryngology, Dr. Ryan Orosco in otolaryngology and Dr. Matthew Katz in urology. Recent hires at the Veteran Affairs Medical Center include in general surgery Dr. Christine Kinnier and Dr. Frederick French. Recruitment is ongoing with excellent candidates in transplant, urology, plastic surgery and acute care surgery. Welcome to our new faculty!

Surgical case volumes have remained high in the main OR, OSIS, BBRP and SRMC. Case volumes for the surgery department increased from a low of less than 600 combined cases at UNMH and SRMC in December 2020 to now an average of approximately 900-1000 cases per month currently. The UNM hospital recently approved the addition of 2 new DaVinci Robotic systems to our current robot which will significantly increase our surgeon's ability to provide this minimally invasive option to our patients. These new systems should be in place in the next 2 months and will also give this state-of-the-art training opportunity to our residents and fellows as they prepare for their future practices.

Our training programs in General Surgery, Otolaryngology, Urology, Plastics as well as our fellowships in Complex General Surgical Oncology, Surgical Critical Care and Acute Care Surgery are all fully accredited with recent approval of expansion of our General Surgery Program to 7 residents/year with 5 preliminary residents and the Urology program to 3 residents/year. The plastic surgery program was also approved this year to an expansion to 2 residents/year and next year the Otolaryngology residency is planning on expansion to 3 residents/year.



The New Hospital Tower now officially named the “Critical Care Tower” continues to be on budget and on time with first patients admitted to the new tower in October, 2024. All nine floors are completed and the outer shell is being placed. The Critical Care Tower will add 18 new operating rooms, 96 ICU beds, new imaging systems and a new adult emergency room. The current 16 main hospital operating rooms will then be completely remodeled to 10 modern full-size operating rooms.

Building on last year’s very successful Research symposium, we are finalizing plans for our 9th Annual Surgery and Ophthalmology Research Symposium to be held on June 23rd, 2023. Dr. James Chodosh who was recently named the inaugural permanent chair of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences has agreed to be our keynote speaker for the Donald E. Fry Lectureship. Dr. Chodosh has a phenomenal background as a clinician, educator and researcher and will speak on “The Challenge of Paradigm-Shifting Surgical Interventions-from the Liver to the Eye”. This year’s research symposium will also for the first time include a video presentation section in addition to the podium and poster presentations.

This year the department will celebrate our 60th anniversary. There have only been 5 permanent chairs and 4 interim chairs in the history of our department. A national search for the next permanent chair of our department of surgery has begun with a faculty retreat in February to identify key qualities in our next chair. Whoever is fortunate to be named the next permanent chair of the department will take on a rich history at UNM and an incredible faculty, residency program and staff. It has been an honor and joy to serve as the interim chair of the department since January 1st, 2021.

I hope that you all enjoy this quarterly newsletter and the articles highlighting department activities, our training programs and research and education missions. Please continue to take care of yourself and your loved ones and have a wonderful and hopefully warmer spring season.



EDUCATION UPDATES

JOHN C. RUSSELL, MD **VICE CHAIR OF EDUCATION**

On Friday, March 17th, at 10 AM Mountain Time, the results of the 2023 National Residency Program Match were released. Each year, the UNM Office of Medical Student Affairs sponsors a Match Day ceremony at the Student Union Building on Main Campus. At that ceremony graduating medical students are honored with a variety of special awards and then, at 10 AM, the official Match results are released, and our students learn where they will be going next year. As a Learning Communities mentor since 2015, I've been privileged to be able to attend this event (because of COVID, it was a Zoom event in 2020 and 2021), and I can confirm this is a very special and joyous event for our students, their families and friends.

However, there are unsung heroes – many of you – who really should be getting special awards that day. You are the faculty who formally or informally mentor and advise our students about careers in Surgery, who teach our medical students during the Phase II Core Surgery clerkship, and who mentor our medical students on scholarly projects. You share with students your excitement about your lives as surgeons. Most importantly, you role-model how surgeons can be skilled and productive in their clinical, educational and research careers while still maintaining great work-life balance. Please know how grateful I am for your many contributions to the education of our medical students.

Recently Dr. Baila Maqbool, Associate Vice Chair for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, and Assistant Professor in the Division of Acute Care Surgery, has extended our department's support of students by starting a preceptorship/shadowing program for UNM undergraduates. To my knowledge, no other UNM clinical department currently offers such a program. Not surprisingly, the early student response to this unique opportunity has been overwhelming. I hope you will consider participating in this program.

I also want to acknowledge Dr. Mark Langsfeld for his many years of service as the faculty director of the Surgery Interest Group.

If we want the best and brightest of our students to pursue a career in a surgical field, we need be proactive in contacting these students as early as possible – as undergraduates and as first and second year (Phase I) medical students. Consider participation in Phase I courses such as “Health of New Mexico”, Doctoring (1, 2, 3), Clinical Reasoning (1,2, 3), or as a Continuity Clinic preceptor. Consider taking on first-year medical students to help in your research projects (all UNM medical students must complete a research or quality improvement project as a condition of graduation). Be a Match advisor for fourth year students.

Finally, consider being a UNM Learning Communities Mentor. As a UNM LC Mentor since 2015 I've found working with a cadre of 6-8 medical students each year from their first day of medical school through graduation to be extremely rewarding, and I'm most proud that several of my students (including Yazmin Irazoqui-Ruiz and Ronald Orozco) have subsequently opted for careers in Surgery. Right now, I'm the only “surgeon” who serves as a UNM LC mentor – that program definitely needs more surgical representation!

Thanks again for all you do to support our UNM medical students.

DEPARTMENT UPDATES

ERICA C. BENNETT, MD VICE CHAIR OF ACADEMIC AFFAIRS & FACULTY DEVELOPMENT



We are heading into promotion season 2023-24 and I have contacted all faculty officially eligible for promotion. The first deadline for the CV and Letter-Writer list is May 1, and dossiers will be due July 17. Reminder emails will be sent for each deadline. Please contact me with any questions!

Helpful hints for promotion:

All junior faculty at the Assistant Professor level hired after 09/01/2015 need to complete the [Achievement in Medical Education Program Foundational Pathway](#) prior to promotion, ideally in the first 2 years of employment.

Links for promotion information can be found on the [SOM Office of Faculty Affairs and Career Development Intranet](#).

All Associate Professors planning for promotion to full Professor need to have on going **mentorship** relationships with junior faculty. 2-3 formal mentees from within or outside of the department. There is mentorship training available through the [UNM SOM Faculty Mentor Development Program](#).

Letters of recommendation from external peers is another requirement for promotion to Professor demonstrating a “regional/national/international reputation”.

Joining professional surgical society national or international committees, collaborating on multi-institutional projects, and/or presenting research at national/international meetings are some strategies to cultivate these relationships.

WESTERN TRAUMA ASSOCIATION PRESENTATION

DR. HAZMA HANIF PODIUM PRESENTATION

Dr. Hamza Hanif's podium presentation at the Western Trauma Association went very well and was well received by the large audience. He represented our department and UNM very nicely.



MT. TAYLOR WINTER QUADRATHLON

This winter season **Drs Itzhak Nir and Morgan Evans** participated in the Mt. Taylor Winter Quadrathlon 2023 race.

"This epic race begins in Grants, NM with a 13 mile bike ride meandering through town, then away buildings to sights of high desert cacti and ponderosa pines, continuing to the end of the pavement on Mt. Taylor, an 1,800 ft climb. The race continues on foot with a 5 mile run on a gravel path that gives way to packed snow, while rising 1,200 ft in elevation. The next 1,200 ft climb is tackled on skis, during a 2 mile portion of the race that includes Heartbreak Hill, a barren and exposed part of the mountain, which comes at the end of this leg making it that much more intense. The 11,301 ft summit of Mt. Taylor is finally reached via snowshoe, after gaining 600 ft in elevation over a mile."

Great job Drs Nir and Evan's on your race and thank you for sharing your amazing pictures!



SAGES 2023 MONTREAL, CANADA

DR. AUYANG'S ROCK OUT TOUR!

As SAGES 2023 kicked off in Montreal, Canada **Dr. Edward Auyang** rocked out on stage with band, "**The Eh Team**". Dr Auyang is the chameleon of the his division with all his talents and pulling out all the bells and whistles during his sages conference rocking out and representing UNM and the 505!!



AWARDS & RECOGNITION

ICARE AWARDS!

Alycia Spinner:

-Glad to have you on our team! Thanks for jumping in and helping me manage all the patients earlier this week when our residents were out sick. It made the situation very manageable. Thanks!_-Whitney Brennan

Andrew Cowan:

- Yesterday, I saw one of Dr. Cowan's patient's in my own clinic. He was a cancer survivor with a new onset vocal fold paralysis and had expressed SI multiple times upon entering the room. After scoping the pt, I walked over to discuss the case with Dr. Cowan who was able to see the patient despite his own busy clinic day. This is not the first time he has made time for my patients and in this particular case, I think it alleviated the patient's concerns and made him more comfortable with plan of care. Dr. Cowan is intelligent, witty, and always takes the time to hear his pts concerns. Our entire outpt clinic team values working with him and we appreciate the ongoing education/collaboration he provides. -Deanna Drayer

_Dr. Jordan Cohen from Tsehootsooi Medical Center - IHS, wanted to recognize Dr. Cowan for going above and beyond when he requested a consult for a patient with a Complex Peritonsillar Abscess. Dr. Cohen was extremely grateful for the expert advise and wanted to commend Dr. Cowan for being so helpful and understanding.- Norma Jackson

Baila Maqbool:

-Thank you Dr. Maqbool for moving a surgery around so we could have the resources to take care of our patients. I really appreciate you! - Becky Williams

-Thank you Dr. Maqbool for always looking out for EGS! - Jennifer Wichman

_Thanks for helping out EGS with our hernia patients and CBDE's!!!- Jennifer Wichman

-Thank you Dr. Maqbool for moving a surgery around so we could have the resources to take care of our patients. I really appreciate you!

Brandon Behrens:

-Months ago Dr. Behrens helped me with a patient on my team that required coordination between multiple surgical teams for a complicated surgical situation. After reaching out to him via Tiger, he spoke with me to better understand my request and then reached out himself to two other surgical teams to coordinate my patient's care. I am so grateful for his teamwork and I utilized this encounter to highlight for my learners what teamwork truly can do. Thanks so much Dr. Behrens!- Sarah Burns

-Thank you so much for coming to help us in PACU when there was a patient who needed a consult. I appreciated your forthrightness and your prompt attention!- Alexis Rollinger

Bridget Fahy:

- Dr. Fahy,I met with Trish Seeber yesterday. She is so impressed by you! She said you are, "kind, helpful, thorough and have amazing communication with your team:".Thank you for all you do for your team, our patients and our center. We are so thankful you are here.- Sandi

AWARDS & RECOGNITION

ICARE AWARDS!

Edward Auyang:

- Thanks for helping out EGS with our hernia patients and CBDE's!!! -Jennifer Wichman

Erica Bennett:

-Thanks for being a supportive leader who communicates effectively and helps our team run smoothly. I appreciate you!- Whitney Brennan

Erin Howell:

-Dr. Howell went out of her way to personally purchase an eye chamber for a patient in need. How much she cares for patients really shows.- Victoria Sanchez

Eugene Wu:

-Dr. Wu, thank you for organizing a team meeting in preparation to come to our collaborative meeting prepared with ideas on how to improve clinic processes. This helps optimize efficiency and provides opportunities for growth. I appreciate the support you provide to our teams.- Mareielena Hernandez

John Russell:

-Dr. Russell, I am sending you a brief note of thanks for your essential role with the General Surgery APP Post Graduate Fellowship Program. Mariaelena Hernandez recognized you in rounding today for your didactic contributions and the way it has aligned for the entire year structure. We are so grateful for your partnership!- Jennifer Gibbs

Liat Shama:

_While preparing for clinic this week, I was struck by how involved Dr. Shama enables her patient's to be in their care. She truly offers options and allows them to be their own advocate. She also truly creates relationships with her patients which is priceless in the world of healthcare. She is a devoted physician and surgeon and I love working with her every time she is in clinic! I am always impressed by the care and devotion she exhibits in reference to her patients.- Lauren Ferguson

-I want to send a warm happy doctor's day note to Dr. Shama. She helps a huge amount of patients with complex, important issues. She does so with supreme competence, compassion, and patience. She approaches helping me learn this new position with those same qualities! Happy Doctor's Day - Dr. Shama!-Willaim Babb

Maxx Gallegos:

-Dr. Katz helped motivate a patient to work with therapy services and progress with her mobility and ability to care for herself! He helped facilitate an interdisciplinary approach!- Genevieve Miura

-Dr. Gallegos went above and beyond his expected duties to assist with two very complex cases this week in general surgery and surgical oncology. Yesterday he moved his administrative schedule around to help our team and the patient get the best operation possible.- Alissa Greenbaum

AWARDS & RECOGNITION

iCARE AWARDS

Morgan Sellers:

-Thank you for taking time to help elevate the knowledge of the APPs!- Jennifer Martinez

- Thank you for taking the time out of your already busy schedule to provide the APP team with education that will help us better care for our patients. I appreciated the course and look forward to the next one.- Sarah Davis

- Dr. Sellers, I was rounding with our APP Director, Mariaelena Hernandez this week. She recognized you for your generosity of time and knowledge as you taught the APP trauma skills sessions. Thank you for investing in our APPs and making our service lines stronger. With gratitude, Jen Gibbs.

Muhammad Ali Rana:

-I was rounding with Ricci Soto this week and he recognized you for being such a responsive, understanding and involved dyad partner. In particular, you provided wonderful support for the APP schedule. With gratitude, Jen Gibbs

Richard Miskimins:

-I'd like to recognize Dr. Miskimins for recently going out of the way for a patient. This patient was traveling from Arizona to be seen by Dr. Miskimins for consideration of a surgical procedure. The morning of the appointment, he was called to another hospital to assist with ATLS. Despite this obstacle, Dr. Miskimins contacted me to assure me he was aware of the patient's appointment and would be available via zoom once a surgical resident had seen the patient. There were no delays for the patient, and Dr. Miskimins was very supportive to the patient and her family when circumstances delayed his ability to do her anticipated surgical procedure. He later contacted me to ensure I was aware of the plan for this patient. The patient and family members came away feeling supported and appreciative of all Dr. Miskimins did that day for them. Your kindness to this patient was greatly appreciated.- JoAlice Moe

-Dr. Miskimins, Thank you for your quick actions to help one of our APPs with recredentialing...it made all the difference!- Jennifer Gibbs

Satyan Shah:

-MD Shah, thank you so much for the pizza! I hope you know how much all of the nurses value and appreciate you here in the PACU. Have a happy holiday and thank you again!- Rebecca Cain

Sonlee West:

-Dr. West, thank you for all the work you've put into the new EGS orderset. These tools help our teams be more efficient and provide safer care to our patients.- Sarah Laurenzano

Tania Kraai:

- Dr. Kraai has been a great collaborator on a unique case. She has really gone above and beyond to engage in shared decision-making with the family and to gather perspectives from many different experts. Thanks for all you do!!

Vinay Rai:

-I rounded with Rebecca Rivera and she wanted to thank you for being patient with her and that you are a great mentor and teacher.- Robert Payette

AWARDS & RECOGNITION

ICARE AWARDS/STAFF

Jessica Irick:

I'd like to recognize Jessica for how hard she has been working while helping in the CT Surgery Clinic, as well as for how willing she is to help the APP's and myself when Christina has been out. Her excellent work ethic and ability to take the initiative are greatly appreciated. The past two weeks of helping in clinic have increased her practical knowledge and during this time she has sought feedback from me to ensure she is doing things correctly. She really is a great asset! Jessica, thank you for the awesome support you have provided!- JoeAlice Moe

- Thank you so much for doing great work! Thank you for taking care of our division while I was out!- Christina Evaro

Christina Evaro:

- Thank you for all your help and patience with training me!- Jessica Irick

Gloria Martinez:

-Thank you so much for cancelling and rescheduling all of my patients while I was out caring for my sick child. I knew that you would handle everything perfectly, and timely, just as you did. That gave me the peace of mind to focus on my son. I cannot thank you enough for what you do for me and my patients.- Angela Salazar



STAFF ADDITIONS



Judith Martinez

Clinic Coordinator, Division of ENT



Andrea Cervantes

Medical Education Program Manager



welcome
TO THE
TEAM



STAFF PROMOTIONS



Jessica Blea

Operations Manager



Ellie Gonzalez

Executive Administrator
to the Chair of Surgery



Alejandra Bassoco

Scheduling Coordinator



MAKE AN IMPACT



THE UNIVERSITY OF
NEW MEXICO
FOUNDATION

PLEASE GIVE TO ADVANCE OUR MISSION

An endowed university position is the highest honor that UNM can bestow on a member of faculty or administration.

The position will endure throughout the life of the University. Thus, it is both a tribute to the holder of the campus appointment, and a lasting legacy for the donor and/or honoree for whom the endowment has been named

LOOKING FORWARD BY GIVING BACK

DR. GARTH OLSON NAMED INAUGURAL FRED HERZON PROFESSOR

On December 13, 2022, The University of New Mexico Board of Regents unanimously voted to appoint **Dr. Garth Olson, MD** as the first **Fred S. Herzon Endowed Professor** in the UNM School of Medicine Department of Surgery, Division of Otolaryngology.

Endowed positions are reserved for truly outstanding faculty members. UNM faculty shape the learning experience for our students, pushes the frontiers of research, and delivers life-saving patient care.

Dr. Herzon joined the UNM School of Medicine faculty in 1971. For more than 30 years, Dr. Herzon provided leadership to the Division of Otolaryngology and provided outstanding care to all New Mexicans. He established the Otolaryngology residency program in 1990 which has grown to a total of 10 residents with planned expansion to 12 residents. Since 1971 the Division of Otolaryngology at the UNM School of Medicine has grown from 2 to 16 faculty and is planning on transitioning to a department in the next 2 years.

Although no longer active in practice, Dr. Herzon continues to mentor and educate Otolaryngology residents and faculty.

The Fred S. Herzon Endowed Professorship leaves a lasting tribute to the contributions, efforts and legacy of Dr. Herzon and we are so grateful to Dr. Herzon and his continual support of future surgical leaders.

The Department of Surgery is growing and establishing several endowed faculty positions to attract and retain world-class faculty to serve all New Mexicans, advancing inclusive excellence, sustainability, health equity, and the student/learner experience.

By bolstering already established endowed positions and creating new endowments to support and sustain Chairs and Professorships, we will position UNM Surgery as a competitor in the Academic Surgery Market for both educators and researchers alike across all surgical divisions/ specialties at UNM.



Please join us in honoring Dr. Herzon and Dr. Olson.

Consider **making a gift** to support future surgical leaders at UNM's School of Medicine.

Go to www.unmfund.org and type "surgery" in the search bar on the GIVE page.

Contact:

Amanda Baca,
UNM Foundation

amanda.baca@unmfund.org
505.313.7636

www.unmfund.org

UNM Foundation,
Two Woodward Circle,
700 Lomas Blvd, Suite 108
Albuquerque, NM 87102