

THE DAPM HANDOFF

June 2025



Dear Colleagues,

Welcome to the June 2025 issue of *The DAPM Handoff*. Once again, we have much to celebrate and even more to be grateful for. Your dedication and the excellence of your work continue to shine brightly—and this newsletter exists to reflect and honor that light.

In academic medicine, June is a time of transition. It marks the close of a long, rewarding—though at times demanding—training journey for our senior residents and fellows, culminating in our graduation ceremony later this month. At the same time, it signals a new beginning for our incoming interns, fellows, faculty, and DAPM members at large, as well as the start of another academic year for all of us who are continuing members of this Department.

The accomplishments highlighted in this issue are a vivid reminder of the excellence, dedication, and promise that define our community. They reflect not only where we have been, but also the bright future we are building together.

Please read on for the following highlights:

- Spotlight on the Division of Chronic Pain
- HumAnes of UCLA Profiles: Jennifer Katsura and Justin Mitchell
- The 17th Annual DAPM Scientific Evening
- Spring meeting season! DAPM leadership at IARS/SOCCA, CSA, OAS, SCA
- UCLA Health Faculty Profiles: Cecilia Canales, Jason Lee, and Cristianna Vallera
- Dr. Jenny Tang and Dr. Allison Woods' China Rotation Experience
- Joe Meltzer endows the annual Alan G. Sieroty APSF/SOCCA Memorial Lecture
- K. Elliott Higgins III presents at the National Academy of Medicine 2025 Health Workforce Well-Being Day
- Three DAPM Poets featured in the UCLA BEAT 2025: Zhuang T. Fang, Brianna Ortals, and Maziar Nourian
- 2025-26 Match Day & Chief Resident Physician Announcements

Maxime Cannesson, MD, PhD

Chair, Department of Anesthesiology & Perioperative Medicine at UCLA



Spotlight on Chronic Pain

By Lisa Lewis

[Read more >](#)

HumAnes of UCLA



Jennifer Katsura, MSN, CRNA
Nurse Anesthetist

"My favorite place that I have been to more recently is Niseko, Hokkaido, because I was able to combine my two favorite hobbies – snowboarding and traveling."

[Meet Jennifer >](#)

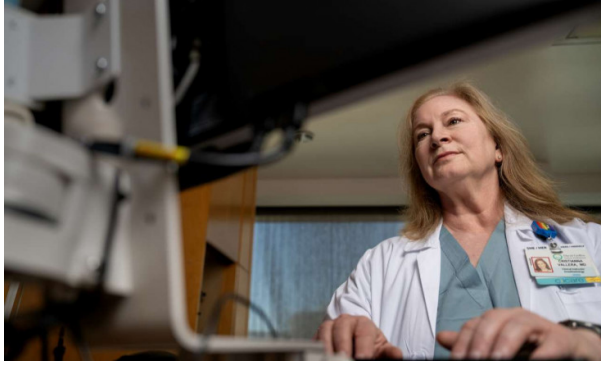


Justin Mitchell, MD
CA-1 Resident Physician

"I'm the oldest of three... My sister is a nurse, and my brother is training to be a pilot. I have three dogs back home: Shaggy (who is the OG), Fred, and Willow."

[Meet Justin >](#)

DAPM IN THE NEWS



No matter the hour, an obstetric anesthesiologist is ready to help

By Lisa Lewis

[Read the article >](#)



Dr. Canales builds bridges in healthcare for non-English-speaking patients

By Evelyn Tokuyama

[Read the article >](#)



The Meltzer Family Endows the APSF/SOCCA Alan G. Sieroty Memorial Lecture

[Read the article >](#)



Reflections from Hangzhou
By Jenny (Jia) Tang, MD, MBA, and Allison Woods, MD

[Read the article >](#)



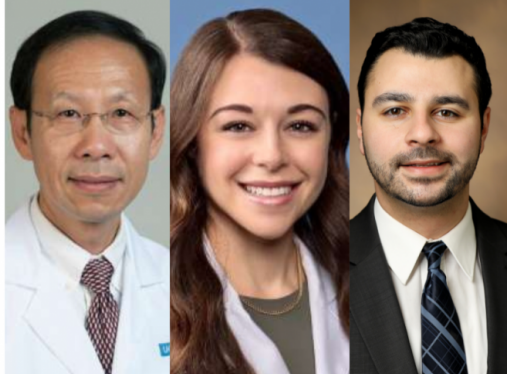
Jason Lee, MD:
Faculty Spotlight by DGSOM at UCLA
By Ashley Bell

[Read the article >](#)



Watch Dr. K. Elliott Higgins III present at the 2nd Annual National Academy of Medicine Health Workforce Well-Being Day

[Watch on YouTube >](#)



***The UCLA BEAT Features DAPM Poets
Zhuang T. Fang, MD, Brianna Ortals,
CRNA, Maziar Nourian, MD***

[Read their pieces on pg. 7, 20, 21, and 65 >](#)



***Cecilia Canales, MD:
Research Spotlight by DGSOM at UCLA
By Ashley Bell***

[Read the article >](#)

RESEARCH SPOTLIGHT

The 17th Annual DAPM Scientific Evening

[Read the article >](#)

RECENT CONFERENCES & MEETINGS

**DAPM Academic Excellence at
IARS/SOCCA 2025**

By Theodora Wingert, MD

[Read the review >](#)

**Reflections from the CSA Annual Meeting
By Philip Levin, MD, FASA, CSA President**

[Read Dr. Levin's reflection >](#)

**DAPM at Ophthalmic Anesthesia
Society Meeting**

By Elaine Liew, MD

[Read about our presentations >](#)

DAPM at SCA 2025

By Ashley Oliver, MD

[Read the review >](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS

DAPM Anesthesiology Residency Graduation

Saturday, June 21, 2025

All department members may access the department calendar on TeamUp and add events through [this link](#). You may view [this video tutorial](#) on how to use TeamUp.

[View the DAPM Events Calendar](#)

MATCH DAY CELEBRATION

Welcome to the UCLA DAPM Residency Class of 2029!

[Watch the Instagram reel welcoming the new class>](#)

WELCOME TO DAPM!

Cristina Alonso Mecinas
Medical Student Coordinator

Neil Sagrado, DNP, CRNA
Nurse Anesthetist

Natasia Bongcas, MS
Fellowship Programs Coordinator

Andrea Hernandez
Faculty Assistant

Annette Aguilar
Operations Coordinator

NEW APPOINTMENTS

**Congratulations to the 2025-26 Chief
Resident Physicians**
Drs. Andrea Antenucci, Michael LoBasso,
Sonali Nayak, and Rebecca Toohey

Jason S. Lee, MD
Associate Residency Program Director for
UCLA Santa Monica Hospital

AWARDS & GRANTS

Nigel Wilkinson-Maitland, MD
2025 Inspirational Physician Award
UCLA Santa Monica Medical Center Board of Advisors

Mingxia Gu, MD, PhD
2025 - 2026 Innovation Award Recipient
UCLA Broad Stem Cell Research Center (BSCRC)

Brittany Burton, MD, MHS, MAS
2025 SOAP/FAER Mentored Research Training Grant

Brittany Burton, MD, MHS, MAS
2025 DGSOM Bruin Scholar

[Watch to hear about the Bruin Scholars >](#)

John Park, MD, PhD (Umar Lab)

American Thoracic Society (ATS) and Johnson & Johnson Grant

"Emerging role of LOXL2 in Right Heart Failure due to Pulmonary Hypertension: Novel Druggable Target"

Louis A. Saddic III, MD, PhD

Marfan Foundation Career Development Grant

"Estrogen mitigates thoracic aneurysm development through a shift in macrophage identity"

K. Elliott Higgins III, MD

2025 SEAd Grant, a starter educational research grant sponsored by the Society for Education in Anesthesia

"Validating a Novel Inventory to Assess Well-Being Influencers and Guide the Cultivation of Supportive Learning Environments in Anesthesiology Training"

Alex Olender, MS, CRNA

2025 1st Quarter "Top CRNA"

Jason Tang, MD

AY24-25 Q3 Resident of the Quarter

Dikran Nalbandian, MD, MS

AY24-25 Q3 Resident Educator Award

Olivia Diaz & Eraka Bath, MD

UCLA Bedari Kindness Institute Research Fellowship

RECENT DAPM PUBLICATIONS

Jason Batten MD, MA: Hospital Ethics Committees and Consultants: How Do Clinicians Perceive Their Utility in Resolving Disagreements About Life-Sustaining Treatments? *The American Journal of Bioethics*.

Jason Batten, MD, MA: Everyday Phrases as a Source of Clinical Miscommunication: Potential Solutions to a Hidden Problem. *The American Journal of Bioethics*.

Mohammad Reza Hatamnejad, MD, MPH, Lejla Medzikovic, PhD, Ateyeh Dehghanitafti, MD, Mansoureh Eghbali, PhD: Role of Gut Microbial Metabolites in Ischemic and Non-Ischemic Heart Failure. *International journal of molecular sciences*.

Bhaswati Roy, PhD, Rajesh Kumar, PhD, Stephanie-Dee Sarovich: The Role of the Glymphatic System in Perioperative Neurocognitive Disorders. *Journal of Neurosurgical Anesthesiology*.

Danny Le, MD, Brittany Burton, MD, MAS, MHS, Joe Hong, MD, Jason S Lee, MD: Drug Price and Health Policy Knowledge Influence Prescription Behavior in Orphan Diseases: Pheochromocytoma and Paraganglioma As Prototypes of Orphan Drug Econometrics. *Cureus*.

Maxime Cannesson, MD, PhD, Alexandre Joosten, MD, PhD: Assisted Fluid Management and Sublingual Microvascular Flow During High-Risk Abdominal Surgery: A Randomized Controlled Trial. *Anesthesia & Analgesia*.

Jonathan Jahr, MD, PhD, Pamela Chia, MD, MS, Tristan Gorgan: Does pre-emptive dexamethasone provide prophylaxis against sugammadex-induced bradycardia? A retrospective study. *PLoS One*.

Alexandre Joosten, MD, PhD: Impact of cardiopulmonary bypass flow on the lower limit of cerebral autoregulation during cardiac surgery: a randomized cross-over pilot study. *Journal of Clinical Monitoring and Computing*.

Justin Mitchell, MD: Etomidate vs Ketamine-Propofol for Induction of Anesthesia in Coronary Artery Bypass Grafting: An Updated Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis. *Seminars in Cardiothoracic and Vascular Anesthesia*.

Eilon Gabel, MD: Postoperative acute kidney injury is associated with persistent renal dysfunction: a multicentre propensity-matched cohort study. *BJA Open*.

Jonathan Jahr, MD, PhD: Artificial Oxygen Carriers (Blood Substitutes): A Pathway Forward? *The ASA Monitor*.

Alexandre Joosten, MD, PhD: Hypovolaemic phlebotomy for hepatic resection. *The Lancet: Gastroenterology & Hepatology*.

Lisa Lee, MD: Risk factors for administration of additional neuromuscular block reversal in adults undergoing general anaesthesia: a single centre retrospective case-control study. *BMC Anesthesiology*.

Danny Le, MD, Brittany Burton, MD, Christian Tejada, MPH, Joe Hong, MD, Jason S Lee, MD, Nirav Kamdar, MD: Drug Price and Health Policy Knowledge Influence Prescription Behavior in Orphan Diseases: Pheochromocytoma and Paraganglioma As Prototypes of Orphan Drug Econometrics. *Cureus*.

K. Elliott Higgins III, MD: Anesthesia Workforce Supply and Demand Imbalance: Comment. *Anesthesiology*.

K. Elliott Higgins III, MD: Beyond the block: a canvas for well-being and conversation in anesthesiology and pain medicine. *Regional Anesthesia & Pain Medicine*. [Accompanying podcast episode discussing the essay [here](#).]

Mingxia Gu, MD, PhD: Vascular network-inspired diffusible scaffolds for engineering functional midbrain organoids. *Cell stem cell*.

Mingxia Gu, MD, PhD: Vascular motion in the dorsal root ganglion sensed by Piezo2 in sensory neurons triggers episodic neuropathic pain. *Neuron*.

Betelehem Asnake, MD: Hosting Global Scholars: A Mutual Benefit. *Vital Times 2024*.

Jane Moon, MD: Pupillometry: Keeping an Eye on Anesthesia. *Anesthesiology*.

Jane Moon, MD: From Convent to Convention Center: Training Sisters, then Anesthesiologists, in Issaquah. *Anesthesiology*.

Report on the 2025 Consumer Electronics Show

By Drew Cheng, MD

[Read the report >](#)

Dr. Zhi Dong graduated from UCLA residency in 2021 and is very excited to come back as faculty to UCLA! His interest in informatics started in medical school, where he studied survival and treatment patterns of brain glioma patients using population-based cancer registries. He continued his studies in data science while obtaining his MPH in health management.

During residency, Dr. Dong participated in the UCLA Resident Informaticist program and worked on projects such as evaluating ERAS protocols and geospatial visualizations. After graduating, he completed a fellowship in regional anesthesiology and acute pain medicine at the Hospital for Special Surgery (HSS), where he was the Informatics and Quality Assurance. He stayed on at HSS, where he served as the Assistant Director of Informatics, trained as an EPIC physician builder, and worked on various user optimization and clinical decision support projects.

Outside of coding and clinical work, Dr. Dong is an avid traveler and has backpacked through 8 countries in Asia in the past 2 years.

Here are a few of his recent articles:

- [Intraoperative opioid and analgesic adjuvant administration practice patterns following implementation of an enhanced recovery after surgery protocol for laparoscopic donor nephrectomy](#)
- [Evaluation of Telemedicine Use for Anesthesiology Pain Division: Retrospective, Observational Case Series Study](#)
- [Implementation and Evaluation of a Neurology Telemedicine Initiative at a Major Academic Medical Center](#)
- [Clinical care pathways for ambulatory total shoulder arthroplasty](#)

QUALITY & PATIENT SAFETY

Special Acknowledgement for Keren Ziv, MD

"Dr. Ziv has received acknowledgment from the staff at West Hills MPU for rescuing a patient from a

cardiac arrest. I want to thank Dr. Ziv for her exemplary care and make everyone aware of the recognition that she and Dr. Navidi received from the staff. Thanks again to Dr. Ziv for the great patient care and well deserved recognition."

Submitted by Johnathan Pregler, MD, FASA

[Read more >](#)

HEALTH & WELL-BEING

The DAPM Spring Fitness Challenge promotes staying active, supporting our health, and fostering connection.

[Follow the challenge on Strava >](#)

For National Administrative Professionals Day (April 23), Administrative Staff received tumblers in appreciation of their diligence and dedication.

DAPM members enjoyed a 2-mile stroll soaking in the beauty of the South Bay.

Congratulations to Dr. Jared Katz, Regional and Acute Pain Fellow, for winning the DAPM Tennis Final! 🎾

Access Debriefing Tool on C8

The Well-Being Program created this debriefing tool with input from residents, faculty, and CRNAs. Its goals are to promote essential discussions, provide constructive support, and adapt to team needs for improved communication and well-being.

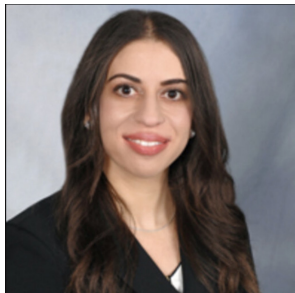
[View on C8 >](#)

We had a great first DAPM Peer Support meeting!

Sign up below for a future training.

[Sign up for a training >](#)

INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE



We are thrilled to share that **Dr. Nancy Boulos and Dr. Brittany Burton** have received our inaugural DAPM Health Disparities Seed Grant. Congratulations!

Selected after an NIH-style review process evaluating significance, innovation, and approach, their proposal entitled "**Patient Preference for Intraoperative Opioid Use and Early Recovery Following Non-Cardiac Surgeries: A Randomized Factorial Design Trial of Opioid-Free versus Opioid-Based Anesthesia: The PERFECT Trial**," stood out for

its strong potential to address pressing health disparities affecting disadvantaged populations.



Resources & Reflections from the 5th Annual DAPM Womxn's Symposium

[Read more >](#)

We would like to highlight the recent observance of Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander Heritage Month in May! Every May, we pay tribute to the rich cultural history, traditions, and contributions of our AANHPI community across the country.

This year, Federal Asian Pacific American Council (FAPAC) was proud to select the theme “**A Legacy of Leadership and Resilience**” in observance of AANHPI Heritage Month, which aims to celebrate the profound contributions, enduring strength, and inspiring leadership of the AANHPI community.



We would also like to highlight the recent observance of **Jewish American Heritage Month** from May! We joined our community in paying tribute to the many generations of Jewish Americans who helped form the fabric of American history, culture, and society.

[Read](#) about the University of California - Office of the President's (UCOP) critical discussion that took place regarding antisemitism in the United States on May 22, 2023.

[Read](#) Chancellor Julio Frenk's campus message to the Bruin Community announcing an Initiative to Combat Antisemitism.

Juneteenth DGSOM Community Celebration
June 18, 2025 | 11am - 2pm

The Department of Neurobiology and the Office of Inclusive Excellence at the David Geffen School of Medicine proudly present the Juneteenth DGSOM Community Festival—an afternoon of music, food, and games celebrating emancipation and community. Contact the **Office of Inclusive Excellence** with accommodation requests for this outdoor event.

[Register for this outdoor event >](#)

We are proud to recognize and celebrate LGBTQIA+ Pride Month in June! Each year, Pride Month serves as a time to honor the history, resilience, and ongoing contributions of our LGBTQIA+ community. It is also a moment to reaffirm our commitment to creating inclusive, welcoming spaces for all identities within our department and beyond.

This year marks the **55th Annual LA Pride Parade**, taking place **Sunday, June 8 at 11am**. There is no cost to attend the parade or the Pride Village (formally block party) celebration that follows. **If you are interested in meeting up with fellow DAPM colleagues at the parade, you can sign up [here](#).** If you're not able to join in person, you can still celebrate by tuning in to the live broadcast on ABC7, the official media partner for the event.

Additionally, we invite you to:

- **Join the DAPM LGBTQIA+ Listserv** to stay connected for community-building events, educational opportunities, mentoring, and ongoing support. **[Sign up here.](#)**
- **Request a DAPM Solidarity Button** to showcase that our space is welcoming and affirming of LGBTQIA+ identities. **[Request one here.](#)**
- **Connect with the UCLA Health Pride Network** by joining the MS Teams group for year-round community and resources. **[Join here.](#)**
- **Volunteer for PRIDE 2025 events** hosted by UCLA Health! **[Sign up here.](#)**

Let's continue to build a culture where everyone feels safe, valued, and seen.

Lastly, attached **[here](#)** and **[here](#)** are two UCLA Zoom backgrounds you can utilize to highlight and celebrate Pride month during your virtual meetings!

If there are other initiatives or observances you'd like to see highlighted, please reach out—we would love to hear from you!

With Pride,

Your Inclusive Excellence Pillar – DAPM Staff Well-Being Committee
Annette Aguilar, Quenesha Caballero, Olivia Diaz, Jibril Osumanu



Another year, another two successful UCLA DAPM Project Lead the Way outreach and pipeline program field trips! The direct feedback from the teachers is that we continue to outdo ourselves with an exceptional and unforgettable experience each year.

Thank you to all that helped facilitate their success -- our department leadership, schedulers, Education Office, O.R. Nursing administrative staff, the O.R. call teams, hospital security and hospitality, and Patient Services.

And thank you to our day-of volunteers who did an outstanding job representing our department and specialty: Drs. Belle Benanza-Fontem, Soroush Kazemi, Linda Li, Jure Marijic, Sara Navab, Thibault Philippine, Wendy Ren, Dane Saksa, Sam Snider, Judi Turner, Lauren Vajda, as well as future doctors Adan Rodriguez and George Ayad (Dr. Ayad's son who acted as our demo patient!).

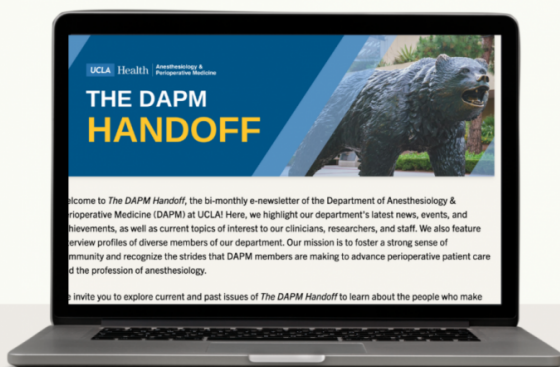
Please [CLICK HERE](#) for thank you cards from the students and teachers and [HERE](#) for a recap video made by a teacher. Please know that experiences like this make life-long and course-altering impacts for these students. In their words, in just a few hours of interaction, you inspired, gave confidence, motivated, provided hope, impassioned, and empowered our next generation.

If you are interested in participating in the future, I will be recruiting for our next visits in the fall.

Thank you,
Sistophia Poorsattar

CONTACT US

Read past issues of The
DAPM Handoff online!



www.uclahealth.org/departments/anes

Editorial Team

Jane Moon, MD
Megan Lebre, MEd
Andrea Hernandez
Linda Li, MD
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[Read past issues](#)

Please refer to the following contacts for all related department requests:

- Academic Personnel: anesap@mednet.ucla.edu
- Billing: anesbilling@mednet.ucla.edu
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- Clinical Research: AnesthesiologyResearch@mednet.ucla.edu
- Communications: AnesthesiologyCommunications@mednet.ucla.edu
- Contracts & Grants: AnesContractsGrants@mednet.ucla.edu

As always, please reach out to your respective assistant for any support you may need.

