

# DIVERSITY IN THE DEPARTMENT OF SURGERY

Dr. Estell Williams, Assistant Professor, Division of General Surgery



The Department of Surgery in collaboration with the UW Center for Leadership & Innovation in Medical Education (CLIME), Center for Equity Diversity and Inclusion (CEDI) and UW Medicine Health Equity Office, sponsored a two-day visit to University of Washington this June by Dr. **Rachel Hardeman** (pictured left) and Dr. **Eduardo Medina** (pictured right). The extensive schedule included a considerable amount of educational and academic discourse, scholarly evidence and critical theory shared by Drs. Hardeman and Medina regarding racism in medicine and its impact on health disparities. The many difficult but necessary conversations greatly enhanced our institution's understanding of these issues.

The event opened with a CLIME symposium and research "hackathon" at Talaris Conference Center. The event was at full capacity and

featured amazing research topics and projects targeting efforts to not only improve our understanding around bias and disparities within our health system, but also ways in which we can and are working to improve our health system. This symposium featured representation from departments across the UW Medicine Health System, fostering interdepartmental collaboration and creation of an environment conducive to effectively tapping into the large "brain trust" here at UW. The Department of Surgery-sponsored reception was a wonderful culmination to the first day, with many community members, students, faculty, and staff in attendance. A closed conversation with Dr. Hardeman entitled "Fighting Racism and Improving our Health: A Discussion for Black Women by Black Women" exceeded attendance expectations, requiring a last minute room change. The discussion, which will now be a regularly occurring event, sparked collaboration among UW black women faculty and staff and offered a space for support to combat feelings of isolation, thus promoting wellness and offering interdepartmental partnership. The visit culminated in a stirring Grand Rounds entitled "Structural Racism and Clinical Practice: Challenges and Opportunities."

The Diversity Council would like to thank Dr. **Douglas Wood**, The Henry N. Harkins Professor and Chair, and the Department of Surgery for their leadership and commitment to addressing issues around racism and inequities within our institution and by leading the charge so that UW can be a thought leader and pioneer in addressing these issues and advancing health care for all people. If you would like to learn more about Dr. Hardeman and her work please visit her website <https://www.rachelhardeman.com>.

## HARKINS' CORNER



Dr. Nicole Zern

Hello all!

The new academic year is off and running, and we are busy in preparation for the annual Harkins' Alumni Society fall events. Please mark your calendars for the following events and join us if you can!

The **Annual Harkins Symposium** for resident education will be held on **Friday, October 11, 2019** in the Hogness Auditorium in the Magnuson Health Sciences Building. The symposium will again feature department faculty presenting the latest updates and advances in their field. The symposium will be followed by the **Strauss Lecture**, presented this year by Dr. Valerie Rusch, MD, FACS. Dr. Rusch is a renowned alumnus of our general and cardiothoracic surgical training programs, and we are thrilled she is returning to Seattle for this event.

Please join us for our annual Harkins' Alumni Banquet following the symposium. This year we return to Ivar's Salmon House on beautiful Lake Union. The event will begin at 5:30 pm and will include dinner and drinks with fellow alumni, as well as our current chief residents in general, cardiothoracic, plastic and vascular surgery. Tickets will be available for purchase on the Harkins society website <http://www.harkinssociety.org> beginning in September.

The UW Harkins Alumni Reception at the American College of Surgeons Clinical Congress in San Francisco, CA will be held on **Tuesday, October 29, 2019, 6-9 pm**. We have selected a local "book-themed" bar for our annual alumni get-together at the ACS meeting. Novela is within walking distance of the conference center and will be a great chance to connect with your fellow UW alumni in a trendy San Francisco setting!

We are also excited to announce some changes to the Harkins' Alumni Society membership structure. In keeping with national trends, we will no longer be charging membership dues. Alternatively, all alumni of our surgical training programs are automatically granted membership into the society upon graduation, which is traditionally conferred at the annual reception in October. We hope this will enable our large and diverse group of alumni to remain active in the society by participating in our annual fall events. We continue to work to maintain our alumni database, and will do our best to keep everyone involved in fostering our training programs at UW!

Sincerely,

Nicole Zern, MD, FACS  
Harkins Society President