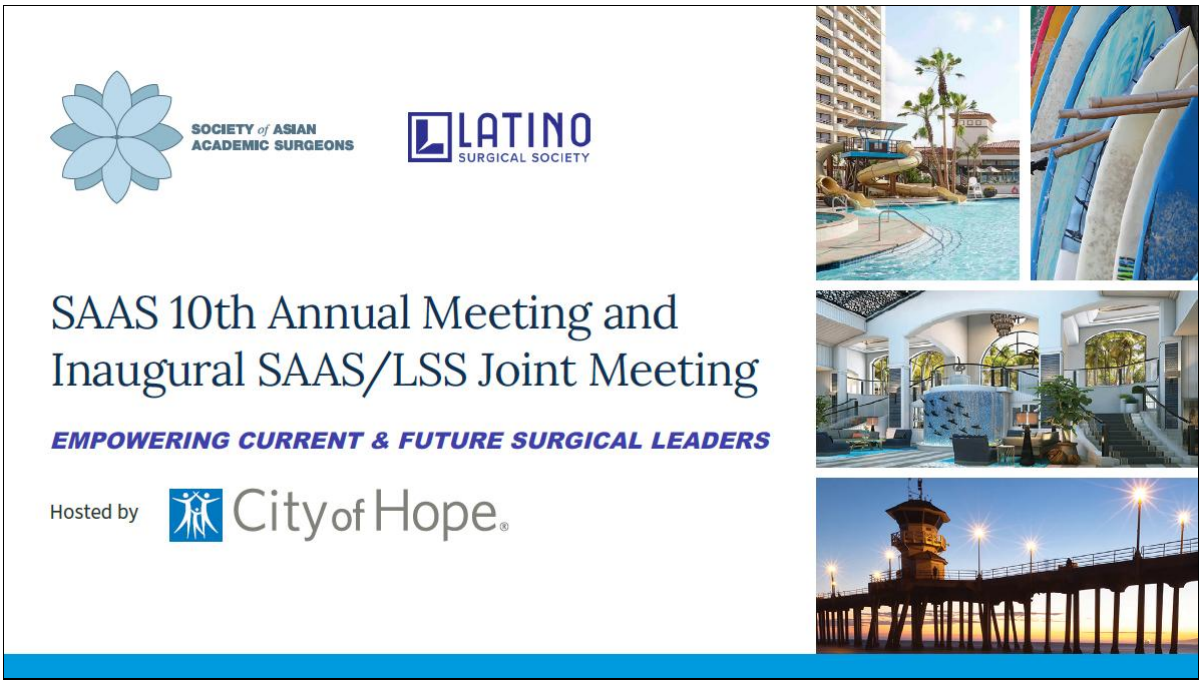
The 10th Annual Meeting of the
Society of Asian Academic Surgeons
Inaugural Joint SAAS/LSS Annual Meeting

City of Hope
Department of Surgery
Huntington Beach, California
September 4-5, 2025



Host: Yuman Fong, MD, Chair and Professor, Department of Surgery
Program Committee Chair: Jinny Ha, MD, MHS
Program Committee Vice Chair: Gina Adrales, MD, MPH
Local Arrangements Chairs: Mustafa Raoof, MD, MS and Yanghee Woo, MD

Table of Contents

Maps	1
Our Mission	2
Our History	3
Executive Council and Past Presidents	4
SAAS Committees	14
SAAS Foundation Visiting Professor	16
In Memory of George Yang MD PhD	17
SAAS Award Winners	18
Local Hosts	23
Speakers	25
Upcoming Meetings	29
Journal	30

Maps

Meeting Time

Thursday and Friday, September 4-5, 2025

Meeting Location

The Waterfront Beach Resort, a Hilton Hotel
21100 Pacific Coast Hwy
Huntington Beach, CA 92648
United States

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** the advancement of a broad & representative leadership in 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*. 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 would become the founding members of SAAS. 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 recognized key challenges within our community and shifted our focus to empowering Asian academic surgeons to achieve their highest potential with the belief that fostering their growth and development would enhance their contributions to surgical leadership.

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 of academic surgery.

From the beginning, our society has been fully welcoming to all. 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 background who is dedicated to supporting greater representation in 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. The 2017 annual meeting saw a significant increase in participation with over twice the number of abstracts submitted. The membership continues to grow and interest has never been stronger.

Founding Members:

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

Executive Council and Past Presidents

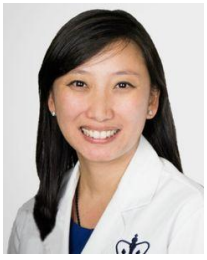
Ankush Gosain, MD, PhD, MBA, President - Ankush Gosain, MD, PhD, MBA, is the Surgeon-in-Chief of UVA Health Children's Hospital, C. Bruce Morton Professor of Surgery and Division Chief of Pediatric Surgery in the Department of Surgery at the University of Virginia School of Medicine, and Physician Executive of Fortify Children's Health, which is Virginia's first Clinically Integrated Network (CIN) dedicated to children. 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, pediatric surgical oncology, congenital diaphragmatic hernia, and pediatric trauma. Dr. Gosain serves on the Executive Councils of the Society of Asian Academic Surgeons (President), the Society of University Surgeons (Secretary), and the Surgical Research Committee of the American College of Surgeons (Vice-Chair). 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, including those who have been traditionally underrepresented in medicine, in their academic and research careers to achieve national and international prominence by advancing patient care and surgical research.

Tejal Brahmbhatt, MD, President-Elect - Tejal S. Brahmbhatt, MD, FACS, is an Associate Professor of Surgery and serves as the Medical Director and Fellowship Director of Surgical Critical Care at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center. He completed his internship at Washington University in St. Louis, followed by a General Surgery residency at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, TN. He then pursued a Fellowship in Traumatology, Emergency General Surgery, and Surgical Critical Care at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, PA. In addition to his medical training, Dr. Brahmbhatt holds advanced doctoral training in music theory and composition, with a focus on the post-Romantic era Russian style and consults for several film production companies in the U.S. and abroad. His clinical research, supported by BARDA and industry sponsorship, focuses on the application of artificial intelligence in point-of-care ultrasound, innovations in surgical education, the psychological stressors of trauma surgical practice, and optimizing trauma and emergency surgery resource allocation in the context of diminishing healthcare resources.

Daniel Chu, MD, MSPH, Secretary - Daniel I. Chu, MD, MSPH, is Professor, Director of the Division of Gastrointestinal Surgery, and Selwyn M. Vickers Endowed Chair 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. As a double-board certified colorectal surgeon, he 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.

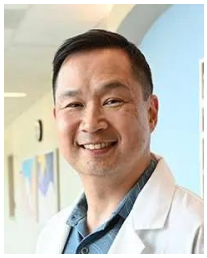
Jinny Ha, MD, MHS, Secretary-Elect - Jinny Ha, MD, MHS, is an assistant professor of surgery and thoracic surgeon at Johns Hopkins. She received her medical degree from the University of Virginia School of Medicine and completed her general surgery residency at the University of Maryland Medical Center. She is a graduate of the Johns Hopkins Cardiothoracic Surgery Fellowship and now serves as the Associate Program Director of the Johns Hopkins Cardiothoracic Surgery Fellowship Program. Dr. Ha treats a wide spectrum of both benign and malignant thoracic disease with a specialization in robotic or minimally invasive techniques. She has active research and clinical programs focused on surgical education, outcomes and health care delivery, and the cardiac sympathetic denervation.

Lindsay Kuo, MD, MBA, Treasurer - Lindsay Kuo, MD, MBA, is an endocrine surgeon and an Associate Professor of Surgery at the Lewis Katz School of Medicine at Temple University. She received her general surgery training at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania, followed by an endocrine surgery fellowship at Brigham and Women's Hospital. From there, she went on to found the endocrine surgery section at Temple University where she has built a robust, high-volume program. Dr. Kuo is also an Associate Program Director for the general surgery residency program, where she enjoys working with and mentoring residents.



Jennifer Kuo, MD, Recorder and Journal Editor - Jennifer H. Kuo, MD, is a board-certified surgeon-scientist nationally recognized for her expertise in the surgical treatment of thyroid, parathyroid, and adrenal diseases. Dr. Kuo is an accomplished, high-volume surgeon in minimally invasive surgical techniques, including trans-oral thyroidectomy and robotic adrenalectomy. She is one of the leading international experts in ultrasound-guided radiofrequency ablation of thyroid nodules and spearheaded the new Interventional Endocrinology program at Columbia. Dr. Kuo also serves as Program Director of the Endocrine Surgery Fellowship Program and the Endocrine Surgery Research program. Her research focuses on the use of predictive algorithms to improve and optimize care for endocrine patients, and is internationally recognized as a pioneer in the safe adoption

of new technology in surgical care. She serves as Associate Editor for the Journal of Surgical Research, and serves on the Editorial Board for The World Journal of Surgery and VideoEndocrinology. Her commitment to excellent, innovative, and personalized care has been repeatedly recognized by Super Doctors and New York Magazine's Top Doctor Awards.



Russell Woo, MD, Councilor-Active Member - Russell Woo, MD, is the Associate Dean for Clinical Programs at the University of Hawaii, John A. Burns School of Medicine and the Chief Academic Officer for the Hawaii Pacific Health Medical Group. He is a Professor of Surgery and Chief of the Division of Pediatric Surgery at JABSOM. Dr. Woo is a graduate of the University of Southern California Viterbi School of Engineering and 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, his scholarly interests center on pediatric surgical outcomes and medical technology innovation. He has made recognized contributions in the areas of surgical robotics, telehealth delivery of surgical care, and magnet based surgical therapies, and has an active research and teaching program aimed at developing new technologies to improve surgical care. Dr. Woo is a fellow of the American College of Surgeons and the American Academy of Pediatrics and is an active member of the American Pediatric Surgical Association and the Society of University Surgeons. Dr. Woo has served on the executive councils of the Association for Academic Surgery and the Society of Asian Academic Surgeons and serves on the Board of Governors for the American College of Surgeons and as a consultant for the American Board of Surgery.

Priyanka Chugh, MD, Councilor-Associate Member - Priyanka V. Chugh MD, MS is a general surgery resident at Boston University/Boston Medical Center. She is currently administrative chief resident and next year will enter fellowship in Pediatric Surgery at British Columbia Children's Hospital in Vancouver. She has a clinical interest in intestinal failure and recently completed a research fellowship at Boston Children's with the Center for Advanced Intestinal Rehabilitation (CAIR). She was awarded the Society of University Surgeons Resident Research Award for her project assessing Medication and Nutrition Adherence in Adolescents and Young Adults with Intestinal Failure. Additionally she has an interest in improving equity and inclusion for surgical trainees. She founded a group, Advancing Cultural Competency and Equity in Surgical Specialties, focused on supporting and advocating for surgical trainees of diverse backgrounds at Boston Medical Center. Work from this group has been published in *JAMA Surgery* and the *Journal of Surgical Education*.

Kenric M. Murayama, MD, MBA, Past-President, (2015-2016) - Kenric Murayama, MD, MBA, is Executive Vice President and Chief Health Officer for the Hawaii Medical Services Association (HMSA), Blue Cross Blue Shield of Hawaii. He recently retired as 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 completed his surgery training at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine. 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 was the inaugural President of the Society of Asian Academic Surgeons, President of the Southwestern Surgical Congress, and a longstanding Board member for the Society of American Gastrointestinal and Endoscopic Surgeons. Dr. Murayama is on the Board of Directors for the Blood Bank of Hawaii, having recently completed his term as Board Chair. 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, MS, MBA, FACS, is Professor of Surgery 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 Muma College of Business, and Associate Chief of Staff for Research and Development at the Bay Pines VA Healthcare System. A 1985 graduate of Johns Hopkins School of Medicine where he was inducted into Alpha Omega Alpha, Dr. Kuo completed his general surgery training at Brigham and Women's Hospital and fellowship in hepatobiliary and transplant surgery at BI-Deaconess Hospital. He spent three years as a postdoctoral research fellow at Harvard Medical School under the mentorship of Joseph Loscalzo, MD, PhD. Dr. Kuo previously served as Chairman of Surgery at the University of South Florida (2017-2022) and Loyola University Medical Center (2010-2017). A U.S. Army Reserve Colonel (Ret.) with deployments to Afghanistan, he is board-certified in general surgery, surgical critical care and clinical informatics. With over 440 peer-reviewed publications and an h-index of 80, Dr. Kuo's NIH-funded research focused on the molecular mechanisms of inflammation and cancer metastasis. He has pioneered work in clinical analytics and machine learning applications in surgery, founding the OnetoMAP analytics platform. His dedication to surgical education and innovation has earned him numerous multiple teaching awards.

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 Professor of Surgery Emerita at Boston University School of Medicine and Immediate Past Chair of Surgery and Surgeon-in-Chief at BU. Prior to being recruited to BU 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 140-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 is a Past-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. Dr Tseng has served 2018-2025 on the American Board of Surgery Council and as a Director of the Complex General Surgical Oncology Board. In 2025 she was appointed as a Trustee of the Ben and Rose Cole PRIA Pancreatic Cancer Research Foundation; became HPB Section Editor of Up-to-Date; joined Color Health Inc as an expert consultant, and became Clinical Professor of Surgery at Creighton University.

Tracy S. Wang, MD, MPH, Past President (2019-2021) - Tracy S. Wang, MD, MPH, FACS, is a Professor of Surgery and Vice-Chair of Strategic and Professional Development. She leads the Department's CAPTAINS (Career Advancement and Professional Training Academy IN Surgery) course. 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 serves as an Associate Editor for the American Journal of Surgery and on the Editorial Boards of World Journal of Surgery, Surgery, and VideoEndocrinology. She is the Treasurer of the Central Surgical Association, and its Representative to the American College of Surgeons' Board of Governors. She is the Chair of the Society of University Surgeons' JEDI Committee. She is on the Executive Council for the International Association of Endocrine Surgeons and Secretary of the AAES Foundation.

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.

Susan Tsai, MD, MHS, Past President (2022-2023) - Susan Tsai, MD, MHS, is a Professor and Chief of the Division of Surgical Oncology, Department of Surgery the Ohio State University. 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. Her research interests include blood-based biomarkers in pancreatic cancer and investigator-initiated clinical trials. She has over 140 peer-reviewed publications and has served on the Editorial Boards of the Annals of Surgical Oncology, Surgery, Journal of Gastrointestinal Surgery, and Surgical Oncology Insight.

Eugene S. Kim, MD, Past President (2023-2024) - 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 and Surgeon-in-Chief of Guerin Children's 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. Dr. Kim is a Past-President of the Association for Academic Surgery and has a passion for the mentorship and sponsorship of young academic surgeons.

Herbert Chen, MD, SAAS Foundation President - Herbert Chen, MD, 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 radioguided parathyroid surgery. Dr. Chen's lab studies thyroid and neuroendocrine cancers and has been received over $38 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 (AAES), President of Surgical Biology Club II, and President of the AAES Foundation. He is an Honorary Fellow of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons. Dr. Chen has mentored over 150 faculty, post-doctoral fellows, residents, medical students, and undergraduates in his lab. He has published over 730 original research and review articles and has edited 29 textbooks (H-index 94). He is well-known for his passion for teaching and mentoring the next generation of surgical leaders. Dr. Chen and his wife Harriet, a freelance photographer, reside in Mountain Brook, AL. His son Alex is psychiatry resident at John Hopkins while his daughter Liz is the digital content and user experience designer for the Southern Coalition for Social Justice.

Jinny Ha, MD, MHS, Program Committee Chair - 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 is a graduate of the Johns Hopkins Cardiothoracic Surgery Fellowship and now serves as the Associate Program Director of the Johns Hopkins Cardiothoracic Surgery Fellowship Program. Dr. Ha treats a wide spectrum of both benign and malignant thoracic disease with a specialization in robotic or minimally invasive techniques. She has active research and clinical programs focused on surgical education, outcomes and health care delivery, and the cardiac sympathetic denervation.

Gina Adrales, MD, MPH, Program Committee Vice Chair - Gina L. Adrales MD, MPH, FACS serves as Chief of the Division of the Minimally Invasive Surgery, Director of the Minimally Invasive Surgical Training and Innovation Center, Associate Director of the Bariatric Surgery Fellowship at The Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. Her areas of clinical expertise include minimally invasive gastrointestinal surgery with particular interest in comprehensive abdominal wall reconstruction, acid reflux and complex foregut surgery, gastroesophageal dysmotility, and obesity. Dr. Adrales is Co-Editor of the Textbook of Hernia. She served on the Executive Council of the American Hernia Society rising to serve the society as its first woman President. Dr. Adrales also serves as a faculty mentor for the Bloomberg School of Public Health and the Whiting School of Engineering, where she is an affiliate faculty member of the Malone Center for Engineering in Healthcare. A dedicated surgical educator, Dr. Adrales was inducted as an Associate member of the American College of Surgeons Academy of Master Surgeon Educators in 2022. She is currently the Director of Robotic Surgery Education for the Department of Surgery at Hopkins. Dr. Adrales' research interests include surgical education, simulation and machine learning, and clinical outcomes and healthcare disparity in minimally invasive surgery.

Ching-Wei Tzeng, MD, Chair, Scholarships Committee - Ching-Wei Tzeng, MD is a Professor of Surgical Oncology at MD Anderson Cancer Center, specializing in the treatment of hepato-pancreato-biliary (HPB) cancers. He is currently the Department Vice Chair for Education and HPB Fellowship Program Director, after previously serving as Vice Chair for Clinical Operations. He is the Chair of the SAAS Scholarship Committee and Vice Chair of the AHPBA Program Directors Committee. His research focuses on perioperative quality improvement, cancer surgery standards, and patient-centered opioid reduction clinical trials, for which he was named a 2021 Andrew Sabin Family Foundation Fellow. Dr. Tzeng is an educator dedicated to the training of fellows, residents, and students, and serves as Vice Chair of the institutional GME council. He has been recognized with the University of Texas Regents' Outstanding Teaching Award in 2021, and Department of Surgical Oncology Graduating Fellows' Teaching Award in 2018, 2020, 2022, 2023, and 2025.

Haejin In, MD, MBA, MPH, Chair, Communications Committee - Haejin In, MD, MBA, MPH, is a surgical oncologist specializing in upper gastrointestinal cancers and peritoneal surface malignancies. She serves as Chief and Associate Director of Strategic Excellence and Engagement at the Rutgers Cancer Institute. She previously held leadership roles as Chief Diversity Officer and Associate Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. Dr. In holds joint faculty appointments as Associate Professor of Surgery at Robert Wood Johnson Medical School and Associate Professor of Health, Behavior, and Policy at Rutgers School of Public Health. Her research focuses on identifying optimal strategies for early cancer detection and screening strategies for gastric cancer, and improving quality of care and reducing disparities among patients with gastrointestinal cancers. She is a founding member of the SAAS Communications Committee and currently serves as its Chair.

Raja R. Narayan, MD, MPH, SAAS Representative to the Association for Academic Surgery - Raja Narayan MD, MPH, is an Assistant Professor and Hepatopancreatobiliary Surgical Oncologist at Loma Linda University Health. He completed his graduate training at Yale, Surgery residency at Stanford, Postdoctoral Fellowship in Cancer Biology at Memorial Sloan Kettering, Surgical Oncology Fellowship at Harvard Medical School with Dana-Farber/Mass Gen Brigham, and an International Minimally Invasive Surgical Oncology Fellowship at Seoul National University Hospital in South Korea. He is an NCI-awarded cancer surgeon scientist whose research focuses on reprogramming aggressive molecular profiles of tumor biology to improve treatment response and learning curves of robotic oncology surgery.

Annabelle L. Fonseca, MD, MHS, SAAS Representative to the Association for Women in Surgery (AWS) - Annabelle L. Fonseca, MD, MHS, is an Associate Professor of Surgery at the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) with joint appointments at the UAB Institute for Cancer Outcomes and Survivorship, the Center for Clinical and Translational Science, and the Center for Outcomes and Effectiveness Research and Education. A fellowship-trained complex general surgical oncologist, Dr. Fonseca specializes in hepatopancreatobiliary and foregut malignancies. Her research, supported by the NIH and Department of Defense, uses implementation science to identify and address modifiable barriers to guideline-concordant care in foregut cancers, with a focus on improving access and outcomes for vulnerable populations.

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), Academic Surgical Congress (ASC), 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

Haejin In (Chair, 2023-2025)
Jessica Liu McMullin (Co-Chair, 2023-2025)
Carlos Chan (2023-2025)
Gopika Senthilkumar (2023-2025)
Christy Chai (2024-2026)
Suresh Agarwal (2024-2026)
Tammy Holm (2024-2026)
Sora Nithikasem (2024-2026)
Samir Gadepalli (2024-2026)
Terry Gao (2024-2026, Associate)
Julie Hong (2024-2026, Associate)
David Su (2024-2026, Associate)

Membership Committee

Russell Woo (Chair and Councilor-Active, 2024-2027)
Priyanka Chugh (Councilor-Associate, 2024-2026)
Sharven Taghavi (2023-2026)
Edward Auyang (2023-2025)
Yoshiko Iwai (2023-2026, Associate)
Radhika Rastogi (2023-2025, Associate)

Program Committee

Jinny Ha (Chair, 2023-2025)
Gina Adrales (Co-Chair, 2024-2026)
Mustafa Raoof (2025 Local Arrangements Co-Chair)
Yanghee Woo (2025 Local Arrangements Co-Chair)
Alex Bondoc (2026 Local Arrangements Co-Chair)
Sameer Patel (2026 Local Arrangements Co-Chair)
Zhi Ven Fong (2023-2025)
Amir Ghaferi (2023-2025)
Emily Keung (2023-2025)
Neal Bhutiani (2023-2025)
Lily Cheng (2024-2026)
Priya Dedhia (2024-2026)
Victoria Lai (2024-2026)

Hassan Aziz (2024-2026)
Connie Shao (2024-2026, Associate)
William Lee (2024-2026, Associate)

Publications Committee

Jennifer Kuo (Chair and Recorder, 2023-2026)
Steven Chao (2023-2025)
Romeo Ignacio (2023-2025)
Alex Kim (2023-2025)
William Lee (2023-2025)
Aimal Khan (2024-2026)
Thuy Tran (2024-2026)
Russell Witt (2024-2026)
Ravi Radhakrishnan (2024-2026)
Jeffrey Velotta (2024-2026)
Jessica Zagory (2024-2026)
Zhixing Song (2024-2026, Associate)

Scholarships Committee

Ching-Wei Tzeng (Chair, 2024-2026)
Jiping Wang (2023-2025)
Syed Nabeel Zafar (2023-2025)
Raja Narayan (2023-2025)
Christy Chai (2024-2026)
Jeremy Chang (2024-2026)
Oliver Eng (2024-2026)
Aarti Mathur (2024-2026)
Zhi Ven Fong (2024-2026)

SAAS Foundation Visiting Professors

The **Society of Asian Academic Surgeons Fund 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.

2025-2026

Pasithorn Amy Suwanabol, MD (University of Michigan)
University of Hawaii
Paul C. Kuo, DMD MD and Leslie A. Will, DMD MSD VP (endowed by Lindsay Kuo, MD, MBA)

Lily Cheng, MD (University of Virginia)
University of Cincinnati
Kuan-Tiao VP (endowed by Greg Tiao, MD)

Hassan Aziz, MD (University of Iowa)
Roswell Park
Sui-An and Shu-Nung Fung VP (endowed by John Fung, MD, PhD)

Zhi Ven Fong, MD, DrPH (Mayo Clinic Arizona)
City of Hope
City of Hope VP (endowed by Yuman Fong, MD)

Samir Gadepalli, MD (University of Michigan)
University of Virginia
Pei-Nan and Lita Tsung VP (endowed by Allan Tsung, MD)

Syed Nabeel Zafar, MD, MPH (University of Wisconsin)
University of Colorado
Kuo Family SAAS VP (endowed by Paul Kuo, MD)

Emily Huang, MD, MAEd (Ohio State)
Cedars Sinai
Ten Chao and Chen Hu Chu VP (endowed by Daniel Chu, MD)

Minna Wieck, MD (University of California Davis)
University of Miami
Gosain Family VP (endowed by Ankush Gosain, MD, PhD, MBA)

In Memory of George Yang, MD, PhD

George Yang, MD, PhD, 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.

SAAS Award Winners

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
2024	Sandra L. Wong, MD, MS – Emory University

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
2024	Jeremy Chang, MD, MS - University of Iowa
2025	Areeba Saif, MD - UTHealth McGovern Medical School

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
2024	Zhi Ven Fong, MD – Mayo Clinic Arizona
2025	Raja Narayan, MD, MPH – Loma Linda University

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
2024	Radhika Rastogi, MD (Presenting author)
	Zequan Yang ,MD (Senior author)
	University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA
2025	Sarah Peiffer, MD (Presenting author)
	Alice King, MD (Senior author)
	Baylor College of Medicine, 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, MD (presenting author)
	Amy Pasithorn Suwanabol, MD (senior author)
	University of Michigan
2021	Serena Day, MD (presenting author)
	Benzon Dy, MD (senior author)
	Mayo Clinic
2022	Jaewon Lee, MD (presenting author)
	Paola Guerrero, MD (senior author)
	UT MD Anderson/Cedars Sinai
2023	Jeremy Chang, MD (presenting author)

	Colin P. Kenny, MD (senior author) University of Iowa
2024	Yanghee Woo, MD (presenting author) City of Hope
2025	Thinzar Lwin, MD (presenting author) City of Hope

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, MBA - UT Memphis
2024	Sai Yendamuri, MD, MBA - Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center
2025	Jennifer Kuo, MD, MS – Columbia University

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
2024	Christy Chai, MD - Baylor College of Medicine
2025	Jeffrey Velotta, MD - Kaiser Permanente

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
2024	Kim de la Cruz, MD - UVA Health
2025	Tejal Brahmbhatt, MD – Cedars-Sinai

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
2024	Priyanka Chugh, MD - Boston University/Boston Medical Center
2025	Chuner Guo, MD, PhD – Stanford University

AWS - SAAS Joint Sponsored Travel Award

Sponsored by AWS and SAAS, this award funds a $750 travel grant supporting attendance of a resident at the AWS Annual Conference.

2023	Gopika SenthilKumar, MD, PhD – Medical College of Wisconsin
2024	Jyi Cheng Ng, MD – Mayo Clinic
2025	Sonal Swain, MD - Weill Cornell Medical College

Local Hosts

Yuman Fong, MD, The Sangiacomo Family Chair in Surgical Oncology, Chair, Department of Surgery, City of Hope - Yuman Fong, MD is a world leader in cancer care and innovation. As chair of the Department of Surgery at City of Hope Cancer Center Duarte and holder of the Sangiacomo Family Chair in Surgical Oncology, he's known globally for his expertise in treating cancers of the liver, pancreas, gallbladder, and bile ducts. He's also at the forefront of groundbreaking research, working to use specially engineered viruses to attack and destroy cancer cells. Before joining City of Hope in 2014, Dr. Fong spent over 20 years at the prestigious Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in New York City. In addition to being a gifted surgeon, Dr. Fong is also an inventor and author. He has created new surgical tools and techniques, written hundreds of medical articles, and edited nearly a dozen textbooks used by doctors around the world.

Mustafa Raoof, MD, MS, Assistant Professor, City of Hope - Mustafa Raoof, MD, MS, joined City of Hope in 2015, where he focuses on the surgical treatment of cancers within the abdominal cavity, particularly those from the liver, bile ducts, pancreas and the gastrointestinal tract. Additionally, Dr. Raoof has expertise in treating cancers that have spread to involve the liver or the peritoneum. At City of Hope, Dr. Raoof is part of one of the largest programs in the region performing complex cytoreductive surgery and hyperthermic intraperitoneal chemotherapy for cancers that have disseminated within the abdominal cavity. He also has vast experience in providing all aspects of surgical care to patients whose cancer has spread to the liver. In addition to clinical practice, Dr. Raoof conducts laboratory research focusing on DNA repair mechanisms in cancers. He is particularly interested in pancreatic cancer that has been very challenging to treat. By identifying and characterizing DNA repair processes that help cancer cells escape the toxic effects of chemotherapy, he is working to develop better targets for future therapies. Dr. Raoof received his medical degree from Pakistan's Aga Khan University, then came to the U.S. where he continued his training at Harvard University, Yale University, MD Anderson Cancer Center and University of Arizona. He is the author of dozens of peer-reviewed papers that have been published in leading scientific journals, including Nature, Journal of National Cancer Institute and Biomaterials. Dr. Raoof is the recipient of several honors and awards, most notably, the National Comprehensive Cancer Network's Young Investigator Award, and the Pancreatic Cancer Action Network's Career Development Award. Dr. Raoof's mission is to deliver complex surgical oncology care with expertise and compassion, as well as to develop new therapies for patients with gastrointestinal cancers. To that end, he chose City of Hope for its "culture of scientific discovery that accelerates adaptation of groundbreaking treatments to clinical cancer care."

Yanghee Woo, MD, Associate Professor, City of Hope - Yanghee Woo, MD, a Professor of Surgery at City of Hope Comprehensive Cancer Center is dedicated surgeon scientist and an international thought leader in robotic surgery and gastric cancer. At City of Hope, Dr. Woo has a unique high volume gastric cancer practice that offers a spectrum of surgical treatments including robotic gastrectomy, D2 lymphadenectomy, peritoneal directed therapies and surgical palliation within a comprehensive cancer care model to an ethnically enriched and diverse patient population in the U.S. She also serves as the Vice Chair of International Affairs and the Director of Minimally Invasive Therapies. Dr. Woo has risen to leadership in her field with a unique global perspective and cutting-edge expertise that has brought the best of surgical innovation and medical advancements for the cure and care of gastric cancer patients. With the vision of a GC free society, Dr. Woo spearheads a transformative Gastric Cancer Program including the translational research efforts aimed at eliminating deaths due GC. Her research includes the identification of immune biomarkers of gastric cancer, the translation of novel therapeutic agents such as oncolytic viruses, and safely integrating novel surgical technologies in cancer care. Dr. Woo has been funded by the NIH, Department of Defense, and SU2C. Her most recent grants by KURE Foundation, Cherng Family Foundation and generous donations will assess identify high-risk individuals for endoscopic screening for GC, investigate immune enhancing effects of mushroom extracts in advanced gastric cancer patients undergoing surgery, and offer the first PIPAC trial dedicated to stomach cancer patients in the U.S. Her on-going contributions to her field are reflected in the growing number of peer-reviewed publications, development of early phase clinical trials, textbooks, and invited lectures. Dr. Woo is a founding member of the G6+ International Gastric Cancer Collaborative Study Group, the U.S. Gastric Cancer Disparities Initiative, and the Social Determinants of Health Care Disparities Workgroup at City of Hope. Her leadership roles in medical societies including currently being on the Executive Committee of the ISSPP, formal member of the KAMA board of directors and the immediate past president of KAGMA. She is often sought as a faculty educator for many surgical societies including ACS, SSO, and SSAT and invited to lecture at numerous international meetings worldwide. She is also an active member of ASGCT, AACR, ASCO, and IGCC. Her pioneering spirit and steadfast dedication to eliminating cancer care disparities were recognized with the “Illuminator Award” by Hope for Stomach Cancer and the “Community Leader in Medicine Award” by the KAFLA. Most importantly, she is loved by her patients as an amazing surgeon, compassionate doctor, and an advocate who is passionate about diversity in clinical trials and an outspoken about cancer care equity for AANHPI and Hispanic communities. Dr. Yanghee Woo will continue to bring us closer to a cancer free society as she strives to live up to her name which means bright (YANG) hope (HEE).

Speakers

Kui and Wai Fong Keynote Lectureship

The Kui and Wai Fong lectureship honors all parents who have supported the careers and success of academic surgeons.

Mark Zhang, DO, MMSc, FAMIA

Chief, Office of Healthcare Innovation and Learning
U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs

Innovation in Healthcare: From the Community to AMCs to VA

Haipeng (Mark) Zhang, DO, MMSc, FAMIA, previously was the Associate Chief Medical Information Officer of Digital Innovation and the Medical Director of the Digital Innovation Hub at Brigham and Women's Hospital, Associate Program Director of the Clinical Informatics and Innovation Fellowship at Mass General Brigham, Palliative Care consultant at Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, and Instructor of Medicine at Harvard Medical School.

He is the founder of Palliative Care Fast Facts for iOS and Android mobile applications, the co-founder of Cake, a venture backed company focused on advance care planning, and also founded and was the first president of American Medical Informatics Association Clinical Informatics Fellows (ACIF), the national organization for clinical informatics fellows. He also founded and is the president of the American Medical Extended Reality Association (AMXRA), the medical society for medical extended reality.
In his previous role as a leader in digital health implementation and digital innovation at Mass General Brigham, Dr. Zhang has created award-winning applications including COVID Pass and Mass General Brigham Prescreen.

Kuo Family Lectureship

The Kuo Family Lectureship was endowed by past SAAS President Paul C. Kuo, MD, MBA, to recognize and pay tribute to his family. This annual lectureship has often featured innovative talks by speakers who have been outside of medicine. This has included: Joanne Chang, Chef and Co-Owner of Flour Bakery + Café; Debbie Lum, Filmmaker (Documentary-Try Harder!); Jason Kalirai, PhD, Mission Area Executive for Civil Space in the Space Exploration Sector of the Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Laboratory (APL); and Patricia Park, Author of Re Jane, Imposter Syndrome & Other Confessions of Alejandra Kim, and What's Eating Jackie Oh?.

Jackie Wong

Associate Partner and Senior Expert
McKinsey & Company
Inclusive Leadership in the Workplace

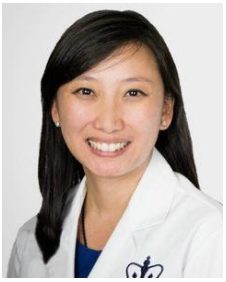
Jackie Wong is an Associate Partner and Senior Expert at McKinsey & Company, serving clients in talent, leadership, and diversity, equity & inclusion. He leads a variety of DEI research at McKinsey, including Asian American workers: Diversity outcomes and hidden challenges and the Race in the Workplace series. Jackie holds an MBA from The Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania, a Master of Architecture from the University of Pennsylvania School of Design, and a B.A. in economics and urban studies from Stanford University.

Professional Development Session: Rethinking Success in Surgery: Reconciling Personal and Professional Expectations

Heather Brod, MA, PCC, Heather Brod, LLC - Heather Brod is an executive coach, consultant, and author with deep experience in higher education, healthcare, and professional services. She helps leaders and teams clarify what matters, shift unhelpful habits, and take action that aligns with their values, goals, and environments. Her book, The Insider's Pocket Guide to Navigating a Faculty Career in Academic Medicine (Springer, 2024), offers a coaching-based approach to building fulfilling, sustainable careers.

Moderator: Emily Keung, MD, AM - 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.

Panelist: Eugene S. Kim, MD - 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 and Surgeon-in-Chief of Guerin Children's 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. Dr. Kim is a Past-President of the Association for Academic Surgery and has a passion for the mentorship and sponsorship of young academic surgeons.



Panelist: Jennifer Kuo, MD - Jennifer H. Kuo, MD, is a board-certified surgeon-scientist nationally recognized for her expertise in the surgical treatment of thyroid, parathyroid, and adrenal diseases. Dr. Kuo is an accomplished, high-volume surgeon in minimally invasive surgical techniques, including trans-oral thyroidectomy and robotic adrenalectomy. She is one of the leading international experts in ultrasound-guided radiofrequency ablation of thyroid nodules and spearheaded the new Interventional Endocrinology program at Columbia. Dr. Kuo also serves as Program Director of the Endocrine Surgery Fellowship Program and the Endocrine Surgery Research program. Her research focuses on the use of predictive algorithms to improve and optimize care for endocrine patients, and is internationally recognized as a pioneer in the safe adoption of new technology in surgical care. She serves as Associate Editor for the Journal of Surgical Research, and serves on the Editorial Board for The World Journal of Surgery and VideoEndocrinology. Her commitment to excellent, innovative, and personalized care has been repeatedly recognized
by Super Doctors and New York Magazine's Top Doctor Awards.

Panelist: Minerva Romero Arenas, MD, MPH - Minerva A. Romero Arenas is an Endocrine & General Surgeon at New York Presbyterian Brooklyn Methodist Hospital. She is an Assistant Professor of Surgery at Weill Cornell Medical College. She is the Assistant Director for Clinical Care and Research at the Office of Access & Excellence of the Meyer Cancer Center. She is the first President and a Founding Member of the Latino Surgical Society. Her interests include benign and oncologic endocrine neoplasms, hereditary syndromes, health disparities, quality improvement, global health, and genomics. A native of Mexico City, Mexico, Dr. Romero Arenas is passionate about recruiting the next generation of surgeons and is involved in mentoring through various organizations.

Upcoming Meetings

September 10-11, 2026
Cincinnati Children's and University of Cincinnati
Cincinnati, OH
Local Host: David Gerber, MD, Chair, Department of Surgery
Local Arrangements Chairs: Sameer Patel, MD and Alexander Bondoc, MD

September 9-10, 2027
University of Hawaii
Honolulu, HI
Local Host: Thomas Read, MD, Chair, Department of Surgery
Local Arrangements Chair: Russell Woo, MD and Dean Mikami, MD

September 6-8, 2028
University of Chicago
Chicago, IL
Local Host: Jeffrey Matthews, MD, Chair, Department of Surgery
Local Arrangements Chairs: Yalini Vigneswaran, MD and Chelsea Dorsey, MD

American Journal of Surgery (AJS)

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