

THE INSIDER

*A newsletter for alumni and friends of the
Department of Anesthesiology & Pain Medicine, University of Washington*

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Dear alumni, colleagues and friends,

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to the relaunch of our departmental newsletter – a long-awaited reconnection with our wonderful and diverse community of alumni, colleagues, and friends who continue to shape and support our mission.

We are excited to bring you regular updates that highlight the energy, innovation and impact of our department. Ultimately, I hope this newsletter will serve as more than just a source of news, but a bridge between past and present, a celebration of our shared history, and an invitation for you to engage with the legacy we are building together.

The Insider features stories that align with our three core missions: research, education, and clinical care. You'll read about the current resident experience, groundbreaking discoveries from our research teams, innovative education initiatives to prepare the next generation of physician leaders, and the compassionate care our teams deliver every day. We'll also occasionally spotlight our UW Global Anesthesia Initiative (UW-GAIN) and, importantly, some of the many ways our donors help to make the stories you will read possible.

In this issue, you'll travel to Kenya with recent APM residency graduate Dr. Jonah Tischler, who participated in our UW-GAIN global health rotation. You'll also learn about the life and resilience of Beverley Heins and how her legacy lives on through the Beverley Heins Endowed Fund for Pain Medicine – established in her honor by her daughter and son-in-law, Lisa and Jim Koch.



**G. Burkhard Mackensen,
MD, PhD, FASE, FSCAI
Allan J. Treuer Endowed
Professor & Chair**

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR, continued

You'll also find faculty news and upcoming events that are open to alumni and friends. No matter where you are in the world, we hope these updates inspire you to stay connected, attend a lecture, or share your story with us.

In addition to the contents of this issue of *The Insider*, I invite you to watch this [introductory video](#), which reveals additional announcements, including two exciting special events hosted by APM in the first months of 2026.



First, the inaugural **Dr. Thomas Hornbein Endowed Memorial Lecture** featuring renowned high-altitude researcher Dr. Mike Grocott, an event made possible thanks to generous philanthropic support from many of you. Second, in celebration of **our department hosting the 2026 Association of University Anesthesiologists (AUA) meeting**, UW faculty member and **Nobel Prize laureate Dr. David Baker** has graciously agreed to speak about his groundbreaking work. I encourage you to watch the video to learn more, then mark your calendars and join us for these exciting events!

Our department has evolved considerably, but our foundation is rooted in the people who make it exceptional – you. Your achievements, insights, and support continue to enrich our community, and we are eager to strengthen those ties through this renewed platform.

Thank you for being part of our journey. We look forward to sharing more with you and hearing from you in the months ahead.

Sincerely,

G.B. Mackensen

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ADVANCED PTEEXAM® NEWS

Congratulations to recent adult cardiothoracic anesthesiology fellowship graduates Jared Cadogan, DO; Zachary Chen, DO; Derrick Ha, DO; and Aakash Saxena, DO on passing the Advanced PTEeXAM®!

For the past decade, UW Anesthesiology & Pain Medicine has maintained a perfect record—30 fellows in a row have passed the exam.

***“The UW method works...
I scored in the 98th percentile!”***





Naivasha Sub-County Hospital, University of Nairobi and UW-GAIN collaborators (L-R): Drs. Dalha Daher, Fani Nhuch, Jonah Tischler, David Muigai, Douglas Bosibori, Steven Mwangi, Tony Roche, Sara Nikravan

BRIDGING CONTINENTS THROUGH CARE AND EDUCATION: REFLECTING ON A TRANSFORMATIVE ROTATION IN KENYA

Dr. Jonah Tischler, who grew up near Tel Aviv and trained at Columbia University before becoming an anesthesiology resident at UW, has long been drawn to global health. “It’s part of my family’s story,” he says, recalling his grandfather’s work as a physician in South Africa. “I’ve always wanted to be involved in global health in some way.”

In April, Tischler accompanied UW Global Anesthesia Initiative (UW-GAIN) faculty for a rotation at Naivasha Sub-County Hospital in Kenya. Situated near Lake Naivasha in Nakuru County, the hospital serves a catchment area of about 180,000 people with 273 beds, two operating theaters, two ICU beds, and several wards onsite.

“I really wish that every resident could have this opportunity. It changed how I understand the role of an anesthesiologist. We can learn so much from our colleagues around the world.”

~ Dr. Jonah Tischler, recent graduate of the UW anesthesiology residency program

Developed in partnership with the University of Nairobi Department of Anesthesia and hospital leadership, the resident rotation was designed to build sustainable connections and foster bidirectional learning. Once in Kenya, Tischler paired up with local senior anesthesia resident Dr. Dalha Daher. Together, they collaborated to support local priorities while training together as clinicians and educators.

Expanding the vision of care

Working alongside Dr. Steven Mwangi, the sole anesthesiologist at the hospital, Daher and Tischler witnessed firsthand the challenges and creative thinking required to deliver care in a resource-limited setting. “Dr. Mwangi is everything,” Tischler emphasized. “Seeing the embodiment of one anesthesiologist in all realms, including the operating room wards and ICU, was inspiring.”

Reflecting on the scope of the care Dr. Mwangi provides across specialties as a perioperative and critical care physician, Tischler said it changed how he sees his role, not just as an anesthesiologist or clinician, but as an educator and team member.

“I saw how much anesthesiologists can contribute in places with limited resources,” he said, adding that he counts his time in Kenya as the most meaningful experience of his residency.

Dr. Daher, who co-presented with Tischler at the UW Department of Anesthesiology & Pain Medicine Grand Rounds in July, described the rotation as “truly transformative,” adding, “It broadened my vision of what the practice of anesthesiology and healthcare delivery can and should be.”

Partnering with purpose

While in Naivasha, Daher and Tischler experienced a rotation focused on systems-based learning, clinical education and teaching. Together, they conducted a needs assessment and developed protocols for massive transfusion and capnography—previously unavailable at the hospital. Under the direction of UW and University of Nairobi faculty, they



Drs. Tischler (top left) and Daher (top right) with trainees

also led point-of-care ultrasound (POCUS) trainings in Nairobi and Naivasha, equipping over 50 local clinicians with technical skills to improve patient outcomes using these diagnostic tools.

One case involved a patient with suspected heart failure. Using bedside ultrasound, the team identified severely reduced left ventricular function and pleural effusion, enabling timely treatment. “Days later, formal echo confirmed exactly what we had already seen with POCUS,” recalled Daher.

At July’s Grand Rounds, Dr. Douglas Bosibori, a key coordinator for the POCUS trainings, shared the long-term impact of Daher’s and Tischler’s work. “Doctors, interns, pharmacists and students are now using devices to assess patients, monitor treatment regimens, and during resuscitation,” Bosibori said, adding, “We have been lucky with this partnership, and we are very grateful.”

“To be honest,” Daher reflected, “I feel like I’ve been the one who’s benefited the most from this partnership.”

“I really wish that every resident—both at the University of Nairobi and University of Washington—could have this opportunity,” Tischler added. “It changed how I understand the role of an anesthesiologist. We can learn so much from our colleagues around the world.”

Sustaining the momentum

Daher continues to lead weekly POCUS rounds in Naivasha, and is co-authoring a pediatric anesthesia reference guide in Somali with Tischler to support providers in Somali-speaking regions.

At the University of Washington, Assistant Professor and Director of UW-GAIN Dr. Yuanting Zha embraces the program’s capacity for a broader vision and multi-institutional partnership. Curriculum for UW anesthesiology residents now includes a global health lecture series. Trainees also have the option to enroll in a three-week global health leadership course offered each fall by the UW Department of Global Health.

BRIDGING CONTINENTS THROUGH CARE AND EDUCATION, continued

Initiated by the generosity of UW Professor of Anesthesiology Dr. Tony Roche, a newly established Endowed Global Health Fund for Anesthesiology & Pain Medicine further supports host-led initiatives, scholarly exchange and future bidirectional trainee opportunities.

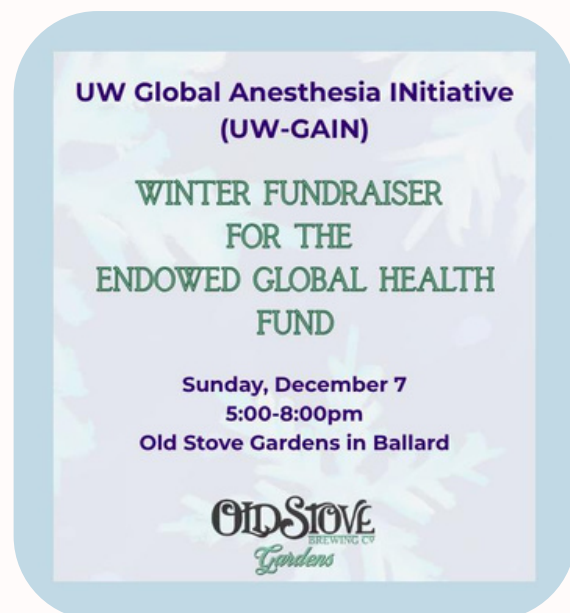
“We are excited to continue to grow this partnership,” Zha said, “and to promote equitable care around the world.”

Two UW anesthesiology residents are already confirmed for a collaborative rotation in Naivasha next spring.

How you can support UW-GAIN

Donations to UW-GAIN enable rotations and partnerships to continue, and also help fund essential equipment such as resuscitation mannequins and ultrasound machines—tools now actively used in training and care.

To sustain UW-GAIN’s impactful momentum, program leaders are hosting a Winter Fundraiser on December 7. The event, which will be held at Old Stove Gardens in Seattle’s Ballard neighborhood, will include food, drinks, and an auction. All contributions will directly support UW-GAIN and its partners.



[Winter Fundraiser tickets](#) are available for purchase now through December 7.



Donations to the [Endowed Global Health Fund](#) are also accepted online.



To learn more about giving options, please reach out to Director of Philanthropy Wendy Kelley: wkelley@uw.edu

UPCOMING EVENTS



DECEMBER 7

Winter Fundraiser, organized by UW-GAIN faculty & staff
Old Stove in Ballard | Seattle, WA
[Secure your tickets](#)



JANUARY 27 & 28

Annual Gunn-Loke Evening Lecture & Grand Rounds
Featuring George A. Mashour, MD, PhD
Senior Associate Dean for Faculty and Faculty Development
Professor of Anesthesiology and Pharmacology, University of Michigan



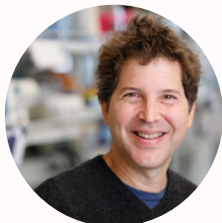
MARCH 10

Dr. Thomas Hornbein Endowed Memorial Lecture
Featuring Mike Grocott, MD, FRCA, FRCP, FFICM, GChPOM (ANZCA)
Professor of Anaesthesia & Critical Care, University of Southampton

MARCH 27-29

AUA 2026 Annual Meeting
Hosted by UW Anesthesiology & Pain Medicine
Seattle, WA

Special pre-conference speaker!



David Baker, PhD
2024 Nobel Laureate
Department of Biochemistry
University of Washington



Annual Meeting

[Registration Information](#)

To learn more and RSVP to
guest lectures, contact
Wendy Kelley:
wkelly@uw.edu



Lisa and Jim Koch

EXPANDING ACCESS TO PAIN CARE ACROSS THE WWAMI REGION: THE BEVERLEY HEINS ENDOWED FUND

Adapted from the article [“A Mother’s Pain, a Daughter’s Mission,”](#) by Nicole Beattie

Beverley ‘Bev’ Heins and her daughter Lisa Koch were always best friends. As the youngest of four and the only girl among her siblings, Lisa has fond memories of her childhood in Billings, Montana, and says she and her mom would “chum up” and go for walks in the woods whenever her brothers and father were off fishing.

“We loved to laugh,” says Lisa. “She was a kid at heart.”

In the late 1990s, Bev was diagnosed with complex regional pain syndrome (CRPS) after years with the experience of unexplained pain. Living in rural Montana, she faced long travel distances and limited access to multidisciplinary pain care. Despite use of spinal cord stimulation, physical therapy, complementary modalities, and opioid-based regimens, she experienced ongoing pain and complications that diminished her quality of life.

A silent struggle

“Mom wouldn’t say a lot about her pain — she never complained and was the strong, silent type,” says Lisa. “Her primary care doctor did his best, but this was an area he just didn’t have knowledge in. This led her to other specialists who didn’t treat her whole self.”

EXPANDING ACCESS TO PAIN CARE ACROSS THE WWAMI REGION, continued

Bev's weekly one-hour calls with Lisa turned into 15-minute calls due to fatigue and brain fog. Family members noticed that she'd withdraw during gatherings to rest instead of chatting at the kitchen table or sitting around the campfire.

But that's not to say Bev gave up.

"She was determined to stay on her feet and not let the disease beat her," says Lisa. "She walked a mile every day until she had to move to an assisted living facility."

Around the same time, Bev was diagnosed with stage 2 breast cancer, which seemed to respond well to treatment. But the CRPS continued to limit her family participation. A couple of days before her granddaughter's

wedding reception, she told Lisa that she was having horrific nightmares and didn't feel well. It turned out her infusion pump had run out, and she was experiencing opioid withdrawal symptoms. She had to be hospitalized for four days and missed the family celebration.

"That had the biggest impact on our family, but she was always there for us, positive and full of love and laughter," says Lisa.

When Bev's pain increased dramatically in 2022, Lisa and Jim were connected to Dr. Brett Stacey, division chief of pain medicine at the University of Washington. Unfortunately, while working toward a solution for Bev through the UW Center for Pain Relief, she was diagnosed with a recurrence of breast cancer. She'd assumed the pain she was experiencing was just the CRPS and didn't seek treatment until it was too far along. Bev passed in November 2022 as a result.



Lisa Koch (L) with her late mother Beverley 'Bev' Heins (R)

An enduring remembrance

In 2023, Bev's daughter Lisa Koch and son-in-law Jim established the Beverley Heins Endowed Fund for Pain Medicine at UW Medicine. Their extraordinary generosity honors Bev's resilience and addresses the critical gaps in chronic pain care for patients in underserved areas.

In 2024 and 2025, Lisa and Jim increased their contribution to the endowment and added immediate-use funds to support projects that extend UW's expertise across the WWAMI region (Washington, Wyoming, Alaska, Montana, Idaho), directly benefiting pain patients.

The fund is driving several initiatives within UW Medicine's Division of Pain Medicine:

- CRPS-specific patient data collection to inform targeted, individualized treatment approaches
- Support group development for patients and families living with chronic pain
- TelePain program expansion into rural communities to train local providers in evidence-based, multimodal pain management and reduce reliance on opioids

"I'm hoping that with our assistance, the UW Pain Clinic can help ensure patients know they have someone who understands and is ready to help them find ways to live the best life they can."

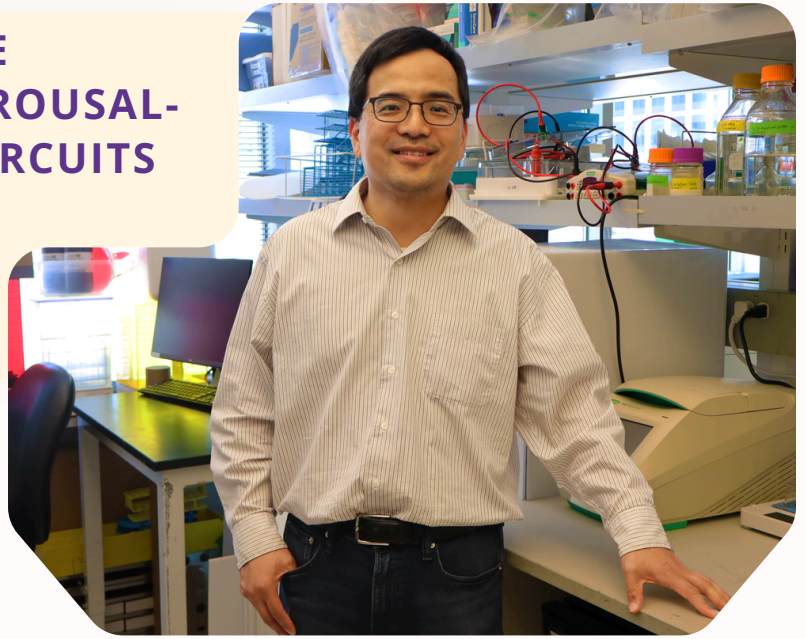
~ Lisa Koch

These philanthropic investments have also helped secure a federal grant to expand the TelePain program for vulnerable and geographically isolated populations, beginning in Montana. For pain medicine professionals and alumni, Bev's story is a reminder of the profound impact targeted funding can have: enabling clinical innovation, reaching underserved patients, and sustaining the multidisciplinary model pioneered by the visionary Dr. John J. Bonica at the University of Washington in 1961.



RESEARCHERS ADVANCE UNDERSTANDING OF AROUSAL-MODULATING BRAIN CIRCUITS

Adapted from UW Medicine Newsroom article, [*"Researchers gain insights into the brain's 'dimmer switch,'"*](#) by Michael McCarthy



Dr. Li Li

A new study in [*Nature*](#), co-first authored by Dr. Li Li, associate professor of pediatric anesthesiology, and Dr. Andrew Luskin, a former UW graduate student and current postdoctoral fellow at The Rockefeller University, advances our understanding of how the brain regulates arousal, attention, and responses to stress and fear. These findings open the possibility of new ways to treat neurological and neuropsychiatric disorders, said Li, who studies opioid drug withdrawal.

"It will open a lot of doors for a lot of labs."

~ Dr. Michael Bruchas, senior author and principal investigator

The team used a technique called single-cell RNA sequencing to identify the different types of neurons in the locus coeruleus and peri-LC, and another technique called pixel-seq to map their exact locations. These investigations revealed that both the locus coeruleus and peri-LC have distinct subpopulations of cells, likely with different functions.

"During withdrawal, for example, we know the locus coeruleus becomes hyperactive," Li said. "With these findings we may be able to identify drug targets either in the locus coeruleus or the peri-LC that will reduce withdrawal symptoms."

The paper provides researchers with what senior author Dr. Michael Bruchas describes as a "detailed roadmap" for studying the locus coeruleus and peri-LC.

"The finding shows us who the key players are, how they connect, and the neurotransmitters involved," he said. "It will open a lot of doors for a lot of labs."

FACULTY NEWS & AWARDS



Department Chair **G. Burkhard Mackensen, MD, PhD, FASE, FSCAI**, was honored with an Excellence in Mentoring Award

by Women in Cardiothoracic Anesthesiology (WITCA). Read the [full article](#).



Assistant Professor **Kelly Michaelsen, MD, PhD**, won an APSF/Medtronic Research Award and the Ellison C. Pierce, Jr., MD Merit Award

to support her work toward an integrated, centralized anesthesia alarm system based on aviation alarm systems principles.



Professor **Nathalia Jimenez, MD, MPH**, is one of eight 2025-2026 Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Health Policy Fellows. She is

currently with the highly selective cohort in Washington, D.C., where she will spend one year working on health-related legislative and regulatory issues with members of Congress and the executive branch.



Professor **Wang Wang, MD, PhD**, received a \$300,000 American Heart Association grant in support of his work to target mitochondrial calcium uniporter for postnatal heart disease.

FACULTY IN THE NEWS

[*The brain's quiet conductor: How hidden cells fine-tune arousal*](#) // The Transmitter // Dr. Michael Bruchas, NAPE Center

[*Medical errors are still harming patients. AI could help change that.*](#) // NBC News // Dr. Kelly Michaelsen

[*What's Best for My Pain: Tylenol or Advil?*](#) // New York Times // Dr. Katherin Peperzak, Director of Inpatient Pain Services

[*Managing the mental health impacts of chronic pain*](#) // Seattle Times // Drs. Kaitlin Touza & Yian Chen, UW Center for Pain Relief



Professor **Dan Raftery, PhD**, welcomed another year of NIH P30 grant funding for his project titled "Collaborating on the Proteomics and Metabolomics Shared Resource (PMSR)."



Professor **Rong Tian, MD, PhD**, received a significant gift from [OrsoBio](#) in support of cardiac metabolism research at the UW Mitochondria and Metabolism Center.



Professor **Tonya Palermo, PhD**, and Associate Professor **See Wan Tham, MBBS**, received a five-year, \$11 million NIH UC2 high impact research award for pediatric pain. Their funded project will begin by analyzing retrospective



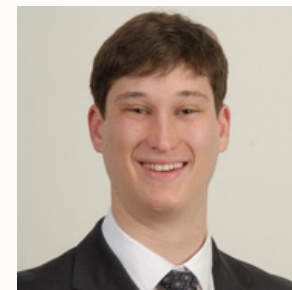
electronic health record data to identify common clinical features associated with chronic primary pain in pediatric patients. Building on these insights, the team will then collect prospective data to determine which phenotypic characteristics are linked to different pain trajectories and outcomes. Read the [full article](#).



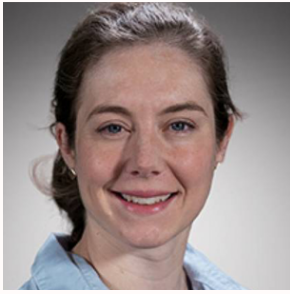
Associate Professor of Neuroanesthesiology **Marie Angèle Theárd, MD**, has been named Vice Chair for Community Building & Belonging.



Professor **Kushang Patel, PhD**, was awarded a three-year, \$4.5M award from the National Institute of Nursing Research (NINR). His work will focus on adapting and implementing a nurse care management model for rural patients with chronic pain.

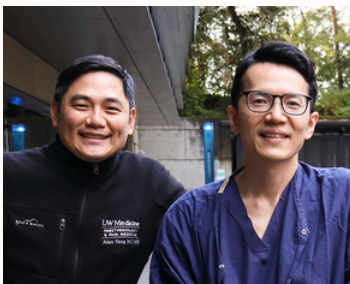


A four-year, \$237.5M HRSA Rural Telemedicine Grant was awarded to Acting Assistant Professor **Jacob Gross, MD, MPH**, to expand the TelePain program. Providing education, training, and support via phone and webinar sessions to community providers in the WWAMI region, the goal is to increase knowledge and confidence in chronic pain management and to provide consultation for complex chronic pain cases.



Clinical Assistant Professor **Katherine Heller, MD** assumed the role of interim associate medical director for critical

care at the University of Washington Medical Center. Read the [full article](#).



Faculty Fellow **Akira Mukai, MD, PhD**, and Assistant Professor **Alan Yang, MD**, were honored with

the SNACC and Japanese Society of Anesthesiologists (JSA) Joint Award at this year's SNACC Annual Meeting, for their research focused on the use of caffeine in awake craniotomy.



In collaboration with the John Rogers Lab at Northwestern University, research fellow **Sean Piantadosi, PhD**, Professor **Michael Bruchas, PhD**, and their team at the Bruchas Lab in the UW Center of Neurobiology of Addiction, Pain, and Emotion have built a paperclip-sized, wireless device that can deliver

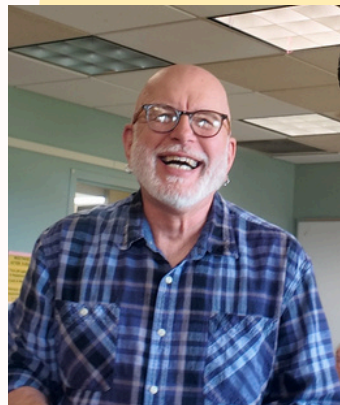


drugs to the brain and instantly track how it responds—all while the subject moves freely. An article describing the new research tool was published in the May issue of the CELL Press journal, [Neuron](#).

HAPPY RETIREMENT!



Clinical Professor **Ivan Lesnik, MD**
11 years of service



Research Coordinator **Shawn Mincer**
14 years of service



Professor **Greg Terman, MD, PhD**
38 years of service



CONNECT WITH US

We love hearing from alumni about achievements, career milestones, and personal updates. They are an important part of our department's story. As we prepare the next edition of the *The Insider*, we invite you to share your news with us!

Your experiences not only inspire current trainees and faculty but also strengthen the bonds within our alumni community. Whether it's a new professional role, awards or honors, publications, impactful projects, or life updates, we'd be delighted to consider your news in a future alumni spotlight section of the newsletter.

Do you have a suggestion about what to include in future issues of *The Insider*? We want to know that, too.

Please send your updates and feedback to Tracy Hyland at apmcomms@uw.edu. Feel free to include a photo if you'd like.

Thank you for staying connected — we look forward to being in touch!