

A Historical Perspective on Research in the Department of Surgery: A Constant During Changing Times



Since 1974, the University of Washington has annually received the highest amount of federal research funding among public universities and the second highest among all public and private universities in the United States. The Department of Surgery is a full participant in this strong scientific culture and considers research to be one of its priorities. Our departmental research enterprise is thriving, in no small part due to the talent, perseverance, and collaborative philosophy of our faculty members.

Our current successes are built on a solid research foundation established since the beginning of our department. The University of Washington (UW) School of Medicine opened in 1946. The first Chairman of the Department of Surgery was Dr. Henry N. Harkins, recruited from Johns Hopkins University. Dr. Harkins brought with him the strong tradition of research from Johns Hopkins, with his own focus on gastrointestinal physiology. New impetus to the department's research activities arrived in the 1970's with Dr. Eugene Strandness, who worked with colleagues in Bioengineering to develop ultrasonic duplex scanning for the diagnosis of vascular disorders. Drs. Alexander Clowes and Ronald Maier in the 1980's expanded the departmental research program with projects in vascular biology and inflammation. Current research interests in the department are broad and include outcomes research, infection, ischemia reperfusion, transplantation, gastrointestinal physiology, vascular biology and imaging, developing, applying and evaluating new advanced laparoscopic techniques, and research on education.

The past decade has produced a substantial growth of research activity in the Department of Surgery, as measured by expenditures from extramural support and dedicated floor space. From 2002 to 2009, total annual expenditures in the Department of Surgery from extramural sources of support grew by 27%, from \$8,124,636 to \$10,335,338. From 2003 to 2010, the amount of designated space for research grew by 32%. The increase during this period came largely from the new multidisciplinary state-of-the-art research space in the Brotman Building at the UW South Lake Union research facility. Aside from simple square footage, the number of sites where Department of Surgery research is now conducted has increased. From a single row of laboratories along the Department of Surgery hallway in the Health Sciences Building, our research units are now found at Harborview Medical Center, the Veterans Affairs Puget Sound Health Care System ("the VA"), the Surgery Pavilion at UW Medical Center, the UW South Lake Union facility, Seattle Children's Hospital, and the University District Building near the UW campus.

Research conducted in the Department of Surgery has also grown in its complexity and collaborative nature. This is demonstrated by the creation of individual research centers that serve not only our own department, but also encompass other departments throughout the UW School of Medicine. In this issue of *Research in the Department of Surgery*, we are introducing a new section to highlight the work of these research centers. This year we feature two of these entities, the Institute for Simulation and Interprofessional Studies (ISIS) and the Surgical Outcomes Research Center (SORCE), both of which have experienced remarkable growth since their inception.

Overseeing research activity in the Department of Surgery has been Dr. Alexander Clowes, who has served as Vice Chairman for Research since 1993. Dr. Clowes has recently relinquished this post, and we give him our utmost thanks for his leadership in raising our research program to its present high level. Dr. David Flum has accepted the task of guiding the Department of Surgery's research activities through the next few years. As Director of SORCE, Dr. Flum is uniquely positioned to expand our program in outcomes research, as well as to help our department meet the challenges and opportunities presented by changes in research funding and regulation. Dr. Flum states, "In the context of this emerging landscape, I look forward to helping the department and its researchers maintain and grow the research portfolio and make the UW Department of Surgery the best in the nation for surgical research."

Changes in the Department of Surgery have come with leadership transitions, medical advances, technological progress, and economic developments. But throughout all these changes, our department's focus on research as part of our three-part mission of patient care, teaching, and research has remained a constant. While this report highlights our research activities, our faculty members are equally dedicated to relaying their knowledge to the next generation of surgeons. Ultimately, our research and teaching serve to provide the best and most up-to-date care possible for our patients. If you would like to support us in our mission, please contact Lynn K. Hogan, Associate Vice President and Chief Advancement Officer, UW Medicine Advancement, at (206) 543-6865 or lhogan@u.washington.edu.

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