

2016 New Faculty



Kathleen Berfield, MD

Dr. Berfield is an Assistant Professor in the Division of Cardiothoracic Surgery and specializes in Thoracic surgery. She is based primarily at the VA Puget Sound Health Care System but also practices at Northwest Hospital & Medical Center and the University of Washington Medical Center. Dr. Berfield received her medical degree and completed her Cardiothoracic Surgery Residency at the University of Washington and is a native of the Pacific Northwest. Her clinical interests are in General Thoracic surgery, end stage lung disease and lung transplantation. She also has an interest in medical student and resident education and previously served as a representative to the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) and the Thoracic Surgery Residents Association (TSRA). She firmly believes that everybody is unique and treatment must be tailored to each patient and their individual goals of care. Dr. Berfield strives to make thoracic surgery easily accessible and understandable to the many Veterans who rely on the VA Puget Sound Health Care System for their health care needs. When not in the hospital, she likes to spend time with her family and explore the Pacific Northwest.



Greta Bernier, MD

Dr. Bernier is an Acting Assistant Professor in the Division of General Surgery with additional fellowship-trained expertise in colon and rectal surgery. She has particular interest in minimally invasive approaches to treat these diseases, and specializes in the full breadth of colon & rectal surgery, including anorectal disease, diverticular disease, inflammatory bowel disease, colorectal cancer and diseases of the pelvic floor. Dr. Bernier received her undergraduate degree from the University of San Diego and completed both medical school and general surgery residency at the University of Washington. She then traveled to Tampa, FL to complete her Colon & Rectal Surgery Fellowship at the University of South Florida. Dr. Bernier is board certified through the American Board of Surgery (ABS) and is a member of the American College of Surgeons (ACS) and the American Society of Colon & Rectal Surgeons (ASCRS). She sees patients at the Seattle Cancer Care Alliance (SCCA) and the UW Medicine Eastside Specialty Center, and operates at the University of Washington Medical Center. She and her husband are both from the Pacific Northwest, and they are thrilled to have returned to Seattle with their two young daughters. In her free time, Dr. Bernier enjoys camping, skiing, all water sports and activities, and spending time with friends and loved ones.



Dennis Kao, MD

Dr. Kao is an Assistant Professor in the Plastic Surgery Division and practices at Harborview Medical Center and UW Medicine Northwest Hospital & Medical Center. Dr. Kao earned his bachelor's degree from the University of Washington, and his medical degree from the University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston. He then completed plastic surgery residency and hand surgery fellowship at the Medical College of Wisconsin in Milwaukee. Following his training in hand and microsurgery, he completed an additional fellowship at Chang-Gung Hospital in Taiwan, focusing on reconstructive microsurgery and brachial plexus injury. Dr. Kao is experienced in treating common hand problems such as carpal tunnel syndrome and finger fractures, as well as complex hand issues such as finger replantation, toe-to-hand transfer, and brachial plexus reconstruction. He is fluent in English, Mandarin, and Taiwanese.

Dr. Kao is board certified in Plastic Surgery, with added qualification in hand surgery. He is a member of the American Society for Surgery of the Hand (ASSH), as well as the American Society of Plastic Surgeons (ASPS).



Pablo Sanchez, MD

Dr. Sanchez is an Acting Assistant Professor of Cardiothoracic Surgery; Section of Thoracic Surgery. He is the Associate Director of the ECMO program at Harborview Medical Center and a member of the Lung Transplant Team at the University of Washington Medical Center. He recently moved from the University of Maryland where he was a member of the Cardiothoracic Transplant and MCS/ECMO Team. During his time at the University of Maryland he participated in the creation of the Lung Recovery Unit (LRU), a specialized VV ECMO unit within Shock Trauma for the treatment of respiratory failure. At the University of Maryland, he led the Ex Vivo Perfusion Laboratory and was part of team that performed the first Ex Vivo Lung Perfusion Transplant in the United States in 2012.

Dr. Sanchez attended Medical School at the Universidad Nacional de Cordoba in Argentina. He underwent Thoracic Surgery training at the Pavilhao Pereira Filho, Santa Casa de Porto Alegre, Brazil. He also underwent a research fellowship at University of Pennsylvania and undertook a clinical fellowship at the University of Maryland.

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Janelle Sousa, MD

Dr. Sousa is an Assistant Professor in the Division of Plastic Surgery at the University of Washington Medical Center. She offers a full range of plastic and reconstructive surgery, specializing in reconstructive microsurgery of the head & neck, extremities, and breast. Dr. Sousa was born and raised

in Anchorage, Alaska, then completed her undergraduate studies, medical school, and plastic surgery residency at the University of Washington. She completed a fellowship in Reconstructive Microsurgery at The Royal Melbourne Hospital in Melbourne, Australia. Outside of the hospital, Dr. Sousa loves spending time with her husband and son, running with her dog, Georgia, cooking, and enjoying all of the outdoor activities Seattle offers.



Nicole Zern, MD

Dr. Zern is an Acting Assistant Professor in the Division of General Surgery practicing at the UW Medical Center, the Seattle Cancer Care Alliance (SCCA) and the UW Medicine Eastside Specialty Center. She specializes in endocrine surgery including benign and malignant thyroid disease, para-

thyroid disease and adrenal tumors. She completed medical school at Emory University in Atlanta, GA and then moved west to Seattle for general surgical residency. She has just returned after a year of Endocrine Surgery Fellowship in Sydney, Australia. Dr. Zern is originally from the Midwest but now considers Seattle home. She is an active member of the American College of Surgeons (ACS) and the American Association of Endocrine Surgeons (AAES). Outside of surgical practice, Dr. Zern enjoys travelling with her husband, David, spending time with friends and she is an avid college football and basketball fan.

67th Annual Strauss Lecture



Dr. Robert S.D. Higgins

The 67th Annual Strauss Lecture was held on Friday, October 14th, 2016. Dr. **Robert S.D. Higgins**, William Stewart Halsted Professor of Surgery, Surgeon-in-Chief at Johns Hopkins Medicine, and Director of the Department of Surgery at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, was the invited lecturer. His topic was “Surgery in the Next Millennium...Honoring the Past and Creating a Sustainable Future Now.”

Before joining Johns Hopkins in July 2015, Dr. Higgins was the Surgeon-in-Chief and Director of the Comprehensive Transplant Center at Wexner Medical Center at The Ohio State University. He has held leadership positions at various organizations, including President of the United Network for Organ Sharing, Treasurer of the Society of Thoracic Surgeons, President of the Society of Black Academic Surgeons, and President and founding member of the Association of Black Cardiovascular and Thoracic Surgeons. Dr. Higgins is a leading authority in the field of heart and lung transplantation, and coronary artery bypass surgery. His research includes: the mechanisms of cell injury in failing hearts; health economics and policy; and, the impact of racial disparities on surgical outcomes.

The Strauss Lecture is supported by the **Alfred A. Strauss MD, Endowed Lectureship in Surgery**, established by the estate of Mrs. Margery Friedlander, daughter of Dr. Strauss. Dr. Strauss possessed a rare combination of skill, vision, and drive. The lectureship carries on the visions and traditions of this inspiring man.

Preceding the Strauss Lecture was the Harkins Surgical Symposium for Resident Education. Presenters at this year’s Symposium included:

- **Tam Pham**, MD, Associate Professor, Division of Trauma, Burn, and Critical Care Medicine—“*Telehealth Initiatives in the Burn Center*”
- **Joseph Cuschieri**, MD, Professor, Division of Trauma, Burn, and Critical Care Medicine—“*Hypothermia, Coagulopathy, and Acidosis: The Evolving Vicious Triad*”
- **Rebecca Petersen**, MD, Clinical Assistant Professor, Division of General Surgery—“*Updated Algorithm for Abdominal Wall Reconstruction*”
- **Greta Bernier**, MD, Acting Assistant Professor, Division of General Surgery—“*Transanal Minimally Invasive Surgery (TAMIS)*”

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