

WHAT YOU OTO KNOW



Department of Otolaryngology -
Head and Neck Surgery

SUMMER 2025
VOL. 6, NO. 1

RESIDENT LIFE

An interview with our chiefs on their residency experience

DIVISION UPDATES

Updates and new additions in each of the divisions.

RESEARCH

Stay up-to-date on all the research highlights in the department



University of Virginia

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Charlottesville, VA 22908

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Summer 2025 VOL. 6, NO. 1

Editor

Ariana Greenwell, MD

Creative Director

Stephen Oswald



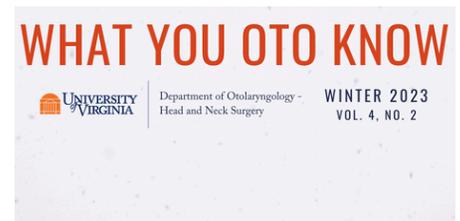
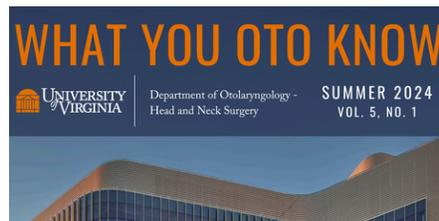
Ariana Greenwell, MD



Stephen Oswald, BA

What You Oto Know is a bi-annual newsletter published by The University of Virginia Department of Otolaryngology - Head and Neck Surgery.

Please send questions, comments, and requests for hard copies to Stephen Oswald at: zrz2ht@uvahealth.org



Find previous issues and subscribe to future issues on our website.
med.virginia.edu/otolaryngology/about/what-you-oto-know



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NEWS & FEATURES

Message From the Chair
PAGE 3

Faculty, Residents, & Fellows
PAGE 4-6

New to the Department
PAGE 7

Division Updates
PAGE 8-14

Interview with the Chiefs
PAGE 15-16

Research Updates
PAGE 17-19

Events & Conferences
PAGE 20-21

Alumni Events & Philanthropy
PAGE 22-23

LOCATIONS

- UVA Health Main Hospital
- ENT Clinic at Fontaine
- Emily Couric Clinical Cancer Center
- Pediatric Otolaryngology Clinic at the Battle Building
- Charlottesville ENT Associates

Message From The Chair

STEPHEN S. PARK, MD



Greetings Friends, Colleagues, and Alumni,

Welcome to the summer edition of our department's newsletter. As we start a new academic year, it is always fun to see three new interns join us and I marvel at how well prepared they arrive. This year is no exception. We also have two new clinical faculty, new fellows in neurotology and facial plastic surgery, as well as new APP's in both the outpatient and inpatient roles. Highlights and bios of them can be found in this issue. The department continues to thrive and grow!

Each year there is usually something to mark it as being unique, such as Covid or the IV fluid shortage last year. This year will be remembered as the time we had a sweeping turnover of leadership at UVA. The backstory is complex and political, and the truth is likely a hybrid of many different sides and perspectives. We will shortly have a new Dean, EVP, and hospital CEO. I know with absolute certainty, however, that the engine that drives this large health system is patient care, and that remains our true north and does not waver. At the department level, all pistons are at full throttle and we continue to be stable as we deliver the highest quality of care, innovation, community service, and education. This is recognized at many levels, especially by grateful patients through their support and philanthropy (over \$1M this past year). Thank you all!

Finally, the upcoming Fitz-Hugh symposium is our 50th! Dr. John Mason will assist me with the program and the theme this year is each of you as our alumni. Specific registration and information will be forthcoming but please reserve the dates **June 12 & 13, 2026, at the Boar's Head Resort**. Our distinguished emeritus professors Cantrell, Levine, Gross, Reibel, and Early will hopefully be in attendance for all of us to chat with.

I hope you enjoy this newsletter and catching up with the department.

As Always,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stephen Park, MD". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Stephen S. Park

General Otolaryngology



John Mason, MD
Associate Professor



Daniel Landes, MD
Associate Professor



Delaney Carpenter, MD
Assistant Professor

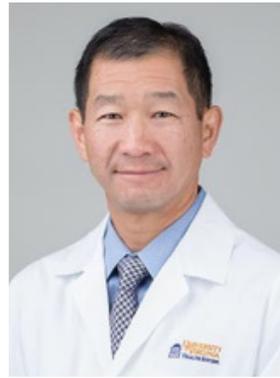
Pediatric Otolaryngology



William Brand, MD
Division Director,
Associate Professor



Ariana Greenwell, MD
Assistant Professor



Stephen Park, MD, FACS
Department Chair,
Professor



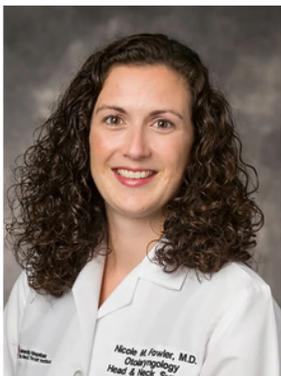
Sam Oyer, MD, FACS
Division Director,
Associate Professor



Vusala Snyder, MD
Assistant Professor

Facial Plastic & Reconstructive Surgery

Head & Neck Oncologic & Microvascular Surgery



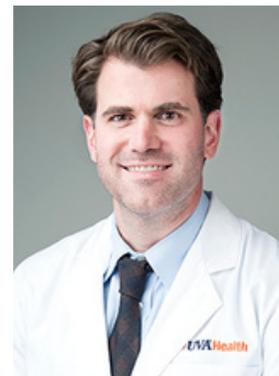
Nicole Fowler, MD
Division Director,
Associate Professor



David Shonka Jr., MD
Associate Professor



Katherine Fedder, MD
Associate Professor



Jonathan Garneau, MD
Assistant Professor



Eric Dowling, MD
Assistant Professor

FACULTY

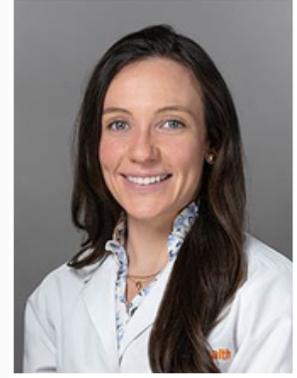
Laryngology



James Daniero, MD, MS
Division Director,
Associate Professor



Patrick McGarey, MD
Assistant Professor

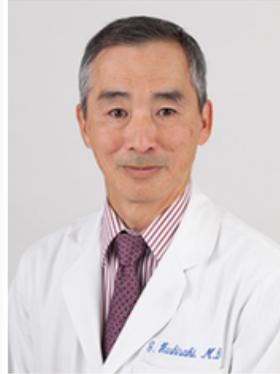


Vanessa Torrecillas, MD
Assistant Program Director,
Assistant Professor

Audiology/Vestibular & Balance Center



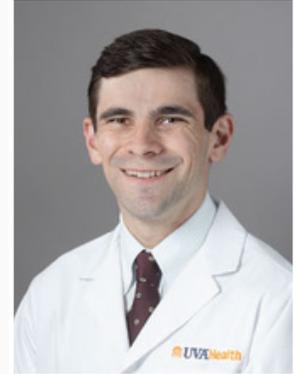
Lori Grove, PhD
Division Director,
Assistant Professor



George Hashisaki, MD
Division Director,
Associate Professor



Bradley Kesser, MD
Department Vice-Chair,
Professor



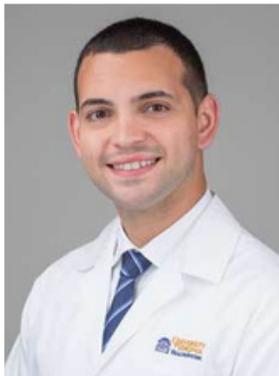
Benjamin Lovin, MD
Assistant Professor

Otology & Neurotology

Rhinology & Endoscopic Sinus Surgery



Spencer Payne, MD
Division Director,
Professor



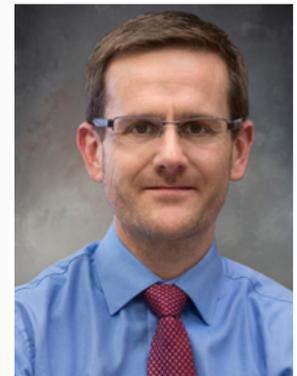
Jose Mattos, MD, MPH
Program Director,
Associate Professor



Steven Munger, PhD
Division Co-Director
Professor



James Daniero, MD, MS
Division Co-Director,
Associate Professor

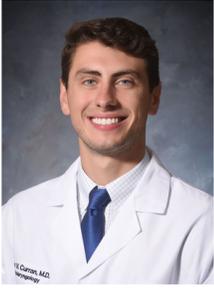


Patrick Cottler, PhD
Associate Professor

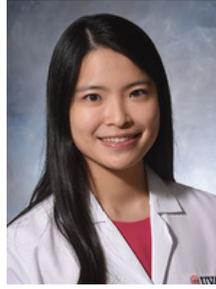
Research Division

RESIDENTS & FELLOWS

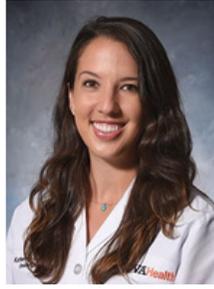
CHIEFS



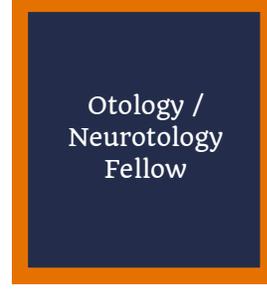
Kent
Curran, MD



Betsy
Szeto, MD



Katherine
Webb, MD

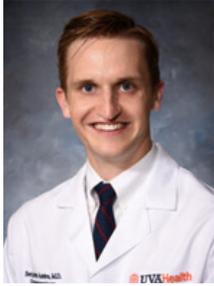


Otology /
Neurotology
Fellow



De'Andre
Warren, MD

PGY-4



Benjamin
Aunins, MD



Alexander
Murr, MD



Jared
Sperling, MD



Facial Plastic &
Reconstructive
Surgery Fellow



Christine
Matthews, MD

PGY-3



Aleeza
Leder Macek, MD



Akshay
Murthy, MD

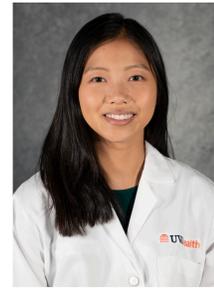
PGY-2



Nicole
Senderovich, MD

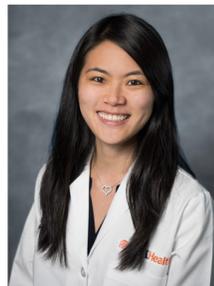


William
Stout, MD

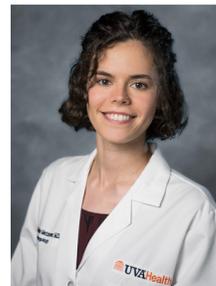


Adelaide
Zhao, MD

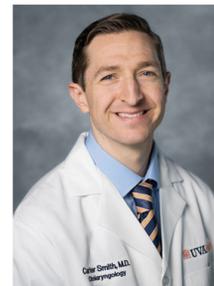
PGY-1



Bao
Sciscent, MD



Danielle
Sidelnikov, MD



Carter
Smith, MD

NEW FACULTY



NICOLE FOWLER, MD
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR



VUSALA SNYDER, MD
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR



CHRISTINE MATTHEWS, MD
FACIAL PLASTIC FELLOW



DE'ANDRE WARREN, MD
NEUROLOGY FELLOW

NEW RESIDENTS



BAO SCISCENT, MD
PGY-1 RESIDENT



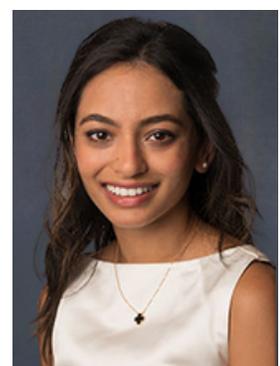
DANIELLE SIDELNIKOV, MD
PGY-1 RESIDENT



CARTER SMITH, MD
PGY-1 RESIDENT



ZACHARY PIERRE
RESEARCH FELLOW



SONAM PATEL
RESEARCH FELLOW

NEW RESEARCH FELLOWS

NEW CLINICAL STAFF

TIFFANY COLAVINCENZO
INPATIENT APP

CAROLYN MCMULLIN
GENERAL APP

SYDNEY BROWN
AUDIOLOGIST

LINDSEY RICHARDS
AUDIOLOGIST

COURTNEY MANDUS
FPS OUTPATIENT APP

SANDRA CUSTODIO
NEU OUTPATIENT APP

OUR FACIAL PLASTIC & RECONSTRUCTIVE SURGERY DIVISION IS GROWING!



Courtney Mandus, PA-C joined our division full-time October 2024. She is originally from Georgia and completed her Physician's Assistant Masters Degree in Alabama. Prior to moving to Charlottesville with her husband, Jeff, who is

completing an Anesthesiology residency, Courtney worked for 5 years in a busy Otolaryngology and Facial Plastic Surgery practice in Annapolis, MD. She has blended seamlessly into our team and sees patients across the spectrum of Facial Plastic Surgery care with an emphasis in cosmetic Botox injections and facial laser treatments.



We're excited to welcome Christine "Chrissy" Matthews, MD as our incoming Facial Plastic & Reconstructive Surgery fellow starting July 2025. Dr. Matthews has an interesting route to medicine starting with a

degree in Psychology and Anthropology from UC Berkley. Following this, she worked in healthcare consulting in San Francisco before returning to her hometown of New Orleans for medical school. She completed her Otolaryngology residency at LSU New Orleans, and we look forward to welcoming her to our team for her fellowship this year.



Finally, we're thrilled to announce that Dr. Vusala Snyder will join us as full-time faculty in Facial Plastic & Reconstructive Surgery starting in September 2025. Dr. Snyder is originally from Azerbaijan and moved to

the United States as a young adult before

completing her medical degree at the University of Kansas. Her Otolaryngology residency training was completed at the University of Pittsburg and she followed this with advanced fellowship training in Facial Plastic & Reconstructive Surgery at the Medical University of South Carolina. We are excited to have Dr. Snyder join our team given her expertise in many areas of facial plastic surgery including functional and cosmetic rhinoplasty, facial trauma and Mohs reconstruction, facial reanimation and facial rejuvenation including aesthetic surgery, laser and injectable treatments and hair transplantation.

Dr. Snyder and her family will join us in Charlottesville where her daughter is a current UVA undergraduate student. Go Hoos!

DIVISION HIGHLIGHT



Sam Oyer, MD (Left), Benjamin Brownlee, MD (Center), and Stephen Park, MD (Right)

AAFPRS fellow, Dr. Benjamin Brownlee, graduated and will be joining a private practice in Tulsa, OK.

STEPHEN PARK, MD, FACS
PROFESSOR, DEPARTMENT CHAIR

SAM OYER, MD, FACS
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, DIVISION DIRECTOR

SENSE AND SENSIBILITY

It has been a dynamic year for the Division of Rhinology & Endoscopic Sinus Surgery, with notable activity across clinical, research, and academic arenas. Dr. Jose Mattos continues to lead an exciting multi-institutional initiative—the Cloud-Based Patient Outcomes Platform (CPOP). Designed to facilitate collaborative clinical research and provide comparative feedback to surgeons, CPOP aims to support data-driven improvements in patient outcomes.



The relatively new Smell & Taste Center continues to flourish and support patients' needs through individualized evaluations and diagnostics. Dr. Munger is hard at work cultivating relationships with Virginia's wine, beer, and culinary communities.

Dr. Spencer Payne had the honor of chairing the AAO-HNS Clinical Practice Guideline Update on Sinusitis. The process, spanning nearly two years, will culminate in its publication in the next few months and presentation at the AAO-HNSF Annual Meeting in Indianapolis this October.



Dr. Mattos has also been active on the international stage. Along with olfactory science researcher Dr. Steven Munger, he is co-chairing a symposium at the upcoming European Chemoreception Research Organization (ECRO) meeting in Bilbao, Spain. Titled “CRS and Olfactory Dysfunction,” the session will explore immunologic mechanisms underlying CRSwNP-related smell loss and highlight new research on olfactory recovery following medical and surgical interventions.



Finally, Dr. Payne was honored to serve as the inaugural alumni speaker for Resident Research Day at Henry Ford Hospital in Detroit—an event that brought things full circle for him professionally.

From collaborative data platforms to international research partnerships, the division remains committed to advancing the science—and the care—of patients with complex sinonasal disease.



Additionally, Dr. Mattos will join neurosurgical colleague Dr. Michael Catalino this fall as invited faculty at an international skull base surgery course in Münster, Germany.

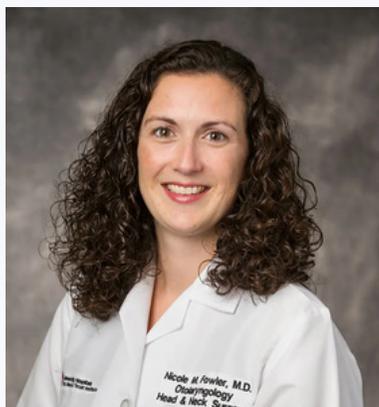
SPENCER PAYNE, MD
PROFESSOR, DIVISION DIRECTOR

NEW DIVISION LEAD OF HEAD & NECK SURGICAL ONCOLOGY & MICROVASCULAR RECONSTRUCTION!

Welcome Dr. Nicole Fowler as Division Lead of Head and Neck Surgical Oncology and Microvascular Reconstruction!



At UVA, Dr. Fowler is now leading our high-volume division that has demonstrated one of the largest annual growths in patient volume within the Oncology Service Line throughout the entire health system. We are excited for Dr. Fowler to join and lead quality and patient safety initiatives, build head and neck cancer outreach to the surrounding community, and continue to cement the strong presence of our Head and Neck Cancer team within the Oncology service line!



Dr. Fowler joins our busy group and brings a wealth of experience in ablative and reconstructive techniques. Dr. Fowler trained at the Cleveland Clinic for Otolaryngology Residency and then completed a Head and Neck Fellowship at the University of Washington in Seattle. She then returned to Cleveland as faculty at University Hospitals of Cleveland/Case Western University. As faculty for over a decade, she developed a busy head and neck ablative and microvascular reconstruction practice and gained national recognition within our prominent national societies. She also held leadership roles as the Director of Otolaryngology Quality and Patient Safety as well as serving as the Fellowship Director of the Head and Neck Fellowship Program.



JONATHAN GARNEAU, MD
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TO CLINICAL INNOVATION

We are excited to share updates from a dynamic year in the Division of Laryngology and Voice Care. This year's activities show our continued engagement with the community and ongoing commitment to clinical innovation.

Our three annual events went off without a hitch with the support of Drs. Daniero, McGarey and Torrecillas, along with Sam Olds, PA-C and our speech language pathology team Joanna Lott, Casey Resnick, Flora Vassilev.



In February, we hosted our annual Laryngeal Dystonia Regional Symposium—an educational and support event for individuals living with neurologic voice disorders, as well as for their caregivers and regional professionals.



In April, our Videostroboscopy and Voice Course drew practitioners from around the country. We embraced this year's World Voice Day theme "Empower Your Voice!" with a lively event at Potter's Craft Cider, featuring The Hot Mamas band, a Shenandoah Valley-based collective of femme multi-instrumentalist singer-songwriters blending Appalachian folk, pop punk, and swing.



This year also marked exciting clinical innovation and partnership. In collaboration with our Head & Neck Surgery colleagues, we welcomed PGY-2 Anesthesia residents into our clinics, offering hands-on experience in flexible laryngoscopy and immersive learning in upper airway anatomy and pathology. We introduced and began testing continuous laryngoscopy during exercise to enhance diagnosis and treatment of inducible laryngeal obstruction. To top it all off, we achieved an exciting milestone as we teamed up with our pediatric colleagues to assist in UVA's first pediatric laryngeal reinnervation.

It's been a year of growth, teamwork, and forward momentum—and we're excited for what's ahead.

VANESSA TORRECILLAS, MD
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, RESIDENCY APD

CHANGING WITH THE SEASON

Summer is a bittersweet time in academic medicine – we bid farewell to our graduating Chief residents and fellows and welcome a new cadre of Chief Residents, a new crop of interns, and a new Neurotology fellow. This year the Otolaryngology Division has also welcomed a new Nurse Practitioner.

Our graduating Neurotology fellow, Dr. Adam Thompson-Harvey, will be heading up Route 29 to Washington, D.C., where he has accepted a faculty position in the Division of Otolaryngology at George Washington University Medical School. Sad to see him go after his 2 years with us, he will not be going far literally or figuratively, as he has accepted an Adjunct Professorship in our Department.



We welcome our new Neurotology fellow, Dr. De'Andre Warren, to the Division. Originally from Santa Cruz, CA, Dr. Warren has slowly made his way East having attended the University of Chicago for his undergraduate degree in Biology and East Asian Languages and Cultures, Loyola University of Chicago – Stritch School of Medicine, followed by Otolaryngology residency at University Hospitals Cleveland. He speaks Spanish and Mandarin and is an avid music lover and musician. Welcome aboard Dr. Warren!



Ben Lovin, MD (Left), Adam Thompson-Harvey, MD (Center), and Brad Kesser, MD (Right)

Dr. Thompson-Harvey has been nothing short of spectacular over his two years with us. He was awarded a \$10,000 Shu Das Departmental Innovation grant, and he and his colleagues here, at Washington University in St. Louis, and Marquette earned an NIH Small Technology Transfer grant to study, test, and validate an iPhone app to test gaze stabilization. We are currently enrolling both normal control patients and patients who had vestibular schwannoma surgery with known unilateral vestibular loss to test the app against the standard testing with a head accelerometer. Our group recently received a no cost extension of the grant. We wish you all the best, Dr. Thompson-Harvey!



Finally, Sandra Custodio, AG-PCNP joins the Division as a general, but more clinically focused otology, nurse practitioner. Sandra comes to us from the Ryan White Clinic here at UVA, and before that from a busy community health center in New Bedford, Massachusetts. While her focus will be Otolaryngology, she will practice general otolaryngology and see patients across the specialty spectrum. We are thrilled to have Sandra join us!

BRAD KESSER, MD

PROFESSOR, DEPARTMENT VICE-CHAIR

RECRUITING FOR THE FUTURE

The University of Virginia's Division of Pediatric Otolaryngology is experiencing remarkable growth—both in patient volume and clinical capacity. Over the past year, the team has seen a significant uptick in referrals from community pediatricians and regional referring centers. Over the past five years the number of outpatient referrals has doubled, driven by expanded outreach as well as strengthening of multidisciplinary programs, such as the aerodigestive and cleft lip/palate teams.

On top of this, we are doubling the size of our clinic in the Battle Building, giving us the opportunity to see more patients and cover the provider expansion. This will also allow us to offer more timely appointments and deepen our commitment to teaching residents the best quality and highest-level care. In short, this coordinated growth in staffing is ensuring that surgical expertise and compassionate pediatric ENT care continue to scale alongside rising demand, cementing UVA's reputation as Virginia's leading pediatric ENT center.



To manage this surge and maintain continuity of care, we are actively recruiting both a new APP, as well as a third fellowship trained pediatric otolaryngologist. This dual recruitment—an APP to enhance access and continuity, and an MD to expand surgical depth—strategically addresses the increased referral flow, as well as allowing us more flexibility to expand our state-of-the-art care, with planned expansion into pediatric voice (such as expanded laryngeal reinnervation offerings), airway reconstruction efforts, and plans for expanding pediatric offering for post tonsillectomy OSA.

WILLIAM BRAND, MD

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, DIVISION DIRECTOR

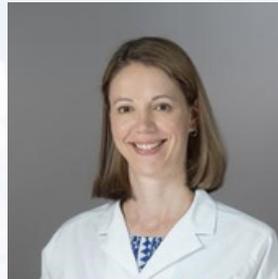
A FEW FAREWELLS AND A COUPLE HELLOS

As the 2024-2025 academic year comes to a close, we wish to congratulate our three Audiology Externs who completed their final year of clinical training with the Audiology Division at UVA. This year we hosted three outstanding graduate clinicians from Au.D. training programs at James Madison University and Vanderbilt University. Under the mentorship of our Clinical Education Coordinator, Dr. Bailey Aksland, these students gained comprehensive clinical experience across all sub-specialty areas of audiology, including pediatrics, vestibular assessment, and cochlear implants. They were awarded their doctoral degrees in May 2025 and have all gone on to secure wonderful job opportunities!



Sydney Brown, Au.D.
James Madison University

We are proud that Dr. Brown is the newest member of the UVA Audiology Division! In June, Dr. Brown officially joined our team, specializing in cochlear implants, diagnostics, and hearing aid services for patients of all ages.



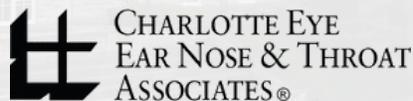
This past year has been one of transition for our clinical team as some members have moved on to other opportunities and new clinicians have joined the Division. In April, we welcomed Lindsey Richard, Au.D. to the UVA Audiology team. Dr. Richard is a graduate of James Madison University with over a decade of clinical experience in ENT, private practice, and pediatric settings. In addition to diagnostic and hearing aid services, she will also specialize in vestibular diagnostics, including rotary chair, VNG, vHIT, and VEMP testing.

We are very excited to welcome both Dr. Richard and Dr. Brown to the UVA Otolaryngology family!



Julia Englund, Au.D.
Vanderbilt University

Dr. Englund has joined the audiology team at Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, specializing in vestibular & balance disorders.



Ashton Fowlkes, Au.D.
James Madison University

Dr. Fowlkes joined the audiology team at Charlotte Eye, Ear, Nose & Throat Associates, specializing in adult diagnostics, hearing aids, and vestibular & balance disorders.

LORI GROVE, PHD
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, DIVISION DIRECTOR



Nelson Gruszczynski, MD



Claudia Gutierrez, MD



Chris Harryman, MD

What motivated you towards the ENT specialty?

Nelson: Precision and finesse in treating an array of pathology.

Claudia: When I was in medical school a head and neck surgeon came to our anatomy lab. He performed a maxillectomy and neck dissection in what felt like minutes. He then talked about how he could use the scapula or fibula to reconstruct the defect. I was blown away at the complexity and creativity of this specialty.

Chris: The opportunity to work with the full age range of patients in an anatomically complex location with a great deal of variety regarding open and endoscopic cases. It is truly the best!

How do you feel your residency experience helped you prepare for the future?

Nelson: Discipline in patient care; people are always expecting an optimal performance, and rightfully so. This is their health. The last 5 years have taught me how to ensure that, without placing excessive pressure on myself.

Claudia: I found mentors who supported and pushed me towards every one of my goals whether it was to become a better surgeon, scientist, leader, or teacher.

Chris: Diverse clinical experiences in the hospital, clinic, and operating room set you up for success. It's a fast paced environment and you learn efficiency out of necessity.

What is a major highlight of your residency?

Nelson: Taking a junior through a parotidectomy, without attending help. Exemplified how far we come, from unable to tie square knots to dissecting on branches of the facial nerve.

Claudia: Working with our attendings was an incredible experience; they were all true experts in their field that cared deeply for their patients. My co-residents are also outstanding clinicians and it was such a joy to go through this journey with them.

Chris: Having the opportunity to work with, teach, and learn alongside my co-residents is something I won't forget. They are admirable people and excellent physicians.

Extras

Fitz-Hugh Research Project

Dr. Gruszczynski: Oncocytic cell carcinoma (thyroid) outcomes at UVA over the last 20 years.

Dr. Gutierrez: VI spent 4 months in an aerospace engineering lab learning how to use lasers to study the mechanical properties of rabbit vocal folds, it was awesome. (Title: Developing Laser-Based Non-Destructive Techniques for Characterizing Vocal Fold Biomechanics).

Dr. Harryman: Identification of a protein target for IgE in Aspirin Exacerbated Respiratory Disease. I will miss Dr. Borish!

Form of Caffeine

Dr. Gruszczynski: Coffee; quantity over quality. If your go-to is cold brew you are a poser.

Dr. Gutierrez: V8 peach mango energy drinks for a normal day (80 mg of caffeine) and Celcius sparkling Fiji apple pear (200 mg) if I was on call the night before.

Dr. Harryman: Black coffee. No nonsense.

Best Bite in Charlottesville

Dr. Gruszczynski: Tavola

Dr. Gutierrez: The yucca fries and bierrria tacos at Bebederos are a must.

Dr. Harryman: Vivace. Highest ratio of marinara sauce to pasta you can find. I love it.

What are your plans following residency?

Nelson: Private practice in South Florida / greater Miami area.

Claudia: I will be completing a one year head and neck oncology and microvascular reconstruction fellowship at the University of Miami (the heart knows what it wants).

Chirs: I am joining a private practice Otolaryngology group in my hometown of Louisville, KY

Do you have any parting advice for aspiring Otolaryngologists?

Nelson: Keep at it - it is a daunting amount of information, but it does click at some point. Find a mentor / friend that instills confidence; this will help you through some difficult times during a rigorous training.

Claudia: Stay inquisitive and make time to reflect on what a privilege it is to be in a specialty that shapes so many aspects of our patients lives.

Chris: Don't let the challenges keep you down. Continue to embrace those challenges and the ability to overcome adversity will serve you well for years to come.



Congratulations, Class of 2025!



BIG CHANGES TO THE RESIDENT RESEARCH BLOCK

A meaningful research experience is an essential part of resident training. This year, we asked how we could improve that experience so that our residents not only get the most out of the experience but are also adequately prepared for a career in the practice of science-based medicine.



Until now, the research block for each resident was focused in a four-month period in the PGY3 year. We have now split this four-month period into a one-month intensive introduction to research in January of the PGY1 year and three months of focused research in PGY3.

During the initial month, our interns will receive didactic instruction in conducting and communicating human-centered biomedical research. This month will offer sufficient time for each intern to meet with prospective research mentors who will guide their selected project in the PGY3 block. They will also be introduced to the AAO-HNS CORE grant program (in anticipation of each of them submitting a CORE grant application in their PGY2 year that will be focused on their planned research project). Finally, each of the interns will get their feet wet in otolaryngology research by conducting a small case report or chart review study, the results of which they will submit for presentation at that year's meeting of the Virginia Society for Otolaryngology.

To help our residents stay on track and to navigate any hurdles that may arise, each will be assigned a

program mentor from our research division faculty (Drs. Munger, Daniero, and Cottler). Separate from the research project mentor, the research program mentor will serve as a longitudinal resource for the resident throughout their five years in the program.

Together, we hope this new structure will help our residents succeed in research, will lessen the conflicts with their clinical and surgical training, and will serve as a compelling recruiting tool in going forward.

A GROWING FACULTY RESEARCH PROGRAM



Our faculty continue to be productive researchers. However, this academic year saw a major uptick in submissions for extramural research funding. Major funding from the National Institutes of Health and other federal agencies continued to be a highly competitive process (and may be even more so going forward, with success rates potentially moving into the single digits). Nevertheless, our faculty submitted four major (i.e., multimillion dollar) proposals for translational and clinical studies this fiscal year, with more planned in the coming months.

THE UVA CENTER FOR SMELL & TASTE DISORDERS

This new university-wide center was launched in February, 2025, but has hit the ground running. Co-directed by Dr. Steven Munger and Dr. Jose Mattos, the center has four major areas of focus: clinical care for individuals with smell or taste impairments, translational and clinical research into the function and dysfunction of these senses, resident, medical student and graduate student training in the science, diagnosis, and treatment of chemosensory disorders, and community outreach.



Partnering with the UVA Health media relations and marketing teams, we have been working to spread the word that UVA Health and the

Department of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery is the place for Virginians to come for care and support for problems with smell or taste or to participate in ongoing studies seeking to improve diagnosis and treatment options. We have also begun to collaborate with the Charlottesville Albemarle Convention and Visitors Bureau to explore ways in which we can increase accessibility for those with a smell or taste disorder, particularly for restaurants, wineries, breweries, and other local businesses focused on food and drink.

Finally, the center will serve as the local host for the 2026 annual symposium of the International Society of Neurogastronomy. This organization brings together scientists, clinicians, culinary professionals, and agricultural professionals with interests in what we eat, how we eat, and why we like what we eat to discuss the science and practice of eating (and drinking). The date is yet to be finalized, but look here for a future announcement.

STEVEN MUNGER, PHD
PROFESSOR, DIVISION CO-DIRECTOR

Internal Research Funding

PAUL A. LEVINE, MD RESEARCH GRANT

This grant supports innovative basic science, translational and clinical research by residents and faculty OR worthy proposals that were not selected for funding by external mechanisms. One award cycle per year providing 2 grants up to \$8,000 each.

SUBINOY DAS OTORHINOLARYNGOLOGY INNOVATION GRANT PROGRAM

This grant fosters translational research partnerships linking medicine, law, regulatory governance, and business disciplines to provide immersive faculty and resident-driven product development experiences early in an Otolaryngologist's career. One award cycle per year providing 1 grant up to \$10,000 total.

THE MILLER FAMILY RESIDENT EDUCATION FUND

This grant supports higher training for residents and junior faculty in the area of Facial Plastic Surgery, especially facial trauma.

GOODBYE 24-25 RESEARCH FELLOWS



Ryan Stepp (left), Keerthi Kurian (middle), and Noah Thornton (right)

Summer is a bittersweet time of year as we say goodbye to a few trainees and welcome new members to the UVA Otolaryngology family. Our research fellowship follows this same rhythm each year.



We were pleased to graduate our 2024-2025 fellows Ryan Stepp (University of South Carolina School of Medicine) and Noah Thornton (Temple University School of Medicine). They both had an incredibly successful year with each involved in over 20 projects and presented several abstracts on the national stage. The culmination of their research year was a podium presentation at the 49th Annual Fitz-Hugh Otolaryngology Symposium. Noah presented his work, "Clinical Perspectives and Complication Profiles in Vocal Fold Injection Augmentation" and Ryan presented his research, "Chitosan-L-DOPA MAP Gel for Acute Laryngeal Injury". We are excited to follow their continued success on their road to becoming Otolaryngologists.

HELLO 25-26 RESEARCH FELLOWS



Zachary Pierre (left) and Sonam Patel (right, middle)

We are pleased to also welcome our new research fellows for the 2025-2026 year, Zachary Pierre (Meharry Medical College) and Sonam Patel (Northeast Ohio Medical University). We are excited to see what new projects will be completed this coming academic year and look forward to their presentations at the landmark 50th Annual Fitz-Hugh Symposium.

RESIDENT & FELLOWSHIP RESEARCH AWARDS AT THE 49TH ANNUAL FITZ-HUGH SYMPOSIUM



Claudia Gutierrez, MD (left) and Aleeza Leder Macek, MD (right)

We are also proud to celebrate the winners of our annual research competition. The runner-up for the resident research award was Dr. Aleeza Leder-Macek under the mentorship of Faculty Laryngologist, Dr. Vanessa Torrecillas. Her award-winning presentation was titled, "The Role of Cervical Osteophytes in Dysphagia". Our first-place winner was Dr. Claudia Gutierrez presenting her AAO-HNSF Core Grant-funded research titled, "Developing Laser-Based Non-Destructive Techniques for Characterizing Vocal Fold Biomechanics".

JAMES DANIERO, MD, MS
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, DIVISION CO-DIRECTOR

49TH ANNUAL FITZ-HUGH

This year's 49th Annual Fitz-Hugh Symposium was an amazing experience for everyone involved! We had a few firsts this year including hosting at the Forum and offering satellite symposiums.

The symposium ended with a beautiful banquet honoring our incredible graduating chief residents Dr. Claudia Gutierrez (upper left, middle), Dr. Nelson Gruszczynski (bottom left, second from the left), and Dr. Christopher Harryman (lower right, second from the left). We wish them all the best and they will be missed. This year, the chief residents awarded the Reibel Faculty Teaching Award to Dr. Nariman Dash.



STROBOSCOPY COURSE

This year was the second ever UVA Voice Center's Stroboscopy & Voice Course. This two-day intensive course was designed to provide practical and hands-on education for speech-language pathologists and otolaryngologists in laryngeal anatomy, voice disorders, and the performance and interpretation of laryngeal stroboscopy.

ANNUAL CADAVER LABS 2024-2025

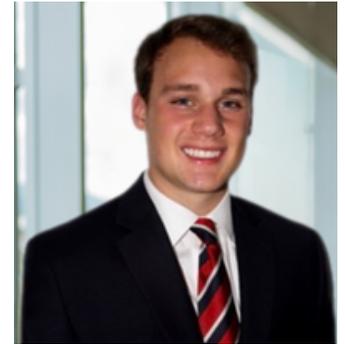
The annual cadaver labs continue to be a valuable part of resident education, and our faculty continue to lead the way in training our residents. This year, we have taken advantage of vendor support to equip our residents with the surgical tools needed so our senior residents can practice more advanced procedures before graduating. We have also had enthusiastic involvement from the new faculty and fellows and we are looking forward to continued involvement from Dr. Fowler and Dr. Snyder when they arrive.



VSO CONFERENCE 2025

UVA was a huge participant in this year's VSO conference. We had a strong showing of faculty, residents, and medical students who participated in panels, oral presentations, and posters.

This year, UVA swept the oral presentations at VSO taking both first and second place! PGY3 Aleeza Leder Macek took 1st place with her presentation "*Two Cases of Intravagal Parathyroid Adenoma*" and our research fellow, Ryan Stepp, took 2nd place with his presentation "*Hydrogel-Based Bandage for Preventing Posterior Glottic Stenosis*".



JAHRSDOERFER VISITING PROFESSOR

We were honored to have Joel Goebel, MD, a professor emeritus from the Washington University in St. Louis, join us this year as the Jahrsdoerfer visiting professor. Dr. Goebel brings with him several decades of experience and wisdom in Neurotology that he imparted onto the residents and faculty. Dr. Goebel's lectures focused on acute vertigo, assessment of dizzy patients, and the basics of ossicular reconstruction with hydroxyapatite bone cement for the temporal bone lab that took place after the lectures.

Dr. Goebel's keynote speech was titled: "*The Evolving Management of the Dizzy Patient – Diagnostic and Therapeutic Challenges*"



AAO-HNSF 2025 ANNUAL MEETING & ALUMNI RECEPTION

The best and brightest otolaryngologist-head and neck surgeons from across the globe will come together **October 11 – October 14, 2025**, in Indianapolis, Indiana for the AAO-HNSF 2025 Annual Meeting & OTO Experience. This year's event will take place at the Indiana Convention Center.

The annual UVA Otolaryngology Alumni Dinner will take place on **October 11** at McCormick & Schmicks. Cocktail hour starts at 6pm and dinner will commence from 7:00 - 8:30pm. You can register now to attend the alumni dinner using the link below:

<https://www.uvamedalum.org/events/uva-otolaryngology-alumni-dinner-at-the-2025-aa-hnsf-annual-meeting/>



Keep an eye out for more information in the coming weeks leading up to the reception dinner and if you have any questions, please contact **Wendy Baldwin** at wdb4b@virginia.edu



UVA Medical Alumni Association & Medical School Foundation



**MEDICAL ALUMNI ASSOCIATION
MEDICAL SCHOOL FOUNDATION**

Want to stay connected and support the Department of Otolaryngology?

The UVA Medical Alumni Association and Medical School Foundation works with the department to plan events, share news, and support fundraising initiatives. Here are a few of the ways you can get involved:

- Stay up-to-date on happenings at UVA Health and the department by updating your contact information [here](https://www.uvamedalum.org/update-contact-info/). (<https://www.uvamedalum.org/update-contact-info/>)
- Follow @uvamedalum on Facebook, Instagram and X, or visit our website at [uvamedalum.org](https://www.uvamedalum.org).

CREATING VICTORIES - UVA HEALTH



"The greatest success for me is helping UVA Cancer Center find a world-class specialist who can build a team doing research in this area. I'm very proud to help create victories, and I'm glad that UVA has the prominence and stature to attract incredible researchers... I really appreciate UVA Cancer Center and everything it's done for me. It's a blessing to have this organization in the Commonwealth of Virginia. We are very, very lucky." - Doug Stewart

Doug Stewart is a two-time cancer survivor who was treated at UVA Health. His experiences inspired him to create the **Stewart Family Research Fund for Head and Neck Cancer** and the **Stewart Family Faculty Recruitment Fund**. Doug's donations allowed us to expand our research division and hire our new chief of the Division of Head and Neck Oncology and Microvascular Surgery, Dr. Nicole Fowler.

Read more about the impact of Doug's contributions using the link below:

<https://giving.uvahealth.com/article/creating-victories>

Philanthropy

A gift to the University of Virginia Department of Otolaryngology- Head and Neck Surgery Resident Education Fund exclusively supports resident education at different levels including books, conferences, etc.

Please consider supporting the next generation of Otolaryngologists. If you would like to make a philanthropic investment in UVA Oto-HNS visit our [website](#).

<https://www.uvamedalum.org/giving/department-of-otolaryngology/>



UNIVERSITY
of VIRGINIA

Department of Otolaryngology
Head and Neck Surgery

**THE 50TH ANNUAL
FITZ-HUGH
SYMPOSIUM
+
ALUMNI REUNION**

SAVE THE DATE

**JUNE 12-13, 2026
CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA**

CHARLOTTESVILLE

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HEAD
RESORT**



Department of Otolaryngology -
Head and Neck Surgery

WHAT YOU OTO KNOW

