



# ANNUAL REPORT

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## FROM THE CHAIR

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

Welcome to our 2023 Annual Report!

For over 30 consecutive years, UCLA Health has been recognized as one of the top 10 institutions in the nation for Neurology and Neurosurgery. In 2023, we were proudly ranked as #6 in the nation.

UCLA Neurosurgery is uniquely suited to take on the most complex patient cases across the gamut of neurosurgical subspecialties, while simultaneously advancing the field through groundbreaking research. From innovations in brain tumor vaccines and immunotherapy, to leading research in focused ultrasound for movement disorders and deep brain stimulation for PTSD, to novel treatments for spinal cord injury, our team is dedicated to delivering top-notch and patient-centered care from the bench to the bedside and back.

UCLA Neurosurgery is consistently ranked among the top in the nation for NIH research funding, with more than \$10 million per year in federally funded grants. Our research includes dynamic clinical, translational, and basic research programs in the areas of brain tumors, traumatic brain injury, cerebrovascular disease, epilepsy, functional neurosurgery, pediatric neurosurgery, and spine surgery. Our faculty and residents are dedicated to multi-disciplinary collaboration and advancing our understanding through numerous high-impact publications, patent applications, and novel clinical trials.

Thank you for your continued support and interest in our program! From all of us at the UCLA Department of Neurosurgery, we wish you and your families good health.

Warm regards,

**LINDA M. LIAU, MD, PhD, MBA**

Professor & W. Eugene Stern Chair  
Chair & Executive Medical Director  
UCLA Department of Neurosurgery



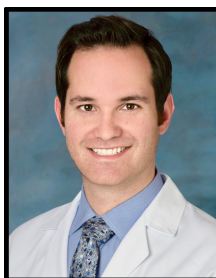
## BRAIN TUMOR DIVISION

Our Brain Tumor Division specializes in advanced treatments and research for tumors previously considered inoperable. In addition, the National Cancer Institute designated the UCLA Health Brain Tumor Center as one of only six Brain Cancer Specialized Programs of Research Excellence (SPORE) nationwide.

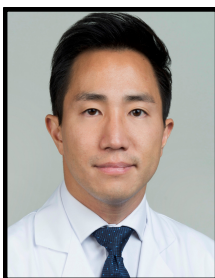
## CLINICAL FACULTY



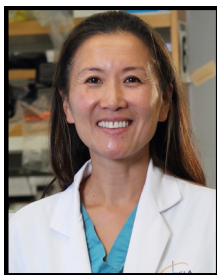
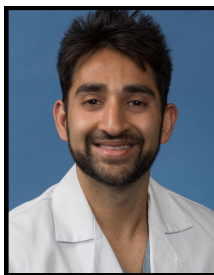
Marvin Bergsneider, MD



Richard Everson, MD



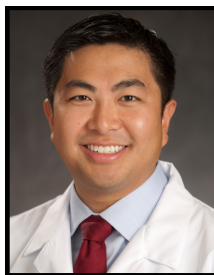
Won Kim, MD

Gregory Lekovic, MD,  
PhDLinda Liao, MD, PhD,  
MBA

Kunal Patel, MD

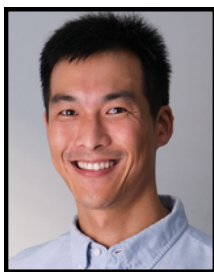


Anthony Wang, MD



Isaac Yang, MD

## RESEARCH SCIENTISTS



Jeffrey Chiang, PhD



Robert Prins, PhD

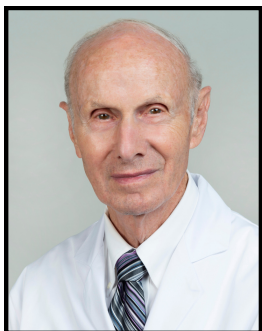
Ben Ellingson, PhD  
(Joint Faculty)Frank Pajonk, MD, PhD  
(Joint Faculty)

To learn more about our Brain Tumor Division click [here](#).

## SPINE DIVISION

Our Spine faculty offer comprehensive, world-class care for spinal injuries, disorders, and disease. The division specializes in effective, nonsurgical treatments and the latest minimally invasive procedures.

## CLINICAL FACULTY



Ulrich Batzdorf, MD



Joel Beckett, MD



Sanjay Dhall, MD



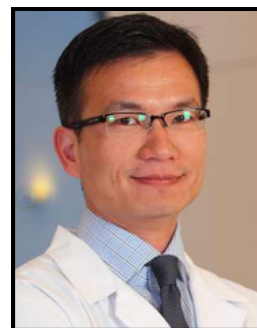
Michael Dorsi, MD



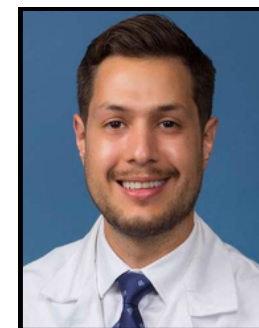
Samer Ghostine, MD



Langston Holly, MD



Daniel Lu, MD, PhD



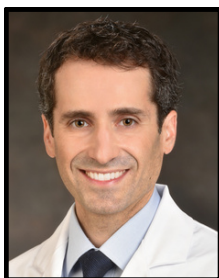
Andrew Vivas, MD

To learn more about our Spine Division click [here](#).

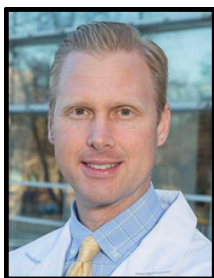


**CEREBROVASCULAR DIVISION**

Our cerebrovascular neurosurgeons utilize the most sophisticated techniques to safely and effectively treat a variety of complex cerebrovascular conditions.

**CLINICAL FACULTY**

Geoffrey Colby, MD,  
PhD



Jeremiah Johnson, MD



Anthony Wang, MD



Gary Duckwiler, MD  
(Joint Faculty)



Reza Jahan, MD  
(Joint Faculty)



Viktor Szeder, MD,  
PhD (Joint Faculty)

To learn more about our Cerebrovascular Division click [here](#).

**PEDIATRIC DIVISION**

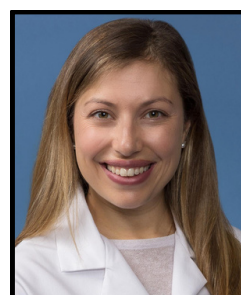
Our pediatric neurosurgeons have led the world in groundbreaking discoveries in both the clinical and research realms. The pediatric team offers top-notch care through continuous research and innovative surgical techniques.

**CLINICAL FACULTY**

Aria Fallah, MD



Anthony Wang, MD



Maya Newman, MD  
(Physiatry)

To learn more about our Pediatric Division click [here](#).

**FUNCTIONAL & EPILEPSY DIVISION**

The Functional & Epilepsy Division specializes in groundbreaking, advanced techniques that lead to exceptional outcomes for patients suffering from neuromodulatory disorders and seizures.

**CLINICAL FACULTY**

Ausaf Bari, MD, PhD



Aria Fallah, MD



Itzhak Fried, MD,  
PhD



Jean-Philippe  
Langevin, MD

**RESEARCH SCIENTISTS**

Nanthia Suthana, PhD



Martin Monti, PhD  
(Joint Faculty)

To learn more about our Functional Division, click [here](#).  
To learn more about our Epilepsy Division, click [here](#).

## NEUROTRAUMA &amp; NEUROCRITICAL CARE DIVISION

Our critical care and trauma team offers advanced, lifesaving care for brain and spinal cord injuries. In addition, the Brain Injury Research Center (BIRC) is dedicated to developing effective therapies for patients suffering from head injuries.

## CLINICAL FACULTY



Manuel Buitrago-Blanco, MD, PhD

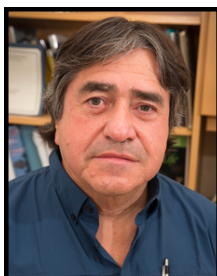


Paul Vespa, MD

## RESEARCH SCIENTISTS



Chris Giza, MD



Fernando Gomez-Pinilla, PhD



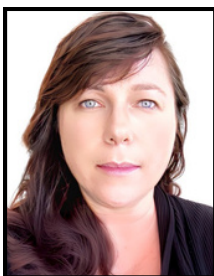
Tiffany Greco, PhD



Neil Harris, PhD



David Hovda, PhD



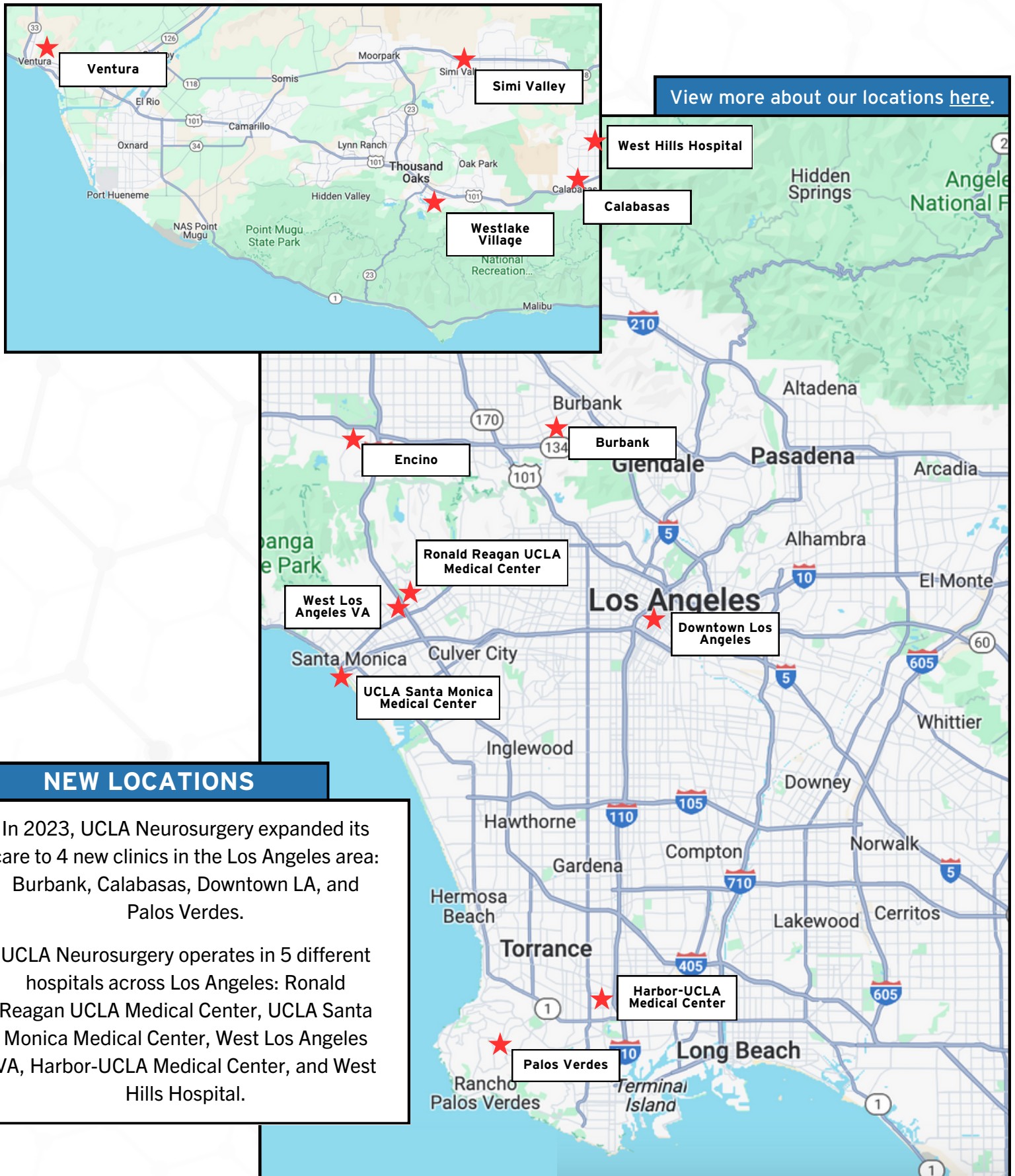
Janel Le Belle, PhD



Mayumi Prins, PhD

To learn more about our Neurotrauma & Neurocritical Care Division, click [here](#).





## NEW LOCATIONS

In 2023, UCLA Neurosurgery expanded its care to 4 new clinics in the Los Angeles area: Burbank, Calabasas, Downtown LA, and Palos Verdes.

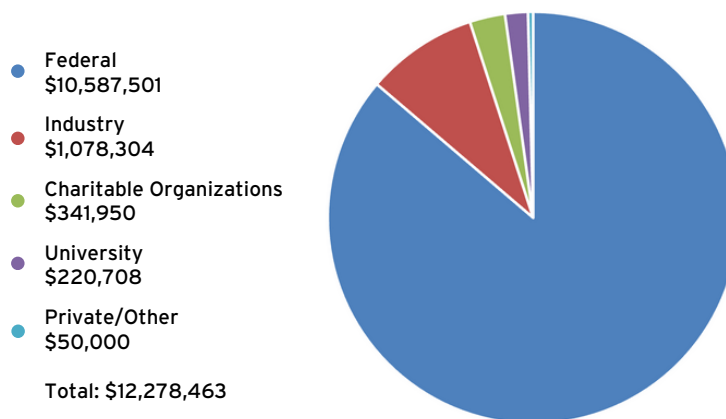
UCLA Neurosurgery operates in 5 different hospitals across Los Angeles: Ronald Reagan UCLA Medical Center, UCLA Santa Monica Medical Center, West Los Angeles VA, Harbor-UCLA Medical Center, and West Hills Hospital.

## RESEARCH SUPPORT

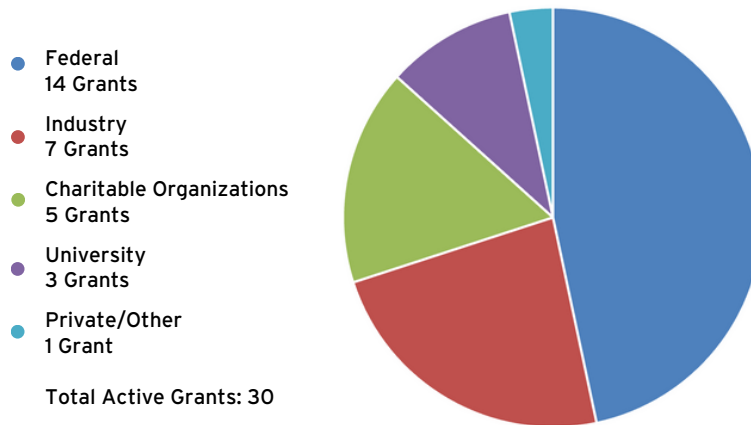
Grants supporting the UCLA Neurosurgery Department fund a variety of critical research efforts undertaken by our faculty and research scientists. Every cent goes towards improving the lives of patients with life-altering neurosurgical conditions.

UCLA Neurosurgery continues to be highly ranked in NIH funding by the Blue Ridge Institute for Medical Research (2023).

Department of Neurosurgery - Sources of Research Support (2023)



Department of Neurosurgery - Total Active Grants (2023)



## INNOVATIVE CLINICAL TRIALS

In 2023, the Department of Neurosurgery initiated a variety of clinical trials. These trials investigated treatments and hypotheses for the most complex neurosurgical disorders that patients face. View active clinical trials [here](#).

## COMMITMENT TO RESEARCH

The UCLA Neurosurgery Department stands out due to its significant contributions at both the bench and the bedside. Our cadre of clinicians and researchers are dedicated to multi-disciplinary collaboration and publishing high-impact research that advances our understanding and practice of neurosurgery.

## PUBLICATION STATISTICS

TOTAL UCLA NEUROSURGERY PUBLICATIONS IN 2023

208

SENIOR/FIRST AUTHOR PUBLICATIONS BY UCLA NEUROSURGERY FACULTY & RESIDENTS IN 2023

91

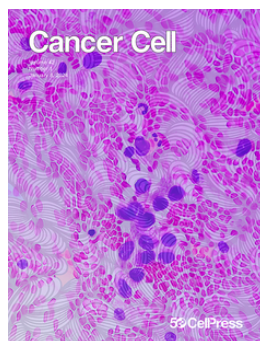
## WHERE WE PUBLISHED

UCLA Neurosurgery faculty and residents were published in a variety of high-impact journals in 2023.

## SAMPLE OF HIGH-IMPACT JOURNALS



The Lancet Oncology



Cancer Cell



The Lancet Neurology



Signal Transduction and Targeted Therapy



## TRAINING THE NEXT GENERATION

The rigorous core curriculum offered by our education programs is designed to train neurosurgeons to achieve educational, clinical, academic, and technical excellence. Our goal is to produce the next generation of leaders who, through top-notch clinical expertise and innovation in basic science, will advance the field of neurosurgery.

## EDUCATION METRICS

In 2023, 123 individuals participated in training in the UCLA Neurosurgery Department.

24 CLINICAL RESIDENTS

10 CLINICAL FELLOWS

43 SUB-INTERNS

35 STUDENT ROTATORS

11 UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCHERS

## RESIDENT AWARDS (2023)

DGSOM Residents and Fellows Award for Excellence in Teaching with Humanism (Joseph Bell, MD, PhD)

Southeastern Brain Tumor Foundation Award (Joshua Casaos, MD)

Frank Acosta, MD Resident Research Award (TJ Florence, MD, PhD)

North American Skull Base Society (NASBS) - Best Basic Science Abstract Award (Maya Harary, MD)

AANS Elekta Tumor Section Award (Kunal Patel, MD)

## RESIDENT GRANTS (2023)

L.B. Research & Education Foundation - H.H. Lee Research Grant (Yagmur Muftuoglu, MD, PhD and Sheel Shah, MD, PhD)

Society of Neurological Surgeons NSTP Grant (Yagmur Muftuoglu, MD, PhD)

UCLA Jonsson Comprehensive Cancer Center Fellowship Grant (Yagmur Muftuoglu, MD, PhD)

NIH KL2 Translational Science Scholars Program Grant (Kunal Patel, MD)

NIH-NINDS R25 Grant (Sophie Peeters, MD)

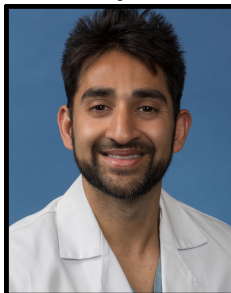
RESIDENT DESTINATIONS

The goal of the UCLA Neurosurgery Residency Program is to train excellent, well-rounded academic neurosurgeons. Our graduates emerge not only as professionals in the operating room and in the lab, but as effective leaders and educators.

2023 RESIDENT GRADUATES



Azim Laiwalla, MD, PhD  
Neurosurgeon,  
Kaiser Permanente



Kunal Patel, MD  
Assistant Professor,  
UCLA



Jasmine Thum, MD  
Functional Fellow,  
UCSF

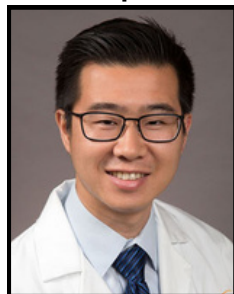
2022 RESIDENT GRADUATES



Mark Attiah, MD  
Assistant Professor,  
University of North Carolina



H. Westley Phillips, MD  
Assistant Professor,  
Stanford University



Matthew Sun, MD  
Assistant Professor,  
UT Southwestern

## MISSION

The UCLA Department of Neurosurgery is dedicated to fostering a culture of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) to enhance the quality of our education, research, and patient care. Our mission is to inspire the next generation of diverse neuroscientists and healthcare professionals through strategic partnerships, mentorship programs, and community engagement initiatives.

## PROJECT EXAMPLES

### UCLA-LAUDS SERIES

The UCLA Neurosurgery Department partnered with the LAUSD to deliver a series of lectures to high school students online. The topics center on Neuroscience and career guidance and are given by a variety of researchers and clinicians from UCLA.

### SUMMER RESEARCH PROGRAM

The UCLA Neurosurgery Department partnered with several other neurosurgery programs to offer a Summer Research Scholarship for black medical students interested in neurosurgery and neuroscience.

### DIVERSITY SCHOLARSHIP

The UCLA Neurosurgery Department established a Diversity Scholarship to support students interested in neurosurgery training. All upcoming fourth year medical students with an interest in equity, diversity, and inclusion are encouraged to apply.

## RECOGNITION OF EXCELLENCE

In 2023, the UCLA Neurosurgery Department received the inaugural Justice Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) Impact Award from the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA. The JEDI Impact Award recognizes the department that had the largest demonstrated impact in six EDI-related domains, including people, climate, structural equity, professional development/education, community engagement, and equitable patient care.

