

CARDIOTHORACIC
GENERAL
MINIMAL INVASIVE
PEDIATRIC HEART
PEDIATRIC
PLASTIC & RECONSTRUCTIVE
SURGICAL ONCOLOGY
THORACIC
TRANSPLANT
TRAUMA & CRITICAL CARE
VASCULAR



THE STITCH

The Newsletter of the
Department of Surgery



AUGUSTA UNIVERSITY
**MEDICAL COLLEGE
OF GEORGIA**

September 2025



Chatter with the Chair

The Team theme continues!

We have added some great new faculty to our team as outlined in this month's newsletter.

Dr. Fagenson is joining the Transplant team, Dr. Greenberg joins the Trauma team, and Dr. McKenzie joins the MIS team. Dr. Ingram provides some relief for the hard working Pediatric surgery team. Lastly, Dr. Gearhart is bringing her colo-rectal expertise to the Surgical Oncology team as that division continues to grow. All these new faculty were recruited by a great team of faculty residents and staff who make our department a great place to work and learn. Welcome new members!

This Surgery team had also delivered some great results in recent state meetings. Our residents and students represented the department well at the Georgia Society for the American College of

Surgeons (GSACS) winning 1st and 2nd place prizes in 4 categories. Our residents and students also had a great showing at the Georgia Vascular Society including best resident and student presentations while our own Vascular Chief, Dr. Gautam Agarwal served as president. While these prizes recognize a single winner, the victories are won through the collaborative efforts of our team. Thank you to all who contributed to this success.

Dr. Erika Mabes is leading another team as she and other MCG members deliver trauma education around the state. Our own Georgia Trauma commission has provided funding to help us deliver the message and train the emergency personnel in smaller hospitals. A great team that works to improve trauma care around our state – to meet the needs of every area, including those rural areas where

trauma care can be even more challenging. Congrats to this team too.

Finally, send an extra congratulations to our Chief Resident, Lillie Tien, who matched into a Trauma fellowship at Broward Health.

I encourage you to dive deeper into the pictures and prose to get more details about these wins.

William D Jordan, Jr., MD
Professor and Chair,
Department of Surgery
Medical College of Georgia
Surgeon in Chief



AFFILIATED WITH MEDICAL COLLEGE OF GEORGIA

NEW FACULTY

■ **Alexander Fagenson, MD**, Assistant Professor, Transplant Surgery, joins us following fellowship training in Abdominal Organ Transplantation and Hepatobiliary Surgery at Mount Sinai Hospital's Recanati/Miller Transplantation Institute. His clinical expertise will significantly enhance our capabilities in complex liver, kidney, and hepatobiliary surgery, further strengthening our transplant surgery program.

■ **Susan Gearhart, MD, MEHP**, Professor and Director of Colorectal Surgery in Surgical Oncology, comes to us from Johns Hopkins University, where she served as Professor and Chief of the Division of Colorectal Surgery. She is an internationally recognized leader in colorectal cancer surgery and surgical education. Her leadership will advance the growth of our colorectal program, expand mentorship opportunities, and foster academic excellence within the department.

■ **Shannon Greenberg, MD**, Assistant Professor, Trauma, Critical Care, and Acute Care Surgery, recently completed a fellowship in Surgical Critical Care and Acute Care Surgery at Indiana University School of Medicine, following her General Surgery residency at Loma Linda University. She brings strong expertise in the management of critically ill and injured patients and will be a key contributor to the education and training of residents and fellows in trauma and acute care surgery.

■ **Martha Ingram, MD**, Assistant Professor, Pediatric Surgery, comes to us after completing her fellowship at Arkansas Children's Hospital in Little Rock, Arkansas. She brings specialized expertise in complex pediatric surgical care and minimally invasive approaches to children's health.

■ **J. Andrew McKenzie, MD, MBA**, Assistant Professor, Minimally Invasive and Bariatric Surgery, completed an Advanced GI Minimally Invasive and Bariatric Surgery Fellowship at Vanderbilt University, following his General Surgery residency here at the Medical College of Georgia. His appointment expands our capabilities in advanced laparoscopic, robotic, and bariatric surgery, and he will contribute to innovation in minimally invasive surgical techniques as well as surgical education.



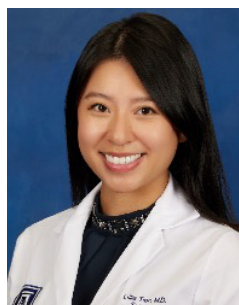
NEW COURSE

Dr. Mables launched the new **Rural Interactive Trauma Surgery course (The RITS)** in partnership with the Georgia Trauma Commission, on August 29 at Wellstar Douglas Medical Center in Douglasville, GA, with an outstanding turnout.

Over 30 providers attended, with 20 officially registered participants, representing a broad range of disciplines across the trauma team. This milestone was made possible through the support of our newly established Surgical Education and Simulation Research Fellowship, with inaugural fellow Dr. Zack Aldaher joining Dr. Erika Simmerman Mables, Director of Surgical Simulation and Research Fellowship Program Director, in facilitating the course.

In collaboration with the Medical College of Georgia, we were proud to offer Continuing Medical Education (CME) credit for all participants. The training was extremely well received, and knowledge assessments and participant feedback are now under review. This course marks the beginning of an exciting new partnership between the Georgia Trauma Commission, the Medical College of Georgia, and community hospitals statewide, as we work to expand trauma education and training throughout rural Georgia.

This successful first delivery is only the beginning—we look forward to expanding this impactful program to more rural providers across the state in the coming months."



Fellowship

Dr. Lillie Tien, matched into the Trauma/Surgical Critical Care Fellowship at Broward Health, Ft. Lauderdale, FL

CONGRATULATIONS

Congrats to **Dr. Bolduc** for his E3 award!



■ **Dr. Valia Bravo-Egana, PhD, F(ACHI), MBA** was selected as American Society for Histocompatibility and Immunogenetics (ASHI) Public Policy Scholar. She will serve a three-year term beginning January 2026.

PUBLICATIONS

■ **Mabes ES, Chainey J, Wang ML, Dickinson KJ.** Problem Identification and Needs Assessment for a Universal Surgical Simulation Educational Fellowship Curriculum. *J Surg Educ.* 2025 Oct;82(10):103680. doi: 10.1016/j.jsurg.2025.103680. Epub 2025 Sep 1. PMID: 40896921.

■ **Sam Ho, Reut Hod-Dvorai, Valia Bravo-Egana, Taba Kheradmand, Christina Bishop, Nicholas K. Brown, Heather Eilrich, Elaine Forrest O'Shields, Julie A. Houpp, Alan M. Sanfilippo, Olga Timofeeva.** Practical guide to personnel competency assessment in clinical histocompatibility laboratories, *Human Immunology*, 2025, 111321, ISSN 0198-8859, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.humimm.2025.111321>.

Georgia Society of the American College of Surgeons Awards:

■ **Dr. Zackery Aldaher** (Surgical Simulation Fellow) received 2nd place for the Trauma Abstract Competition

■ **Dr. Ankit Dhiman** (PGY4) received 2nd place for the Surgical Oncology Abstract Competition

■ **Sweta Munagapati** (3+MS) received 2nd place award for her podium presentation Expanding Access: Georgia's First Student-Run Free Surgery Clinic with Integrated Diagnostics

■ **Daniel Moncada** (MS3) received 1st place for the Surgical Oncology Abstract Competition

Georgia Vascular Society Awards:

■ **Nuverah Mohsin** (PGY3) – Robert B. Smith Award for Best Resident Presentation
Comparative Outcomes for Symptomatic versus Asymptomatic Carotid Artery Stenosis Interventions: A Five-Year Single-Institution Retrospective Analysis. This is our first win in 13 years—beating Emory University, Mercer University, Mayo Clinic Florida (Jacksonville), and others.

■ **Michele Patel** (MS4) – Best Poster Presentation
Juxtarenal Aortic Aneurysm: Open Surgical Repair Followed by Endovascular Reintervention.

■ **Vishaal Motla** (MS4) – Best Medical Student Podium Presentation
Benchmarking Vascular Access in Georgia: A Quality Analysis.

Congratulations to all three for their exceptional work and representing our program with excellence!



AUGUSTA UNIVERSITY
MEDICAL COLLEGE OF GEORGIA

Department of Surgery

Follow Us!
SOCIAL MEDIA



@mcgsurgery



Save the Date!

**2026 MORETZ
SURGICAL SOCIETY
MARCH 13-14**