DAVID GEFFEN SCHOOL OF MEDICINE AT UCLA
ENDOWMENT REPORT
2025

UCLA | David Geffen School of Medicine

The David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA continues to rank among the top-rated medical schools. In leading-edge facilities, students learn from distinguished clinician-scientists and clinician-educators who influence policy and innovations in health care. These students not only gain the expertise to deliver clinically outstanding and deeply compassionate care, but they also shape the future of the field.

2025 AT A GLANCE

NEW LEADERSHIP

University of California President James B. Milliken

On Aug. 1, 2025, **James B. Milliken** became the 22nd president of the University of California's (UC) world-renowned system of 10 campuses, six academic health centers and three nationally affiliated laboratories. President Milliken came to UC from the University of Texas (UT) system, where he served as chancellor since 2018. His previous leadership roles included chancellor of the City University of New York, president of the University of Nebraska and senior vice president at the University of North Carolina.

President Milliken has a history of supporting research and medical schools. Under his leadership, UT had $5 billion in annual research expenditures, ranking second in the nation. The UT system's health enterprise, with seven medical schools, is one of the largest health care providers in the nation.

President Milliken is proud of UC's remarkable achievements in research and looks forward to contributing to its next era of discovery and impact. "The University of California is universally regarded as the preeminent public research university in the world," President Milliken says. "With nearly 300,000 students and generating over $80 billion in economic activity, UC enhances the daily lives of people in California and across the country through world-class educational opportunities, groundbreaking research and top-rated health care."

LEADING-EDGE
RESEARCH EXCELLENCE

This year, UCLA faced significant disruptions to its research mission. In January, the federal government proposed changes to indirect costs and compliance requirements for research grants, which would create administrative and financial strains on UCLA and other leading research institutions. UCLA then faced even greater disruptions when the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the National Science Foundation (NSF) and the Department of Energy (DOE) suspended research grants totaling hundreds of millions of dollars. These suspensions arrived in July and were cited by federal authorities as related to concerns about antisemitism and bias, halting lifesaving research and impacting the labs of many David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA faculty. While NIH and NSF awards were reinstated in August and September, DOE funding remains suspended.

UCLA leadership has actively engaged in advocacy, legal review and community support, hosting town halls and coordinating with the University of California Office of the President and Board of Regents to protect research continuity. Meanwhile, the University of California and the federal government have been negotiating a $1.2 billion fine against UCLA to settle civil rights violation allegations. On Nov. 14, a federal judge issued a preliminary injunction against the fine. Despite these challenges, the David Geffen School of Medicine

continues to deliver excellent education, novel research and lifesaving treatments.

Of particular note, the school and UCLA Health are gaining momentum and leading the field in four interrelated, forward-looking disciplines.

Immunology and immunotherapy
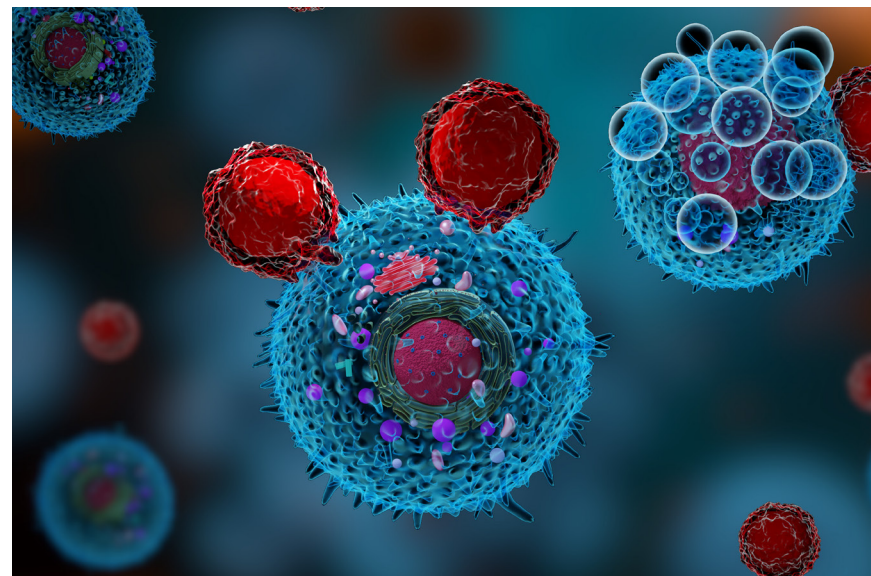
Rendering of immune cells

Using targeted recruitment and retention, UCLA has cultivated extraordinary expertise in the rapidly advancing field of immunology and immunotherapy. The program thrives through key collaborations with organizations such as the NIH-funded Undiagnosed Diseases Network, the California Center for Rare

Diseases, the Eli and Edythe Broad Center of Regenerative Medicine and Stem Cell Research, and the California Institute for Immunology and Immunotherapy — soon to be one of the first occupants of the new UCLA Research Park.

Since its inception in the 1960s, UCLA's immunology program has stood among the most distinguished in the nation and remains one of the few institutions worldwide to offer gene therapy for immune disorders.

UCLA is also a leader in immunotherapy, a transformative approach to treating cancer, autoimmune diseases and neurodegenerative conditions such as Alzheimer's disease. Breakthroughs in this field have contributed to HIV therapies, monoclonal antibody treatments and the development of mRNA vaccines, including those used to combat COVID-19.

Transplantation

UCLA Health has completed over 2,000 adult heart transplants, 300 pediatric heart transplants and more than 7,000 liver transplants. The year 2025 marked the university's most recent groundbreaking achievement, as UCLA Health performed the world's first bladder transplant. The transplant program has a reputation for pioneering complex multiorgan procedures, such as heart-lung and heart-liver transplants. The program also excels in pediatric transplantation and rare surgeries that include intestine, hand and face transplants.

Researchers are developing new methods to expand donor organ availability. Jerzy Kupiec-Weglinski, M.D., Ph.D., professor of surgery and of pathology and laboratory medicine, is creating methods to rejuvenate marginal donor livers, while Abbas Ardehali, M.D., professor of surgery and medicine and director of the UCLA heart, lung and heart-lung transplant programs, has revolutionized organ preservation, extending viability far beyond traditional ice storage. The team also continues to refine surgical techniques and immunosuppressive protocols to ensure long-term success for transplant recipients.

UCLA's outcomes speak volumes: The heart transplant program boasts a donor organ rejection rate of just 5%, while the national average is 25%.
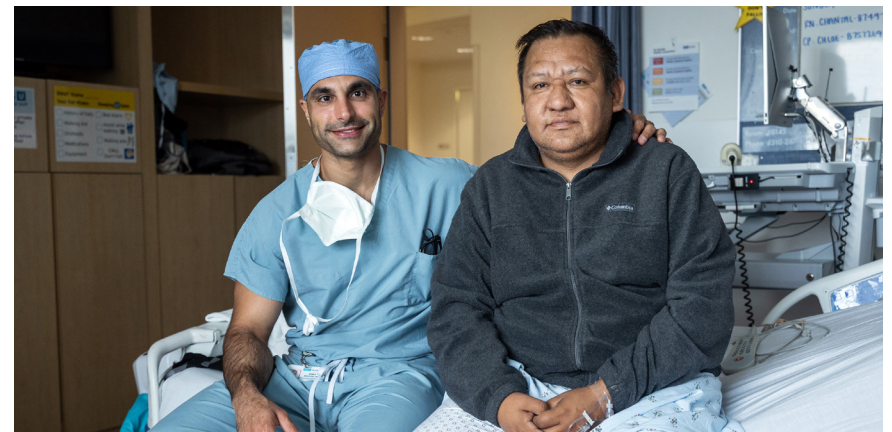
Dr. Nima Nassiri with bladder transplant patient Oscar Larrainzar
Photo credit: Nick Carranza

Big data

UCLA Health and the David Geffen School of Medicine are at the forefront of integrating big data and predictive medicine to transform health care delivery.

Big data harnesses machine learning and advanced analytics to enhance prevention, diagnosis, treatment and personalized care. Big data provides the datasets that are needed by artificial intelligence (AI) models. AI analyzes big data to uncover insights, make predictions and automate decisions.

UCLA Health is leading the responsible adoption of AI in clinical settings. With a strong emphasis on ethics, patient safety and transparency, the institution is shaping policies and partnerships to ensure AI is deployed in alignment with best practices. Paul Lukac, M.D., M.B.A., an assistant clinical professor in the Department of Pediatrics, was recently named the system's first chief AI officer and will lead the strategic development and integration of AI across UCLA Health.

Among numerous AI initiatives at the medical school, Catherine Sarkisian, M.D., one of the recipients of this year's David Geffen Endowment funding, is working with AI to better deliver lab results in a more personalized manner (page 17). The school's education program continues to incorporate AI in its teaching (page 10). Serena Wang, M.D., serves as the chair of the UCLA AI in Medical Education Council. Dr. Wang is also leading faculty professional development in this area through her Foundational AI Principles and Tools for Medical Educators course.

Predictive medicine

Predictive medicine uses AI to anticipate individual health risks and guide tailored interventions before symptoms appear. These strategies promise earlier diagnoses and more effective treatments, improving outcomes across countless patient populations.

The UCLA Research Park will be the first to combine immunology, quantum computing and AI, offering students proximity to some of the most brilliant minds in the field and leading-edge research.

ACHIEVEMENTS

The David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA again ranked well in this year's *U.S. News & World Report* list of Best Medical Schools: in the first tier for research and in the second tier for primary care. Acceptance to the school is highly competitive, with only 3.3% of applicants offered entry.

The school's partner training enterprise, UCLA Health, earned top honors in the magazine's Best Hospitals rankings. The system tied for No. 1 in both California and Los Angeles for hospital-based patient care and earned a spot on the publication's Best Hospitals Honor Roll for the 36th consecutive year. This year, the distinction was reserved for only 20 hospitals or health systems among more than 4,400 evaluated across 15 medical specialties and 22 procedures and conditions. Ten UCLA Health specialties placed in the top

10: ear, nose and throat (No. 2), pulmonology and lung surgery (No. 4), diabetes and endocrinology (No. 5), ophthalmology (No. 5), psychiatry (No. 5), urology (No. 7), geriatrics (No. 7), gastroenterology/gastrointestinal surgery (No. 8), rheumatology (No. 8) and orthopedics (No. 10). UCLA Health was designated high performing in all 22 procedures and conditions evaluated.

In September, UCLA Health announced receiving a $7.1 million grant from the NIH to expand research into a newer form of psychotherapy that has been shown to alleviate chronic pain among older adults to a greater extent than traditional cognitive behavioral therapy. The five-year clinical trial will work with nearly 700 war veterans at seven U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs centers throughout the country to evaluate the effectiveness of the therapy, known as emotional awareness and expression therapy. The trial will be led by Brandon Yarns, M.D., assistant professor in the Department of Psychiatry and Biobehavioral Sciences.

Medical school alumni continue to do great things. **Fred Ramsdell, Ph.D.**, who earned his doctorate in microbiology and immunology from the David Geffen School of Medicine, won a 2025 Nobel Prize in physiology or medicine. Dr. Ramsdell, an immunologist, shares the prize with Mary Brunkow, Ph.D., of the Institute for Systems Biology in Seattle and Shimon Sakaguchi, M.D., Ph.D., of Osaka University in Japan. Their discoveries of how regulatory T cells prevent the immune system from harming the body's own tissue have laid the foundation for a new field of research known as peripheral immune tolerance and have spurred the pursuit of regulatory T cell-centered therapeutics in areas like cancer, autoimmune disease and organ transplantation. There are currently more than 200 ongoing clinical trials based on their research.

Our individual faculty achievements are equally impressive:

E. Dale Abel, M.D., Ph.D., chair and executive medical director of the Department of Medicine, is the recipient of the Association of Professors of Medicine (APM) Robert H. Williams, MD, Distinguished Chair of Medicine Award. This peer-nominated award recognizes a physician who has demonstrated outstanding leadership as the chair of a department of internal medicine.

S. Thomas Carmichael, M.D., Ph.D. (left), chair of the Department of Neurology and professor of neurology and neurobiology, and **Paul W. Noble, M.D.**, professor-in-residence and a member of the academic senate, have been elected to the National Academy of Medicine (NAM), one of the highest honors in the fields of medicine and health. Members

are recognized for their exceptional professional achievement and commitment to service.

Dr. Carmichael is the lead author of a study published in *Nature Communications* that uncovered the first drug to fully reproduce the effects of physical stroke rehabilitation in scientific models. Maraviroc, originally developed to treat HIV, blocks the CCRV receptor in the brain, increasing the brain's plasticity and resulting in significant recovery in movement control after stroke in a preclinical model. Stroke is the leading cause of adult disability because most patients do not fully recover from the effects of stroke. To date, there are no drugs in the field of stroke recovery, requiring patients to undergo physical rehabilitation, which has shown to be only modestly effective. Maraviroc has yet to be tested in human clinical trials for this purpose.

Enrico Castillo, M.D., MSHPM, associate professor of clinical psychiatry at the David Geffen School of Medicine, has been named an Emerging Leader in Health and Medicine Scholar by the NAM. The Emerging Leaders program recognizes early- to mid-career leaders, researchers and health care providers. The 10 scholars chosen each year are offered unique opportunities to collaborate with the NAM and its members for a three-year period.
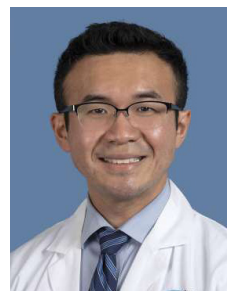

Joann Elmore, M.D., M.P.H., director of the UCLA National Clinician Scholars Program (page 14) and professor of medicine, will co-lead a newly funded, multi-institutional clinical trial to evaluate whether AI can help support radiologists in interpreting mammograms more accurately, with the goal of improving breast cancer screening and reducing unnecessary callbacks and anxiety for patients. The study is supported by a $16 million award from the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute.

Marla Lipsyc-Sharf, M.D. (top), and **Jingran Ji, M.D.** (bottom), both clinical instructors in the Division of Hematology/Oncology at the school, have received 2025 research awards from the Conquer Cancer Foundation, the philanthropic arm of the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO), in recognition of their contributions to advancing breast cancer research and care. Each received a Career Development Award — a three-year, $200,000 mentored grant that supports early-career physician-scientists as they transition to independent clinical research careers — aimed to accelerate discoveries in clinical oncology and improve outcomes for patients with cancer.

Theodore Scott Nowicki, M.D., Ph.D., an assistant professor-in-residence of pediatric hematology/oncology and microbiology, immunology and molecular genetics, has been awarded a prestigious $4.5 million R37 MERIT Award from the NIH to help improve the effectiveness of cellular therapies for solid tumors. Dr. Nowicki and his team have found that T cells are more effective at killing cancer cells when they produce higher levels of a molecule called TNF-alpha, which helps T cells mount a stronger attack against cancer and reduces the Th2 immune cells, which can weaken the immune response. The researchers have engineered a new "supercharged" T cell that can produce extra TNF-alpha when they recognize and engage with cancer cells.

Owen Witte, M.D., who holds the President's Chair in Developmental Immunology at UCLA, has been awarded the Harrington Prize for Innovation in Medicine by the Harrington Discovery Institute at University Hospitals and the American Society for Clinical Investigation. Dr. Witte is the founding director emeritus of the UCLA Broad Stem Cell Research Center and teaches in the Department of Microbiology, Immunology and Molecular Genetics, and in the Department of Molecular and Medical Pharmacology. He was chosen in recognition of his pioneering discoveries that have fundamentally reshaped the treatment of leukemia, lymphoma and other cancers.

The David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA seeks to strengthen the impact each of its graduates will have in the world of health and health care. The generous, unrestricted David Geffen Endowment is crucial to making this happen. The following pages describe the initiatives supported by the endowment in 2025.

EDUCATION

Education leadership

The David Geffen School of Medicine is dedicated to cultivating leaders who will shape the future of medicine across a wide spectrum of fields, including clinical care, academic teaching, scientific research, the corporate sector and public service. Realizing this vision demands bold thinking and purposeful action. It calls for inventive approaches to teaching and mentoring medical students and the resolve to lead transformative change within a complex institution. The David Geffen Endowment makes this possible by helping to support education leadership, including curriculum co-directors and longitudinal clinical experience site leads.

The school's curriculum goes well beyond procedural medical skills to emphasize the importance of providing compassionate, humanistic and effective patient-centered care. Delivering holistic care requires honing strong communication skills; gathering and interpreting patient data through comprehensive histories, physical examinations and diagnostic tests; formulating differential diagnoses; and developing evidence-based care plans.

Ethics and professionalism are at the core of the program, with a focus on empathy, compassion and respect for all.

Curriculum, course and teaching support; clerkship and clinical training support

The HEALS (Healer|Educator|Advocate|Leader|Scholar) curriculum, launched in 2021, graduated its first cohort of students on May 30, 2025. This set of graduates had one of the most successful residency matches in recent history. Nearly 99% matched to some of the top residency programs in the United States for their graduate medical training. Among the class of 2025, the top two specialties were internal medicine and psychiatry. Thirty-three percent matched in the UC system, with 20% matching at UCLA.

In keeping with the school's commitment to continuous quality improvement and evidence-based practice, feedback and evaluations from faculty, staff and students are used to continually refine the HEALS curriculum and academic calendar. During State of the Curriculum (SOTC) presentations, the associate dean for curricular affairs assembles assessment and evaluation data across courses to ensure that the curriculum is delivered cohesively and that program-level outcomes are achieved. These SOTC reviews combine a broad array of data sources and use external benchmarking for those constructs where it is available.

The SOTC process has informed important changes to address issues and strengthen the school's innovative HEALS

curriculum. These include a basic science integration course and longer ob/gyn and pediatrics rotations. Efforts are also underway to strengthen training in biochemistry, genetics, immunology and microbiology as a result of SOTC feedback.

The HEALS 2.0 curriculum integrates new and emerging content designed to ensure that students are best prepared to practice medicine in this age of rapid technological and scientific breakthroughs. Innovations include moving from a program organized around a traditional four-year structure to a three-phase curriculum delivered over four academic years. This design allows for more clinical training time, foundational science education and advanced electives. The updated calendar will ensure that students are well-prepared to provide optimal patient care.

Phase 1 focuses on case-based learning to encourage students to think like physicians from the beginning. This phase combines basic and clinical sciences, early clinical medicine experiences and all thread areas, such as patient care, research and interdisciplinary education. Phase 1 also features the Medicine and Society course, which allows students to explore the complex interplay of science, technology, health, social and structural determinants of health, ethics, and the humanities.

Phase 2 encompasses a year of clinical rotations, featuring clerkships and educational experiences that blend clinical care, basic science, thread areas, and many new and emerging topics.

Phase 3 emphasizes a deep creative and scholarly experience, the Discovery program, with protected time dedicated to a personal academic interest and longitudinal clinical experiences, as well as specialty-specific competency development and internship preparation.

AI in simulation education

A student utilizes the UCLA Simulation Center

The Simulation Center discussed in last year's report has become a leading research hub for exploring AI applications in medical education and simulation. Faculty and staff are building and testing a variety of learning experiences driven by large language models (LLMs) to research AI's effectiveness as a communication skills practice tool for medical trainees. Last year, the Simulation Center team built an AI-simulated patient

phone call where students could practice delivering abnormal mammogram results and receive automated performance feedback. This prototype was piloted with medical students and presented at numerous national and international medical conferences, leading to a manuscript in a high-profile, open-access journal, the *Journal of Medical Internet Research (JMIR)*.

The Simulation Center team is exploring partnerships with AI product vendors, which would provide free access to their software. Supplementary funding was obtained from UCLA's Teaching and Learning Center to produce a series of AI training workshops to teach ethical, reliable and creative use of LLMs in health professions education, such as designing AI-powered simulation scenarios with automated feedback. Eventually, the school hopes to develop a large library of simulation training scenarios that students or trainees could access asynchronously, to practice challenging conversations in a risk-free environment.

Anatomy teaching and student lab support

Anatomy forms a cornerstone of medical education, and students at the David Geffen School of Medicine consistently demonstrate exceptional proficiency, often achieving top scores in anatomy on their Step 1 board exams. The school's anatomy laboratories are meticulously designed to mirror real-world operating and emergency room environments, offering students an immersive clinical experience that prepares them for success across medical disciplines. These labs also serve as the training ground for paramedic students and first- and third-year dental students, as well as host to specialized courses for clinicians from around the globe.

Significant investments have been made to equip the anatomy labs with innovative technology. This infrastructure allows students to explore human anatomy in depth, with faculty delivering high-resolution 3D instruction from a central hub to individual computer stations throughout the lab. Endowment support has also ensured the availability of essential instructional tools, including dissection kits, trays, portable suction devices, surgical instruments, suturing kits and personal protective equipment.

In 2023, the lab began developing its own 3D-printed models to illustrate embryological development and associated congenital conditions. These models offer a hands-on learning experience, enabling students to compare printed structures with cadaveric anatomy. Due to the lack of commercially available models for certain anatomical features, the lab turned to 3D printing, often using open-source designs to reduce costs. The acquisition of an Original Prusa XL five-toolhead 3D printer last year has further enhanced instruction for both medical and dental students. Ongoing support from the David Geffen Endowment continues to fund supplies and maintenance for this initiative.

The endowment also supports a wide range of anatomy-based coursework. This includes a comprehensive year-long lab for first-year students, targeted review sessions at the start of each eight-week core rotation for second-year students and a principles of anatomy education course for third-year students interested in academic careers. Fourth-year students benefit from advanced electives in emergency medicine, surgery, head and neck surgery, plastic surgery, and more, refining their surgical skills on cadavers under the guidance of experienced faculty. Over half of the fourth-year class chooses to participate in these electives. Additionally, first-year students with an interest in surgery are introduced to various specialties through hands-on lab experiences, which many describe as the most effective way to explore potential career paths.

Students studying anatomy

Point-of-care ultrasound (POCUS) training is integrated throughout all four years of medical education. It plays a key role in the one-week College Foundations and Assessment for Internship courses, which prepare students for sub-internships and residency. As a rapidly growing diagnostic tool, POCUS offers real-time, bedside insights into patient physiology and pathology, often with greater accuracy than traditional physical exams or X-rays.

A well-funded human cadaver anatomy lab like the one at the David Geffen School of Medicine is essential to the foundation of medical education, where anatomy serves as the cornerstone of clinical skill competence. Human dissection offers a hands-on learning experience that is irreplaceable; it deepens students' understanding of the human body's complexity and illustrates anatomical variation amongst patients, vital to all areas of medicine. Digital models, virtual products and simulations are useful, but working with cadavers fosters crucial spatial reasoning, professional respect for the human form, and the development of fine motor and surgical skills in a supervised environment. Endowment support ensures that this invaluable educational resource remains accessible, up-to-date and equipped with the tools and facilities necessary to train future physicians to be compassionate, knowledgeable doctors who are prepared to meet the demands of modern health care.

POSTGRADUATE TRAINING

Graduate Programs in Bioscience

Thanks to the generous support of the David Geffen Endowment, 27 Ph.D. students received research stipends and tuition support to advance their graduate education. These competitive recipients are pursuing advanced training across a range of disciplines, including bioinformatics; medical informatics; human genetics; molecular biology; molecular, cellular and integrative physiology (MCIP); molecular pharmacology; neuroscience; and physics and biology in medicine.

In a cohort of outstanding students, here are five who are making particularly remarkable strides in their fields:

Michael Apostol (neuroscience) was selected as a predoctoral trainee in the UCLA Translational Neuroscience of Drug Abuse (TNDA) Program to conduct research in psychiatric and substance use disorders, cognitive neuroscience, neuroimaging and neuromodulation under Nicole Petersen, Ph.D.

Tim Bartsch (molecular biology) investigates cellular responses to mitochondrial membrane stress under the mentorship of Lena Pernas, Ph.D.
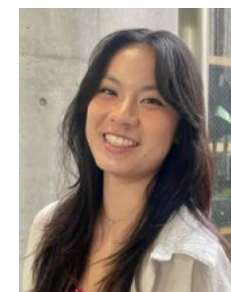
(From left) **Carmen Spicer** and **Franciscus Chandra (MCIP)**, and **Isabelle Lesmana (neuroscience)**, are conducting research under Elaine Hsiao, Ph.D., on topics including the gut-brain axis, neurodegenerative disease, epilepsy treatment and microbiome-immune interactions. Ph.D. candidate Isabelle Lesmana received an honorable mention for the Taylor M. Brown Memorial Award and serves as co-president of the UCLA CELL Scholars Program.

The continued support of the David Geffen Endowment plays a vital role in fostering a strong and dynamic academic environment — one that cultivates the next generation of innovative researchers and scientific leaders.

Medical Scientist Training Program (MSTP)

The UCLA-Caltech MSTP is a premier training program for a combined M.D.-Ph.D. The program is dedicated to recruiting and training exceptionally qualified physician-scientists who are committed to becoming leaders, educators and innovators in the biomedical research workforce. Through rigorous clinical and research training, these individuals are uniquely positioned to drive technological innovation and expand scientific understanding at the intersection of medicine and science, ultimately contributing to improved public health outcomes.

The program's core goals include:

- Identifying and recruiting gifted students with a deep passion for scientific inquiry and a steadfast commitment to research, medicine, service and leadership.

- Providing an inclusive, safe and supportive training environment where trainees can thrive academically and scientifically in their chosen fields.

- Offering personalized mentorship to foster the personal and professional development of trainees from various backgrounds and with varied career aspirations.

This past year, the endowment covered partial MSTP director support. The MSTP leadership structure is intentionally robust, designed to allow directors the bandwidth needed to attend to the needs of trainees without unduly compromising their own research programs. The co-directors of the program are David Dawson, M.D., Ph.D., and Olujimi Ajijola, M.D., Ph.D. The team also includes associate directors Maureen Su, M.D., and Karen Reue, Ph.D., associate directors for admissions and mentoring, and Ippolytos Kalofonos, M.D., Ph.D., associate director for MSTP social sciences. Drs. Ajijola, Dawson, Kalofonos and Su are practicing physician-scientists representing four clinical specialties (medicine, pathology, psychiatry and pediatrics), while Dr. Reue leads an outstanding research program in human genetics and medicine. Committed to ensuring that each MSTP student receives rigorous Ph.D. training, the directors leverage their strong relationships with the graduate school leadership at both UCLA and Caltech and serve as strong role models and advocates for all.

UCLA National Clinician Scholars Program (NCSP)

The NCSP is a postdoctoral fellowship focused on health services research. This two-year fellowship program provides physicians and doctoral-trained nurses a unique opportunity to develop research and leadership skills to address the most pressing health care problems in the country. The program trains the next generation of scientists and leaders in health and health care.

The return on investment from this program is high. This year alone, three of the 2025 graduates were hired into faculty positions at the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA. In

addition, two other 2025 graduates were accepted into other prestigious UCLA programs, one into the Specialty Training and Advanced Research (STAR) Program and one into the clinical geriatrics fellowship. In the past seven years, 20 graduates joined UCLA as junior faculty: seven in the Department of Medicine, five in emergency medicine, three in psychiatry, two in family medicine, one in pathology, one in pediatrics and one in neurology. The UCLA Joe C. Wen School of Nursing also hired two alumnae. UCLA's community and funding partners have hired 21 graduates.

The endowment funding also allowed the NCSP to leverage funding from multiple other departments and organizations. It provides flexible support that allows the program to fill critical gaps not covered by other sources. This flexibility enables the program to expand the number of fellows, since other funding streams only cover limited components of support. The NCSP trained 21 postdoctoral fellows during 2024-25, and support was received from multiple UCLA departments and programs and state and local partners.

In 2025, funding from the David Geffen Endowment served as an essential complement to other funding sources, including: one Department of Veterans Affairs West Los Angeles co-funded postdoc fellow (research project and scientific travel); one National Research Service Award co-funded postdoc fellow (partial stipend, full benefits, research project and scientific travel); one emergency medicine co-funded postdoc

fellow (partial stipend and benefits); and one AHRQ T32 co-funded postdoc fellow (partial stipend and benefits, research project support and scientific travel).

This past year, fellows delivered more than 68 presentations and published 51 scholarly articles and editorials. They engaged directly with policymakers in Washington, D.C., and collaborated across disciplines and communities to turn data into action. Notable accomplishments and awards include:

- Two graduates (cohort 2021-23 and cohort 2023-25) were named to the 2025 Bruin Scholars Program.

- Two scholars from the 2023-25 cohort were awarded NIH Loan Repayment Program awards.

- One scholar was selected as one of four UCLA graduate student winners of the Health Equity Challenge for developing innovative, community-based solutions to improve health equity in California.

- Two scholars were recognized at the UCLA Department of Medicine (DOM) Research Day. One received the first-place trainee award in health services research and another won second place in the same category.

- One scholar presented at the inaugural UCLA DOM L.A. Summit alongside the Venice Family Clinic.

The NCSP core curriculum includes leadership and interprofessional development seminars, communication training (including media interactions), and training in biostatistics, community engagement, health policy and AI.

In addition, fellows are actively involved as mentors to many pre-med and medical students and residents. They also volunteer in the community. The training program has a proven record of developing researchers who serve as change agents addressing health disparities, equity and quality of care in Los Angeles and beyond.

This past year, the endowment helped fund payroll expenses for four postdoc fellows who were partially funded by the NRSA, Department of Emergency Medicine, AHRQ and the L.A. County Department of Mental Health; provided partial salary support for program associate directors and a program special advisor; and covered 100% of payroll for four full-time program staff and 15% of payroll for a full-time IT desktop support analyst.

Non-payroll costs included travel to scientific conferences; software licenses; books; computer supplies; uniforms; fellow research project expenses for three postdoc fellows; NCSP national meeting expenses; the common fund contribution required by the national program; office space for nine postdoctoral students; consultant fees for leadership guest speakers and workshop facilitators; program promotional materials; and office operations expenses, such as supplies and technology infrastructure.

FACULTY AND DEPARTMENT SUPPORT

Siavash Kurdistani, M.D.
Chair of the UCLA Department of Biological Chemistry; professor, biological chemistry and pathology and laboratory medicine; and associate director of technology development at the UCLA Broad Stem Cell Research Center

The endowment supports the UCLA Department of Biological Chemistry in the David Geffen School of Medicine. The department's research addresses the molecular mechanisms underlying fundamental processes in biology and disease. They apply genetic, biochemical, cell biological, computational and biophysical approaches to study stem cell biology, development, gene regulation, cell signaling, cancer biology, neurobiology, genetic variation and disease.

Partial salaries and benefits for Dr. Kurdistani, his assistant and research personnel receive endowment funding, as do research supplies, such as chemicals, reagents, media and consumables (e.g., plastic and glassware, etc.).

Service and maintenance agreements for the department's shared equipment are covered, and funds are used for departmental operation support. These expenses include office supplies, shipping/FedEx costs, the departmental telephone line, facilities building and repair costs, departmental IT support and the department's scientific software license.

UCLA | **David Geffen School of Medicine**

Catherine Sarkisian, M.D.

Professor, Division of Geriatrics; staff physician, Greater Los Angeles VA Healthcare System; director, UCLA Value-Based Care Research Consortium; and director, Los Angeles Community Academic Partnership for Research in Aging, an NIH-funded partnership between UCLA and Los Angeles city and county agencies on aging

The David Geffen Endowment has provided crucial support to Dr. Sarkisian's research team this year. Specifically, this funding underwrote the salary for a UCLA Informatics Systems and Solutions (ISS) data engineer to oversee the build and execution of an AI-grounded precision medicine lab result reporting tool that provides older adults with personalized, understandable information.

Dr. Sarkisian and her team are also in the final stages of developing AI models that can predict patient lab results in real-time based on their electronic health records before patients receive results via the patient portal. This is a new operability unavailable in any other health system in the nation. They are also finalizing the ability to replace their standard (and often needlessly alarming) lab result reports. Based on their individual data, patients at a low risk for diabetes will be notified that they have essentially zero risk of developing a bad outcome.

Next steps will be to test this new AI-informed precision medicine lab result report against standard care in a randomized trial. Other AI projects Dr. Sarkisian's interdisciplinary team has completed or has in progress include:

- Conducting a randomized trial to investigate whether AI-informed patient care can improve health outcomes and decrease costs, using an AI model to identify patients at greatest risk of needing high-cost care, partnered with a care coordination intervention.

- Developing and testing AI tools to predict and identify which patients in the emergency department can be safely discharged and seen in a follow-up, next-day clinic rather than admitted to the hospital.

- Conducting a randomized trial of two AI scribe tools and the impact on time spent writing notes and physician burnout (in press at the *New England Journal of Medicine AI*).

- Developing and testing AI models to identify older adults at low risk of developing advanced kidney disease and operationalizing more personalized lab result communication tools.

WITH GRATITUDE

The visionary generosity of David Geffen and the David Geffen Foundation is shaping the future of medicine in ways that we could not have foreseen when the endowment began more than two decades ago. Our students are not only gaining access to a world-class education, they are being empowered to lead, innovate and provide care with purpose and compassion. You are helping us cultivate a generation of physician leaders who will carry the impact of your legacy into every hospital, clinic and community they serve.

Your gift represents more than support; it is a statement of belief in our mission and in the transformative power of medicine. It allows us to reimagine what is possible in medical education, push the boundaries of discovery and deliver excellent patient care and treatment. UCLA leadership and the entire David Geffen School of Medicine are deeply honored by your partnership. Amidst the current risks to research funding, your support is more highly appreciated than ever.