The 8th Annual Meeting of the Society of Asian Academic Surgeons

The Johns Hopkins University
School of Medicine
Baltimore, Maryland
September 14-15, 2023

Host: Andrew Cameron, MD, PhD
Surgeon-In-Chief, Department of Surgery
Program Chair: Russell K. Woo, MD
Local Arrangements Chairs: Gina Adrales, MD and Jinny Ha, MD

SOCIETY of ASIAN ACADEMIC SURGEONS

JOHNS HOPKINS
SCHOOL of MEDICINE

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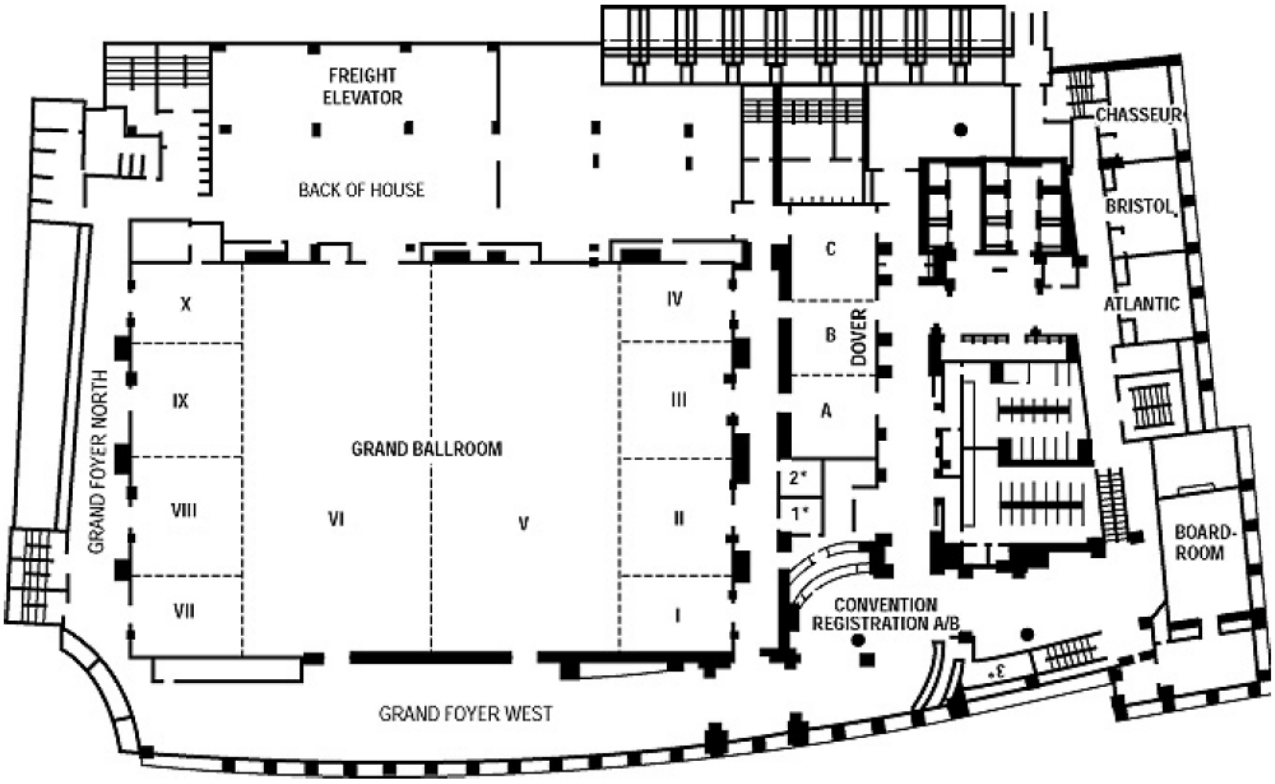
Maps

MEETING VENUE
Local Program
Thursday, September 14, 2023
The Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine

Meeting Venue
Thursday and Friday, September 14-15, 2023
Baltimore Marriott Waterfront
700 Aliceanna Street
Baltimore, Maryland

GRAND BALLROOM LEVEL 3



Our Mission

The objectives of the Society of Asian Academic Surgeons shall be to cultivate, nurture and support the advancement of Asians in academic surgery. To achieve these objectives, the Society shall:

1. Enhance the personal and professional development of Asians in academic surgery.
2. Promote diversity and inclusion within the leadership of academic surgery.
3. Encourage and assist in the study of issues of importance to the Asian community.

Our History

The founding of SAAS can be traced to the Presidential Session on Unconscious Bias in Academic Surgery that took place during the 6th Annual Academic Surgical Congress (ASC), directed by then-Society of University Surgeons (SUS) President Dr. Dai Chung. Dr. Don Nakayama presented an eye-opening talk on the lack of Asians in the leadership of American academic surgery and would later publish that data in the *Annals of Surgery* [Nakayama, DK. Asian Americans in leadership positions in academic surgery. Ann Surg. 255(3):583-8. 2012]. As it turned out, Dr. Chung was the first Asian to ever be elected to the SUS presidency.

That October, during the American College of Surgeons (ACS) Clinical Congress in Washington, DC, a group of nine Asian academic surgeons gathered to talk about the implications of that talk. This group of nine would become the founding members of SAAS (see below). During that meeting, they agreed to pay the initial dues that would provide the seed money to create a new society. After the initial tongue-in-cheek suggestion of naming it the Asian Surgical Society, it was decided to call it the Society of Asian Academic Surgeons.

At first, it was unclear what role we would serve to our membership. The first thought was that we would serve more as a social society that would allow members of the Asian community to meet and network. However, we soon realized that there were important issues facing our community, and we soon changed our focus to the personal and career development of Asian academic surgeons with the belief that the best way to increase Asian representation in the leadership of academic surgery was to prepare future generations to succeed.

Towards this end, we raised money to provide scholarships for both trainees and junior faculty to help them with their career development. We also initiated awards for the best research submitted by members to the ASC to showcase the advances being made by Asians in the field.

From the beginning, our society has been fully inclusive. We defined “Asian” in the broadest sense to include not only those from East, Southeast, and South Asia, but also Persians, Arabs, Turks and any other nationality from the Asian continent.

Furthermore, membership in SAAS is open to anyone of any ethnicity who has an interest in promoting underrepresented populations in any arena of academic surgery.

Our membership quickly grew by word of mouth, and we hosted get-togethers at the ACS Clinical Congress and at the ASC. It soon became apparent that we needed to take the next step of organizing our own meeting focusing on the issues important to our membership. The Inaugural Annual Meeting was held in 2016 and hosted by Dr. Mary Hawn and the Stanford Department of Surgery. 2017 has seen a significant increase in participation in the Annual Meeting with over twice the number of abstracts submitted. The membership continues to grow and interest has never been stronger.

Founding Members
Herb Chen, MD
Dai Chung, MD
Dev Desai, MD, PhD
Lillian Kao, MD, MS
Tien Ko, MD
Paul Kuo, MD
Nipun Merchant, MD
Jennifer Tseng, MD, MPH
George Yang, MD, PhD

Officers and Executive Council

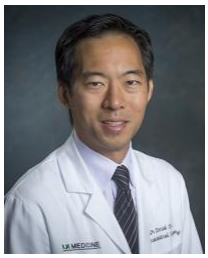
Susan Tsai, MD, MHS, President

Susan Tsai, MD, MHS, is a Professor in the Division of Surgical Oncology, Department of Surgery and the Director of the LaBahn Pancreatic Cancer Program at the Medical College of Wisconsin (MCW). She completed her medical school and residency training at the University of Michigan. During residency, she completed a clinical research fellowship at the National Cancer Institute in the laboratory of Suzanne Topalian. After residency, she completed a Surgical Oncology Fellowship at the Johns Hopkins Hospital. While in fellowship, she also received a Master's in Clinical Investigation from the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. Her clinical practice focused on GI oncology and pancreatic cancer. She serves as the Director of the MCW Surgical Oncology Biorepository and Pancreatic Cancer Clinical Database. Her research interests include blood-based biomarkers in pancreatic cancer and investigator-initiated clinical trials. She also serves as the Associate Program Director of the Complex Surgical Oncology Fellowship Program.

Eugene S. Kim, MD, President-Elect

Eugene S. Kim, MD, received his undergraduate degree in Biochemical Sciences from Harvard University and his medical degree from Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons. He completed his residency in general surgery at Columbia University Medical Center, New York-Presbyterian Hospital, in New York City. Dr. Kim subsequently completed a fellowship in pediatric surgery at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center, Cincinnati, Ohio. Currently, Dr. Kim is Professor of Surgery and Pediatrics, Division Chief of Pediatric Surgery and Vice Chair in the Department of Surgery at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles, California. Dr. Kim's clinical expertise is in pediatric surgical oncology and the surgical management of complex solid tumors, the surgical repair of chest wall deformities (pectus excavatum), and anorectal malformations. In addition, Dr. Kim is the principal investigator of a basic science laboratory focused on novel preclinical therapeutics for the aggressive childhood malignancy, neuroblastoma. Dr. Kim's research interests are focused on a novel cancer stem cell population in neuroblastoma and its role in tumor recurrence and metastatic disease. He is also studying mechanisms of recurrent metastatic disease in high-risk neuroblastoma.

Daniel Chu, MD, MSPH, Secretary



Daniel Chu, MD, MSPH, is an Associate Professor in the Division of Gastrointestinal Surgery at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. He completed his undergraduate at Yale and medical school at The Johns Hopkins School of Medicine. After residency at Boston University Medical Center, he completed a colon and rectal surgery fellowship at the Mayo Clinic. His clinical practice specializes in the spectrum of colorectal disease including inflammatory bowel disease, colorectal cancer, diverticular disease, and anorectal disorders. His NIH-funded research interests focus on identifying, understanding, and reducing health disparities in surgery with particular attention to health literacy.

Tejal Brahmbhatt, MD, Treasurer

Tejal S. Brahmbhatt, MD, FACS, is Medical Director in Surgical Critical Care and Fellowship Director of Surgical Critical Care at Cedars Sinai Medical Center. He completed his internship at Washington University of St. Louis and residency in General Surgery at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, TN. He completed a Fellowship in Trauma, Emergency General Surgery, and Surgical Critical Care at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, PA. Additionally, he has advanced doctoral training in music theory and composition and currently serves as a consultant for several film production companies in the US and abroad. His clinical and research interests include surgical education, psychological stress of trauma surgical practice, and trauma and emergency surgery resource appropriation in an environment of dwindling resource allocation.

Ankush Gosain, MD, PhD, MBA, Recorder and Journal of Surgical Research Society Editor

Ankush Gosain, MD, PhD, MBA, is the Dr. David R. and Kiku Akers Endowed Chair in Pediatric Surgery and serves as Chair of the Department of Pediatric Surgery at Children's Hospital Colorado. He is an NIH-funded Pediatric Surgeon-Scientist with a basic & translational science laboratory studying the enteric nervous system and gastrointestinal mucosal immune development and function as they relate to congenital colorectal disease (e.g., Hirschsprung disease) and aberrant intestinal homeostasis, with the overarching goal of developing novel therapies. His clinical expertise is in pediatric colorectal surgery, liver tumors, congenital diaphragmatic hernia, and trauma. Dr. Gosain serves on the Executive Councils of the Surgical Research Committee of the American College of Surgeons, the Association for Academic Surgery (International Career Development Courses Director), the Society of University Surgeons (Program Chair & Secretary-Elect), and the Society of Asian Academic Surgeons (Recorder). He is an elected member of the Society of Clinical Surgery (Treasurer) and the American Society for Clinical Investigation, platforms which he uses to advocate for the

Surgeon-Scientist phenotype. His overarching goals are to nurture and develop trainees and faculty in their academic and research careers to achieve national and international prominence, and to grow opportunities for individuals who have been traditionally underrepresented in medicine.

Vikas Dudeja, MD, Councilor-Active Member

Vikas Dudeja, MD, is a tenured associate professor of Surgery, and Director of the Division of Surgical Oncology in the Department of Surgery at UAB. He has spent the last 14 years evaluating the pathobiology of pancreatic cancer and devising strategies to address its progression and metastases. He is an expert in the immune and stromal biology of pancreatic and other hepatobiliary malignancies. Research in his laboratory has demonstrated the role of stromal pathway in creating an immunosuppressive environment in pancreatic cancer. His work has also demonstrated that gut microbiome modulates anti-cancer immune response and that its modulation can emerge as novel therapy against cancer. His research has been supported by grant funding from the NIH, Department of Defense, VA Merit Program and society foundations including the Society of Surgical Oncology and National Pancreas Foundation.

Connie Shao, MD, MSPH, Councilor-Associate Member

Connie Shao, MD, MSPH, is originally from Michigan and obtained her BS in Biomedical Engineering from Washington University in St. Louis. She completed medical school at the University of Chicago and is currently a fourth-year general surgery resident at UAB. During her two research years, she completed her MSPH in Health Outcomes and the American College of Surgeons MacLean Ethics Fellowship, focusing on reducing disparities in healthcare access via telemedicine. She loves SAAS because of its supportive community, incredible mentors, and inspiring trainees.

Kenric M. Murayama, MD, MBA, Past-President, (2015-2016)

Kenric Murayama, MD, MBA, is Chair and Program Director of the Department of Surgery at the John A. Burns School of Medicine of the University of Hawaii where he attended medical school. He is the Thomas J. Whelan, Jr., MD Professor of Surgery. He completed his surgery training at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine during which time he did a two-year research fellowship in pancreatic physiology. He received his MBA from Marist College in May 2019. Dr. Murayama serves on the American College of Surgeons Board of Governors as the Society of Asian Academic Surgeons representative. He recently completed his term on the General Surgery Board of the American Board of Surgery and is an Associate Member to the ACS Academy of Master Surgeon Educators. Dr. Murayama was the inaugural President of the Society of Asian Academic Surgeons, was President of the Southwestern Surgical Congress, and was a longstanding Board member for the Society of American Gastrointestinal and Endoscopic Surgeons. Dr. Murayama is on the Board of Directors for the Hawaii Medical Services Association and the Blood Bank of Hawaii, having recently completed his term as Board Chair. Recently, Dr. Murayama was appointed to the role of Chair of the Clinical Program in Surgery and Medical Director for Surgical Services for The Queen's Health System. His clinical interests are in minimally invasive surgery for treatment of foregut disorders, biliary disease, and abdominal wall hernias. Dr. Murayama has a longstanding commitment to surgical education and leadership development in surgery.

Paul Kuo, MD, MBA, Past-President (2016-2017)

Paul C. Kuo, MD, MBA, is Professor of Surgery, Vice Chair for Faculty Development and Academic Affairs and Assistant Dean for Research Program Development at the University of South Florida, Morsani College of Medicine, Professor of Information Systems and Decision Sciences at the University of South Florida Muma College of Business and Chief of Surgery at Tampa General Hospital. Immediately prior to this, he was the John P. Igini Professor of Surgery and Chair of the Department of Surgery at Loyola University Medical Center. He is a 1985 graduate of the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine. He trained at the Brigham and Womens Hospital in general surgery, and at the New England Deaconess Hospital (now the BI-Deaconess) in Hepatobiliary/Transplant Surgery, and spent three years as a postdoctoral research fellow at Harvard Medical School under Joseph Loscalzo, MD, PhD. Dr. Kuo is also a dedicated member of the U.S. military who supported Afghanistan's Operation Freedom as a member of the 697th FST/GHOST Team in 2017 and again with the 909th FST in 2019, and currently serves as a general surgeon with the United States Army Reserve Medical Corps.

Nipun Merchant, MD, Past-President (2017-2018)

Nipun Merchant, MD, is the Alan S. Livingstone Endowed Professor of Surgery in the University Of Miami, Department Of Surgery, Vice Chair of Surgical Oncology Services and the Chief of the Division of Surgical Oncology. He is also the Chief Surgical Officer and Director of Surgical Oncology Research of the Sylvester Comprehensive Cancer Center. He is a recognized leader in the clinical management of hepato-pancreatico- biliary and neuroendocrine malignancies. Dr. Merchant has an active basic science and translational research laboratory investigating signal transduction and tumor- stromal interactions in pancreas cancer. He has served on several study sections for the NIH and chaired the NCI-F Study Section. He is also a member of the Pancreas Task Force of the GI Steering Committee of the National Cancer Institute, the Commission on Cancer and the National Comprehensive Cancer Network (NCCN) Pancreatic Adenocarcinoma Panel Member. He serves on the Editorial Boards of the Annals of Surgery, Annals of Surgical Oncology, Surgery, American Journal of Translational Research and is an Associate Editor for BMC Cancer.

Jennifer F. Tseng, MD, MPH, Past President (2018-2019)

Jennifer F. Tseng, MD, MPH, is the Utley Professor and Chair of the Department of Surgery at Boston University School of Medicine, and Surgeon-in-Chief at Boston Medical Center in Boston, Massachusetts. Prior to being recruited to Boston University School of Medicine/Boston Medical Center in July 2017, Dr. Tseng served as the chief of surgical oncology at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center (BIDMC) and as a professor of surgery at Harvard Medical School. Of note, Dr. Tseng was the first female full professor of surgery at BIDMC and only the fourth in the history of Harvard Medical School. Dr. Tseng has published more than 120-peer reviewed journal articles on reducing surgical risk, cancer biomarkers, and developing models for cancer treatment-sequencing strategies, with a strong focus on racial and socioeconomic disparities in care. Dr. Tseng is on the editorial board of several journals and was appointed Deputy Editor of JAMA Surgery. She currently serves as the President of the Society for Surgery of the Alimentary Tract (SSAT). Dr. Tseng is the first woman as well as the first nonwhite person to serve as chair and chief of surgery at an academic medical center in Boston, and one of a modest percentage nationally.

Tracy S. Wang, MD, MPH, Past President (2019-2021)

Tracy S. Wang, MD, MPH, FACS, is currently Professor of Surgery, Vice-Chair of Strategic and Professional Development, and Chief of the Section of Endocrine Surgery in the Department of Surgery at the Medical College of Wisconsin (Milwaukee, WI). Dr. Wang is the Program Leader for the Endocrine Cancer program at the Froedtert Hospital/Medical College of Wisconsin Cancer Center. Her clinical practice is focused on the surgical endocrine disease of the thyroid, parathyroid, and adrenal glands, including inherited endocrine syndromes. Dr. Wang has published >150 peer-reviewed manuscripts and book chapters. She recently completed her term as Treasurer of the American Association of Endocrine Surgeons and is a Councilor for the Central Surgical Association and the International Association of Endocrine Surgeons. She is the recent past-President of the Society of Asian Academic Surgeons. She is on the Board of Directors for the Surgical Biology Club II. She also serves as an Associate Editor for the American Journal of Surgery and on the Editorial Boards of World Journal of Surgery and the Journal of Surgical Research.

Allan Tsung, MD, Past President (2021-2022)

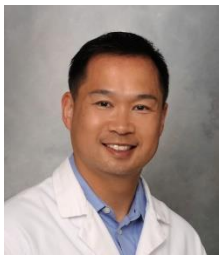
Allan Tsung, MD is Chair of Surgery at the University of Virginia where his goal is to expand the field of surgery, strengthen the institution, and most importantly, shape and inspire faculty, residents, and students to make outstanding contributions in clinical care, research, and education. Dr. Tsung is a surgeon-scientist with a commitment to academic medicine stemming from his passion to make a difference beyond the individual patient. His long-term goal is to continue bringing bench side research breakthroughs to bedside clinical therapies. As a busy surgical oncologist, Dr. Tsung has a focus in evaluating and managing patients with liver, bile duct and pancreas cancers, with expertise in laparoscopic and robotic surgery. In addition, he conducts basic, translational and health services research in the lab, clinics, and operating room. Dr. Tsung's work has generated 300+ published peer-reviewed manuscripts in leading scientific journals and has a long track record of funding as Principal Investigator on multiple NIH and society grants. His laboratory has a long-standing record of examining the role of innate immunity in injury-induced inflammation and tumorigenesis of primary and metastatic cancer. In addition, as a clinician who encounters disparities in health outcomes for patients receiving cancer treatment, he also examines the structures, processes, and biopsychosocial factors that affect access to care and outcomes for the most vulnerable populations due to socioeconomic disadvantage. One of Dr. Tsung's main career objectives has always been to develop the next generation of surgeon scientists. He is an advocate for medical students, general surgery residents and surgical

oncology fellows, serving as program director for the complex general surgical oncology fellowship at Ohio state. He also previously served as Vice Chair of Research for the Department of Surgery at University of Pittsburgh, where his goal was to develop a sustainable model for residents to develop the research skillsets necessary to maintain a career in academic surgery. Dr. Tsung is the past president of the Society of University Surgeons, Society of Asian Academic Surgeons and current Secretary of the Society of Clinical Surgery. He also participates in leadership roles in several other important academic surgical organizations, such as the Society of Surgical Oncology, the Americas Hepato-Pancreato-Biliary Association, and the American Association for the Study of Liver Diseases.

Herbert Chen, MD, SAAS Foundation President

Dr. Herbert Chen obtained his BS from Stanford University with Honors and with Distinction in 1988 and graduated from Duke University School of Medicine Alpha Omega Alpha in 1992. Dr. Chen then completed a general surgery residency followed by a surgical oncology and endocrinology fellowship at The Johns Hopkins Hospital. Dr. Chen is Chair of the Department of Surgery at University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB), the Surgeon-in-Chief of UAB Hospital and Health System, and the Senior Associate Dean for Academic Affairs in the UAB Heersink School of Medicine. He is a Professor of Surgery, Pediatrics, and Biomedical Engineering, and holds the Fay Fletcher Kerner Endowed Chair. His clinical interests include endocrine surgery and he is a pioneer in radio guided parathyroid surgery. Dr. Chen's lab studies thyroid and neuroendocrine cancers and has received over $18 million in extramural funding. He is the American Cancer Society MEN2 Thyroid Cancer Professor. Dr. Chen is the Editor-in-Chief of the American Journal of Surgery. He has held several leadership positions in major academic societies including President of the Society of Asian Academic Surgeons Foundation, President of Association for Academic Surgery, President of the Society of Clinical Surgery, President of the American Association of Endocrine Surgeons, and President of Surgical Biology Club II. Dr. Chen has mentored over 130 faculty, post-doctoral fellows, residents, medical students, and undergraduates in his lab. He has published over 640 original research and review articles and has edited 28 textbooks. He is well-known for his passion for teaching and mentoring the next generation of surgical leaders. Dr. Chen has also been recognized as a champion for diversity, equity, and inclusion. Dr. Chen and his wife Harriet, a freelance photographer, reside in Mountain Brook, AL. His son Alex is a psychiatry resident at John Hopkins while his daughter Liz is a faculty member at NC State College of Design.

Russell Woo, MD, Program Committee Chair



Russell Woo, MD, is a Professor of Surgery and Chief of the Division of Pediatric Surgery at the University of Hawaii, John A. Burns School of Medicine. Dr. Woo is a graduate of the Yale University School of Medicine. He completed his general surgery residency at Stanford University as well as research fellowships in surgical robotics and biotechnology innovation. He then completed his subspecialty fellowship training in pediatric surgery at Children's Hospital Los Angeles. Dr. Woo's clinical interests include general and thoracic pediatric surgery, neonatal surgery, and pediatric vascular anomalies. In addition, he has an active research and teaching program aimed at developing new technologies for use in minimally invasive surgery.

Kamran Idrees, MD, Chair, Scholarships Committee

Kamran Idrees, MD, MSCI, MMHC, is Director of the Pancreas and GI Surgical Oncology and Director of the Peritoneal Surface Malignancy Program at Vanderbilt-Ingram Cancer Center. After completing his general surgery training at University of Alabama at Birmingham, he finished a clinical fellowship in Surgical Oncology at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center, where he was trained in regional perfusion treatments including Heated Intra-Peritoneal Chemotherapy (HIPEC) and Isolated limb infusion (ILI). He also carried out a research fellowship in colorectal cancer at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in addition to a Hepato-Pancreatico-Biliary Surgery fellowship at Washington University in St. Louis. He is certified by the American Board of Surgery.

Sophie Dream, MD, Chair, Communications Committee

Sophie Dream, MD, is Assistant Professor and Program Director of the Endocrine Surgery Fellowship Program at the Froedtert & Medical College of Wisconsin. Dr. Dream grew up in Ohio and completed her undergraduate coursework at the University of Cincinnati. She began her medical education at the University of Cincinnati College of Medicine, graduating in 2013. She completed her surgical residency at Henry Ford Hospital and went on to finish her endocrine surgery fellowship at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. Dr. Dream's research interests focus on health services and outcomes in patients with thyroid, parathyroid, and adrenal disorders.

Anai Kothari, MD, MS, SAAS Representative to the Association for Academic Surgery

Anai N. Kothari, MD, MS, is an assistant professor in the Division of Surgical Oncology, Department of Surgery and a member of the Collaborative for Healthcare Delivery Science at the Medical College of Wisconsin. He grew up in Manitowoc, WI and received his BS and MD at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Dr. Kothari completed his General Surgery training at Loyola University Medical Center where he also earned a Master's degree in Epidemiology. This was followed by a fellowship in Complex General Surgical Oncology at the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center. Dr. Kothari's clinical expertise is the surgical treatment of upper gastrointestinal cancer and advanced cancers of the GI tract. He is a member of several national societies including the Society of Surgical Oncology, American College of Surgeons, and Society of Asian Academic Surgeons. He is an active researcher with a focus on using advanced analytics to improve cancer care.

Emily Keung, MD, SAAS Representative to the Association for Women in Surgery (AWS)

Emily Keung, MD, is Assistant Professor of Surgery in the Department of Surgical Oncology at The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center. Her clinical practice focuses on the care of patients with soft tissue sarcomas and cutaneous malignancies. Dr. Keung received her undergraduate degree from Harvard College and her medical degree from Harvard Medical School. She completed her general surgery residency and surgical critical care fellowship at Brigham and Women's Hospital and fellowship in Complex General Surgical Oncology at MD Anderson Cancer Center. Her primary research focus has been to investigate the role of immunotherapy for the treatment of soft tissue sarcoma and melanoma and to study the role of the epigenome in soft tissue sarcoma.

Yumi Hori, BA, Executive Director

Yumi Hori is the Executive Director of the Society of Asian Academic Surgeons and Director of Education for BSC Management. She is a management executive with more than 20 years of nonprofit education planning experience. Yumi has worked with the Society of American Gastrointestinal and Endoscopic Surgeons (SAGES), The Fellowship Council, the Society of University Surgeons (SUS), and the Association for Surgical Education (ASE). She previously worked at UCLA in public policy education, as well as in the Japanese American National Museum (JANM) Education Department. She graduated from the University of California, Los Angeles.

SAAS Committees

Communications Committee

Sophie Dream, MD, Chair (2021-2023)
Haejin In, MD, Vice-Chair (2018-2023)
James Wu, MD (2021-2023)
Alex Kim (2021-2023)
Ji Fan, MD (2021-2023)
Hari Nathan (2022-2024)
Priyanka Chugh (2022-2024)
Stephanie Chen (2022-2024)
Ahmad Hamad (2022-2024)
Christopher Scott (2022-2024)

Program Committee

Russell Woo, MD, Chair (2022-2024; 2022 Local Arr. Chair)
Jinny Ha, MD, Vice Chair (2022-2024; 2023 Local Arr. Co-Chair)
Ash Gosain, MD, PhD, ex officio (2019-2023)
Gina Adrales, MD (2019-2023; 2023 Local Arr. Co-Chair)
Chee Chee Stucky (2021-2023)
Nancy Cho, MD (2021-2023)
Neha Goel, MD (2021-2023)
Bonnie Chow (2021-2023)
Jessica Zagory (2022-2026, 2024 Local Arr. Co-Chair)
David Yu (2022-2026, 2024 Local Arr. Co-Chair)
Heather Wachtel (2022-2024)
Kevin Koo (2022-2024)
Hee Soo Jung (2022-2024)
Anai Kothari (2022-2024)
Raja Narayan (2022-2024)

Publications Committee

Ankush Gosain, MD, PhD Chair (2019-2023)
Victoria Lai, MD (2021-2023)
Clara Park, MD (2021-2023)
Mihir Shah, MD (2021-2023)
Areeba Saif, MD, (2021-2023)
Annabelle Fonseca (2022-2024)
Jeffrey Velotta (2022-2024)
Oliver Eng (2022-2024)
Reed Ayabe (2022-2024)
Sameer Patel (2022-2024)

SAAS Committees

Scholarships Committee

Kamran Idrees, MD, Chair (2022-2024)
Calvin Chao (2022-2024)
Ching-Wei Tzeng (2022-2024)
Neal Bhutiani, MD (2021-2023)
Priya Dedhia, MD (2021-2023)
Mayur Patel (2022-2024)
Romeo Ignacio (2022-2024)
Hop Tran Cao (2022-2024)
Lily Cheng (2022-2024)

Visiting Professors

The Society of Asian Academic Surgeons Foundation Visiting Professorships are open for SAAS Active Members who are faculty members at the Assistant or Associate Professor level and are within the first 10 years of their faculty appointment. It will support their travel to host institutions to give grand rounds and will increase the national visibility of rising stars in academic surgery.

2023-2024 SAAS Visiting Professorships

- Boston University (Host: Jennifer Tseng, MD)
    - *Teh Ling and Yu Chen Ko – SAAS Lectureship*
    - **Anai Kothari, MD** (Medical College of Wisconsin)

- City of Hope (Host: Yuman Fong, MD)
    - *City of Hope - SAAS Lectureship*
    - **Jeff Velotta, MD** (Kaiser/ University of California San Francisco)

- Dartmouth University (Host: Sandra Wong, MD)
    - *Association of Women Surgeons – Hong Mo and Hsi Mei Chen Lectureship*
    - **Emily Keung, MD** (MD Anderson)

- Loyola University (Host: Vivian Gahtan, MD)
    - *Masami and Kanemi Mizuno – SAAS Lectureship*
    - **Tania Arora, MD** (Medical College of Georgia)

- Northwestern University (Host: Hasan Alam, MD)
    - *Alam Family – SAAS Lectureship*
    - **Aarti Mathur, MD** (Johns Hopkins)

- UT-Southwestern (Host: Herbert Zeh, MD)
    - *George P. Yang – SAAS Lectureship*
    - **Monica Dua, MD** (Stanford University)

In Memory of George Yang, MD, PhD

George Yang, M.D., Ph.D., went to undergraduate and medical school at Northwestern University. He earned his Ph.D. in molecular genetics at the University of Illinois at Chicago. He completed his residency in general surgery at Stanford University and remained at Stanford as faculty until coming to UAB in 2018.

George ran a successful laboratory that focused on mechanisms of injury repair. His caring nature and surgical skill helped countless patients not only at UAB but at the Birmingham Veterans Affairs (VA) hospital – a place where his dedication to his patients, peers and staff was unparalleled.

In addition to his clinical and research leadership, George was known across the community as someone who acted on his values. He was motivated, inclusive, and humble, and the field of surgery took note. In 2021, George was named the Society of University Surgeons Inaugural Trailblazer Award Winner. The SUS noted that he was nominated and selected by his peers based on his leadership and contributions to the SUS as well as his unwavering vision, commitment, and dedication to the promotion of the Asian American and Pacific Islanders (AAPI) community in academic surgical leadership.

George has always been an advocate for underrepresented groups in medicine. In 2010, he was a founding member of our very own Society of Asian Academic Surgeons (SAAS) and was named our first executive director in 2016. George will always be known for championing social justice and diversity, equity, and inclusion. He believed in building groups of individuals with shared experiences and creating deep community. He believed in created spaces where everyone felt safe. In 2021, SAAS honored George by creating and bestowing him the George Yang SAAS Trailblazer Award.

Let's honor George by lifting up those around us, giving back, and moving the field of surgery forward.

George Yang, MD, PhD Trailblazer Award

An award that recognizes a surgeon for contributions to surgical science and for paving the way for the next generation of surgeons.

2018	Quan-Yang Duh, MD – University of California, San Francisco
2019	Steven Stain, MD – Albany Medical Center
2021	George Yang, MD, PhD – University of Alabama, Birmingham
2022	Herbert Chen, MD – University of Alabama, Birmingham

Resident/Fellow Development Scholarship

The SAAS Resident/Fellow Development Scholarship is a travel grant supporting attendance of a surgical trainee at the Association for Academic Surgery's Fall Courses, held each year just prior to the American College of Surgeons' Clinical Congress. The recipient of this award serves a two-year term as a Resident member of the Scholarships Committee.

2014	Vikas Dudeja, MD, PhD – Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center
2015	Lyen Huang, MD, MPH – Stanford University
2016	Zhi Ven Fong, MD, MPH – Massachusetts General Hospital
2017	Deepa Cherla, MD – Cleveland Clinic
2018	Emily Keung, MD – M.D. Anderson Cancer Center
2019	Chi-Fu Jeffrey Yang, MD – Stanford University
2020	Nikhil Panda, MD - Massachusetts General Hospital
	Linda Pak, MD - Brigham and Women's Hospital
	Selena Li, MD - Massachusetts General Hospital
	Bhuwan Giri, MD - University of Miami
2021	Neal Bhutiani, MD PhD - The University of Texas – M.D. Anderson Cancer Center
	Heather Lyu, MD - The University of Texas – M.D. Anderson Cancer Center
	Rowza Rumma, MD - Brigham and Women's Hospital
	Ahmad Hamad, MD - The Ohio State University
	Jessie Ho, MD - Northwestern University
2022	Calvin Chao, MD- Northwestern University
2023	Raja Narayan, MD, MPH - Dana-Farber Cancer Institute/Mass General Brigham

Junior Faculty/Early Career Development Award

The SAAS Junior Faculty/Early Career Development Award is a travel grant supporting the attendance of a faculty member within 5 years of their first appointment at the Surgical Investigators' Course at the Academic Surgical Congress. The recipient of this award serves a two-year committee on the Scholarships Committee.

2015	Peter Chang, MD – Beth Israel Deaconess
2016	Daniel I. Chu, MD – University of Alabama at Birmingham
2017	Ching-Wei David Tzeng, MD – M.D. Anderson Cancer Center
2018	Eric Sheu, MD – Brigham and Women's Hospital
2019	Aslam Ejaz, MD – The Ohio State University
2020	Emily Keung, MD - The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center
2021	Priya Dedhia, MD, PhD - The Ohio State University
2022	Lily Cheng, MD - Texas Children's Hospital
	Mihir Shah, MD - Emory University
	Annabelle Fonseca, MD - University of South Alabama
2023	Syed Nabeel Zafar, MD - University of Wisconsin – Madison

Esther Tsai Sugg Research Award

The Esther Tsai Sugg Research Award is granted to the highest scoring abstract submitted by a SAAS member as either first or senior author to the annual Academic Surgical Congress.

2015	Chris Goodenough, MD (Presenting author)
	Michael Liang, MD (Senior author)
	University of Texas – Houston
2016	Jason Castellanos, MD (Presenting author)
	Nipun Merchant, MD (Senior author)
	University of Miami
2017	Syed Nabeel Zafar, MD (Presenting author)
	Nabil Wasif, MD (Senior author)
	Howard University
2018	Daniel ("Brock") Hewitt, MD, MPH (Presenting author)
	Anthony Yang, MD (Senior author)
	Northwestern University
2019	Apoorve Nayyar, MD (Presenting author)
	Kristalyn Gallagher, DO (Senior author)
	University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill
2020	Aaron Baer, MD (Presenting author)
	David Shibata, MD (Senior author)
	University of Tennessee, Memphis
2021	Sourav Bose, MD, MBA (Presenting author)
	William Parenteau, MD (Senior author)

	Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, Philadelphia
2022	Vivek Pamulapati, MD (Presenting author)
	Karen Ho, MD (Senior author)
	Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine, Chicago
2023	Taylor Lee BS (Presenting author)
	Lily Cheng, MD (Senior author)
	Texas Children's Hospital, Houston, TX

SAAS Annual Meeting Travel Award

The SAAS Annual Meeting Travel Award is a travel grant, awarded to the first author of the highest scoring abstract submitted by a SAAS member to the annual meeting.

2016	Julie Goswami, MD (presenting author)
	Allan Tsung, MD (senior author)
	University of Pittsburgh
2017	Michael Fenlon, MD (presenting author)
	Kasper Wang, MD (senior author)
	Children's Hospital of Los Angeles
2018	Zhi-Ven Fong, MD (presenting author)
	Motaz Qadan, MD, PhD (senior author)
	Massachusetts General Hospital
2019	C. Ann Vitous (presenting author)
	Amy Pasithorn Suwanabol, MD (senior author)
	University of Michigan
2021	Serena Day (presenting author)
	Benzon Dy (senior author)
	Mayo Clinic
2022	Jaewon Lee (presenting author)
	Paola Guerrero (senior author)
	UT MD Anderson/Cedars Sinai
2023	Jeremy Chang (presenting author)
	Colin P. Kenny (senior author)
	University of Iowa

ASA – SAAS Surgical Leaders Fellowship Grant

This award is sponsored by the American Surgical Association and SAAS to provide funds to travel to an ASA member's home institution for a shadowing experience of being a surgical leader in academic surgery. A SAAS member will be selected every other year, on even years.

2020	Tracy Wang, MD, MPH - Medical College of Wisconsin, Milwaukee
2022	Ankush Gosain, MD, PhD - UT Memphis

Mid-Career Award

The SAAS Mid-Career Award is a grant supporting the attendance of a faculty member to the Society of University Surgeons' (SUS) Mid-Career Academic Surgery Professional Development Course. This grant was made possible by a generous contribution from Past President Dr. Tracy Wang. The recipient of this award serves a two-year committee on the Scholarships Committee.

2022	Hop Tran Cao, MD - The University of Texas – M.D. Anderson Cancer Center
	Romeo Ignacio, MD - University of California – San Diego
	Chee-Chee Stucky, MD - Mayo Clinic Arizona
2023	Jiping Wang, MD PhD - Brigham and Women's Hospital/Dana-Farber Cancer Institute

SAAS – SUS Leadership Agility Program Scholarship

Sponsored by SAAS in partnership with the Society of University Surgeons, this award funds the tuition to the annual Society of University Surgeons (SUS) Leadership Agility Program. The Tseng Family Award, endowed by Dr. Jennifer Tseng, provides the annual SAAS contribution for this award.

2019	Linwah Yip, MD - University of Pittsburgh
2022	Romeo Ignacio, MD - University of California, San Diego
2023	Russell Woo, MD – University of Hawai'i

SAAS – AWS Resident Research Travel Award

Sponsored by SAAS in partnership with the Association of Women Surgeons (AWS), this award funds a $1000 travel grant supporting attendance of a surgical resident trainee at the SAAS Annual Meeting.

2022	Connie Shao, MD - UAB
2023	Areeba Saif, MD - UTHealth Houston McGovern Medical School

Local Hosts

Andrew Cameron, MD, PhD, Director, Johns Hopkins Department of Surgery

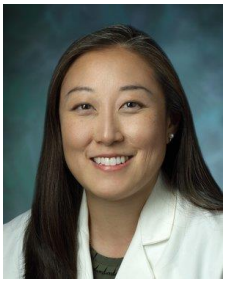
Andrew Cameron, MD, PhD, is the Director of the Johns Hopkins Department of Surgery and Surgeon-in-Chief of The Johns Hopkins Hospital. Dr. Cameron was born at Johns Hopkins and raised in Baltimore. He attended Harvard College and returned to Johns Hopkins where he obtained his M.D.. and Ph.D. degrees. His surgical training was spent at the Massachusetts General Hospital and then at UCLA for Liver Transplantation. He returned to Hopkins as Head of the Liver Transplant Program in 2006. His laboratory studies stem cells and the liver to promote drug-free transplantation and other pursuits include the use of social media to increase organ donation. He is married to Lisa, a lawyer, and has two children, Charlotte and John.

Gina Adrales, MD, MPH, Associate Professor of Surgery, Johns Hopkins Department of Surgery

Gina Adrales, MD, MPH is Director of the Minimally Invasive Surgery Training and Innovation Center at Johns Hopkins Department of Surgery and Co-Director of the Johns Hopkins Bariatric Surgery Fellowship. Her areas of clinical expertise include gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD), gallbladder disease, achalasia, splenectomy (spleen removal), benign gastric and intestinal surgery, bariatric surgery, and open and laparoscopic hernia repair (inguinal, ventral, incisional, umbilical, hiatal, paraesophageal). Dr. Adrales has been named an associate member of the American College of Surgeons' Academy of Master Surgeon Educators. Awardees are recognized for having devoted their careers to surgical education and are considered premier leaders in their respective fields. Prior to joining Johns Hopkins, Dr. Adrales was on faculty at Dartmouth where she directed the Surgery Clerkship, the Hernia Surgery Center, and the Bariatric Surgery Program. During her tenure at Dartmouth, she earned her Masters of Public Health at The Dartmouth Institute for Health Policy and Clinical Practice. She completed her residency at the Carolinas Medical Center and a research and clinical fellowship in minimally invasive surgery at the University of Kentucky before her first faculty appointment at the Medical College of Georgia. A national leader in hernia surgery, Dr. Adrales serves on the Executive Council of the Americas Hernia Society and previously served on the Executive Council of the Americas Hernia Society Quality Collaborative to improve the safety and quality of hernia surgery. She is actively involved in a number of committees for the Society of American Gastrointestinal and Endoscopic Surgeons including various roles in surgical education, the development of the Fundamentals of Endoscopic Surgery and an innovative interactive hernia surgery education module.

Local Hosts

Jinny Ha, MD, MHS, Assistant Professor of Surgery, Johns Hopkins Department of Surgery



Jinny Ha, MD, MHS, is an assistant professor of surgery and thoracic surgeon at Johns Hopkins. She received her medical degree from the University of Virginia School of Medicine and completed her general surgery residency at the University of Maryland Medical Center. She then completed a cardiothoracic surgery fellowship at The Johns Hopkins Hospital. Dr. Ha specializes in the surgical treatment of various benign and malignant conditions of the lung and esophagus, including lung cancer, chest reconstruction, esophageal cancer, esophageal reconstruction, mediastinal tumors and diseases, pleural diseases, chest wall tumors, plication for diaphragm paralysis, tracheal resection and lung transplantation. She is a member of various professional societies, including Society of Thoracic Surgeons, Thoracic Surgical Association and the European Society of Thoracic Surgeons.

Professional Development Session: Surgical Ergonomics

M. Susan Hallbeck, PhD, PE, CPE, FHFES, FIEA, Patricia E. Kern Scientific Director and Professor of Health Care Systems Engineering, Mayo Clinic Rochester

Susan Hallbeck, PhD, PE, CPE is the Robert D. and Patricia E. Kern Scientific Director and Professor of Health Care Systems Engineering in the Kern Center for the Science of Healthcare Delivery and a Consultant in Health Care Delivery Research, as well as a Consultant in Surgery at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, MN. Dr. Hallbeck is the Past-President of the Human Factors and Ergonomics Society (HFES). She is currently President-elect of the Society for Surgical Ergonomics. Dr. Hallbeck is a licensed professional engineer and a certified professional ergonomist. Susan earned her PhD from Virginia Tech, her MS from Texas Tech and her BS from Iowa State University, all in Industrial Engineering. Prior to joining Mayo Clinic, Dr. Hallbeck was a professor at the University of Nebraska in Industrial Engineering for 25 years and is now an emerita professor there. Dr. Hallbeck is an HFES Fellow and International Ergonomics Association Fellow. She is on the editorial board of *Applied Ergonomics and Human Factors in Health Care* and a society representative and guest editor for the *American Journal of Surgery*.

Geeta Lal, MD, MSc FRCS(C), Professor of Surgery and Pediatrics, University of Iowa Carver College of Medicine

Geeta Lal, MD, MSc FRCS(C), received her BS from McMaster University, and her MD at the University of Toronto. She earned an MSc at the University of Toronto and The Samuel Lunenfeld Research Institute. She completed residency in General Surgery at the University of Toronto and a fellowship in Endocrine Surgical Oncology at the University of California, San Francisco. Dr. Lal has served in many different roles throughout her career, including being the Co-Leader of the cancer center's Endocrine Multidisciplinary Oncology Group and heading an NIH-funded basic science laboratory for many years. She was the Associate Chief Quality Officer for the Adult Inpatient Services at her institution till July 2022 and continues to maintain a busy endocrine surgery practice. Having experienced work-related musculoskeletal symptoms herself, she is committed to increasing awareness of and developing solutions to counteract the impact of poor ergonomics on surgeons' professional and personal lives. She is the founder of Surgical Ergonomics, a speaking and coaching business and a co-founder and Inaugural President of the new Society of Surgical Ergonomics.

Professional Development Session: Surgical Ergonomics

Adrian Park, MD, *Chief Surgical Officer and Chief Innovation Officer at Meritus Health, Associate Dean of Research and Innovation, proposed Meritus School of Osteopathic Medicine*

Adrian Park, MD is the Chief Surgical Officer and Chief Innovation Officer at Meritus Health as well as Associate Dean of Research and Innovation, proposed Meritus School of Osteopathic Medicine in Hagerstown, MD and Professor of Surgery at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. Dr. Park has made major advancements in the improvement of laparoscopic techniques and technology , complex hernia repair, foregut and spleen surgery and the understanding of surgical ergonomics. Previously Dr. Park was the James and Sylvia Earl Chair of Surgery and Surgeon in Chief, Luminis Health , in Annapolis, MD following upon his role as the Dr. Alex Gillis Professor and Chairman of the Department of Surgery at Dalhousie University in Halifax, NS. Prior to this appointment, Park served as the Campbell and Jeanette Plugge Professor and Vice Chair for the Department of Surgery, the Head of the Division of General Surgery at the University of Maryland Medical Center, and the Chair of the Maryland Advanced Simulation, Training, Research, and Innovation (MASTRI) Center.

Talar Tejirian, MD, Board-Certified General Surgeon, Los Angeles

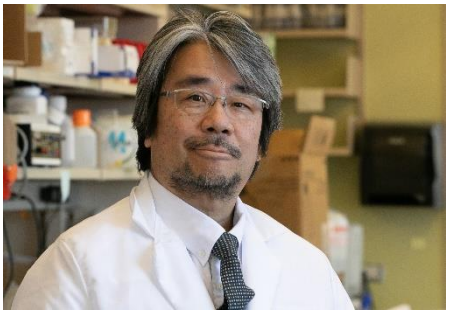
Talar Tejirian, MD, is a board-certified general surgeon in Los Angeles, CA. She graduated Summa Cum Laude and with College Honors from UCLA with a double major in psychology and neuroscience. She received her medical degree from the University of San Francisco, California (UCSF). She completed six years of general surgical residency and fellowship training and is a fellow of the American College of Surgeons. For over a decade, she dedicated her professional time to treating patients with a variety of surgical problems, training future generations of surgeons and performing research at the Kaiser Permanente Los Angeles Medical Center. She does have special areas of interest that include abdominal wall reconstruction and proctology. In mid-2019 Dr. Tejirian developed a permanent nerve injury after spine surgery and has stopped operating. She now focuses on promoting surgeon physical wellness, public health education, and surgical meeting planning.

Kui and Wai Fong Keynote Lectureship

Honoring all parents who have supported the careers and success of academic surgeons.

Kazuhiko Yamada, MD, PhD

"Progress Toward Clinical Kidney Xenotransplantation: Genetic Modification of Porcine Donors and Thymus Transplantation for Induction of Tolerance"



Kazuhiko Yamada, MD, PhD, is the Margery K. and Thomas Pozefsky Professor in Kidney Transplant Surgery at The Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine and serves as Director of Xenotransplantation at The Johns Hopkins Hospital. In August 2022, Dr. Yamada moved from Columbia University where he was Professor of Surgery and Medicine (with tenure), and Director of Surgical Research at the Columbia Center for Translational Immunology (CCTI). After Dr. Yamada qualified as a Board-certified urologist in Japan, he joined the Transplantation Biology Research Center (TBRC) at Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH). He joined the Columbia Center for Translational Immunology (CCTI) in 2015 and was appointed to Professor of Surgical Sciences in Surgery, at Columbia University Medical Center (CUMC) and Director of Surgical Research, CCTI in 2015, and Professor with tenure, Department of Surgery, Columbia University in 2016. Dr. Yamada has a broad background in transplantation immunology as well as in transplant surgery. He has conducted both allogeneic and xenogeneic transplantation projects at the TBRC in MGH, the CCTI at CUMC, and now at Johns Hopkins University. He has been responsible for seeking mechanisms of transplant tolerance in pre-clinical large animal models and developing innovative strategies for the induction of tolerance across both allogeneic and xenogeneic barriers in large animal translational research models. Dr. Yamada has been awarded numerous NIH grants with over US 25 million dollars as either PI or PL. He also received 21.4 million US dollars in industry funding in 2022-2024. He has published over 190 peer-reviewed articles in American or European journals.

Kuo Family Lectureship

Jason Kalirai, PhD

"Space Exploration at Johns Hopkins APL"

Jason Kalirai, PhD, is the Mission Area Executive for Civil Space in the Space Exploration Sector of the Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Laboratory (APL). He joined APL in November 2018 and is leading the implementation of innovative and cost-effective solutions to critical civil space challenges by developing space science missions, instruments, and research programs. Major Civil Space programs under development and operation at APL include New Horizons, Parker Solar Probe, DART, Europa Clipper, Lunar Vertex, IMAP, EZIE, Dragonfly, and more. Dr. Kalirai has published over 100 research papers on topics related to astrophysics, and has won numerous awards for his achievements. .

Upcoming Meetings

September 5-6, 2024
Tulane University Department of Surgery
New Orleans, LA
Local Host: Mary Killackey, MD, Chair, Department of Surgery
Local Arrangements Chairs: Jessica Zagory, MD and David Yu, MD

September 4-5, 2025
City of Hope
Los Angeles, CA
Local Host: Yuman Fong, MD, Chair, Department of Surgery
Local Arrangements Chairs: Mustafa Raoof, MD and Yanghee Woo, MD

The Journal of Surgical Research

Official Publication of the
Society of Asian Academic Surgeons