Dear Colleagues:

I hope everyone is refreshed from an enjoyable break this summer and energized for the academic year ahead. It seems fitting then that we take this opportunity to embark on a strategic planning process for the Department of Surgery. Building on the success of the Strategic Plan for Research, led by Dr. Alp Sener, our wider process will begin with an electronic survey and focus groups to consult extensively as we craft our shared vision for the next five years. I hope you will participate in this inclusive process and share my enthusiasm and optimism that our Strategic Plan for the Department will strengthen collaboration across the Academic Health Science Centre; promote innovative thinking; and produce measureable academic and clinical achievements.

I am also pleased to announce the establishment of two new committees in the Department of Surgery: Simulation and Development. Terms of Reference for these committees have been drafted and we expect to have inaugural meetings with the members put forward from each Division in the near future. These committees will be crucial as we move forward into Competency Based Medical Education (CMBE); particularly within a challenging financial paradigm.

As always, I welcome your feedback.

Sincerely,

Emil H. Schemitsch, MD, FRCSC
Richard Ivey Professor & Chair
Department of Surgery
Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry
Western University
Division highlights: Thoracic Surgery... And then there were three...

At the end of June, we were sad to bid farewell to our partner, Dr. Eric Fréchette. Dr. Fréchette wished to return to his home province, and so accepted a position at the Charles-Lemoyne Hospital in Montréal. However, we will happily continue to foster our “French connection” with the arrival of our latest Thoracic Fellow, Dr. Mehdi Qiabi. Mehdi comes from the Université de Sherbrook in Quebec. We are sure that Dr. Qiabi will be a valuable addition to the team, and are confident he will continue the tradition of our fellows’ 100 percent success rate on the Royal College Exams. This is, among many other aspects, a contributing factor to our program being the most sought-after Thoracic Surgery Fellowship in the country. Also helping us to cope with our patient volumes in the absence of a fourth partner is our brand new Physician Assistant Yuanyuan Gu, who will be starting with us in September. Dr. Gu not only holds a Master of Physician Assistant Students degree from the University of Manitoba, she also holds a Bachelor’s and Master’s degree in Medicine from the Fujian Medical University, and obtained her PhD from the Fujian Medical University in China and the University of Manitoba. We are very excited to have her join us as the first Physician Assistant in the Department of Surgery.

Examining the practise of Thoracic Surgery in Ontario, our Division at London Health Sciences Centre is, paradoxically, the smallest Division but the second busiest in the entire province. We provide care for all aspects of Chest Diseases, and are the only tertiary care and Level 1 Thoracic Centre for the entire Southwestern Ontario region. Our Division offers cutting edge technology such as minimally invasive (VATS) surgery, robotics, endomucosal resection, and more recently, scar-less Per Oral Endoscopy Myotomy (POEM) surgery.

“We have the only study of its kind in the world that is looking at circulating tumour cells as “liquid cancer biopsies” to detect esophageal cancer recurrence”

In addition to our clinical strengths, our Division is very active in the area of research. We have just completed our own QUINTETT (Quality of Life in Neoadjuvant vs Adjuvant Therapy of Esophageal Cancer Treatment Trial) and are analysing the results. As part of this trial, we have the only study of its kind in the world that is looking at circulating tumour cells as “liquid cancer biopsies” to detect esophageal cancer recurrence.
Division Highlights... Continued

We hope that one day a simple blood test will help us diagnose and monitor our treatment of esophageal cancer.

Ongoing research in our Division, in collaboration with the engineers at CSTAR, has focused on translational and cutting-edge robotic technology. Our group has been investigating minimally-invasive robotic-assisted treatments for tumor ablation for patients otherwise not eligible for surgery. We have developed a “finger on a stick” tactile image sensor to help detect occult tumors during minimally-invasive VATS surgery. This device is currently undergoing Health Canada approval, and will be the thesis project for one of our Master of Science students.

The Division has a strong interest in surgical outcomes research. Utilizing our knowledge in this area, and working closely with Cancer Care Ontario, we have been instrumental in developing several treatment guidelines for esophageal, gastric, and lung cancer.

One component of our Division’s teaching and mentoring is to proudly welcome and train International Fellows, especially from Saudi Arabia. Our most recent graduate, Ali Albargawi, just achieved a consultant position, and our former graduate, Manal Alnaimi is the first female Thoracic Surgeon in Saudi Arabia. Our current fellow, Dr. Aziz Alghanami will be completing his clinical training this year, and is staying on with us to complete a Master of Surgery degree at Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry, Western University.

Over the years, education has been a strong focus for the Division of Thoracic Surgery. We have achieved several Canadian firsts by hosting our Thoracic Ultrasound Course along with our VATS course. Last year we also performed the world’s first Thoracic in situ simulation that occurred in OR 17 with our fellows and nurses. These simulations provided an excellent opportunity for team building, the development of our communication skills, and helped to identify several safety threats that have been rectified to ensure improved patient care. Our educational pursuits are spearheaded by Dr. Dalilah Fortin, who has been the Thoracic Surgery Program Director since 2008, and was the CCTC Site Education Director for Western’s Critical Care Training Program until July 2014. She is an active participant in departmental initiatives related to education, and also serves as an Examiner and Surveyor on the accreditation team for the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada.

Dr. Richard Inculet has been a consultant thoracic surgeon in London since 1986. His numerous accomplishments include serving as the original head of surgical oncology, and being a former president of the Canadian Association of Thoracic Surgeons. Dr. Inculet holds the achievement of longest-running division head in the Department of Surgery, having led the Division of Thoracic Surgery since its inception in 1994 until this summer. On July 1, he handed over the helm to Dr. Richard Malthaner, and continues on at LHSC as the busiest clinical thoracic surgeon.

In addition to his new position as Division Chair/Chief, Dr. Malthaner is currently the Thoracic Cancer Champion for the Southwest Regional Cancer Program, and sits on the Thoracic Cancer Advisory Committee for Cancer Care Ontario. Dr. Malthaner is always promoting an evidence-based approach to patient care with the BEST in Thoracic Surgery Journal Club, ERAS, weekly quality improvement rounds, and Adherence to Practice guidelines. He is the Associate Editor for the Canadian Journal of Surgery and the Upper Gastrointestinal and Pancreatic Disease Group of the Cochrane Collaboration.

Although the Division of Thoracic Surgery is only three surgeons strong, we have a talented, collegial, and hardworking team. Together with our nurses, allied health professionals, and secretaries, we continue to provide the best patient care. Our top priorities include recruiting a fourth Thoracic Surgeon, securing an outpatient Thoracic Interventional Suite, and continuing to employ evidence based practices to improve patient care. When faced with a challenge, our response is always: “We care. We can. We will.”
Dr. Emil Schemitsch and Dr. Patrick Colquhoun, Surgical Quality Officer and Surgical Council Chair, are excited to announce that Victoria Hospital, LHSC will soon be a part of the National Surgical Quality Improvement Program (NSQIP). NSQIP hospital participants include over 60 hospitals in Canada, international hospitals, and numerous American hospitals.

New NSQIP data on 1204 LHSC University Hospital surgeries for the period of March 2016 through December 2016 reveals that University Hospital, LHSC performs “exemplary” and better than hospital participant average on:
- all service mortality,
- all service renal failure,
- colorectal return to the OR (ROR),
- cardiac ROR,
- neurosurgery C.Diff Colitis,
- orthopedic ventilator > 48 hours,
- orthopedic readmission,
- proctectomy VTE, and
- TKA readmission.
Surgical Quality Council: September 25 was the third meeting of the Surgical Quality Council. Membership includes representatives from each surgical division, as well as administration and hospital site chiefs. Discussion pertained to ongoing quality improvement efforts, National Surgical Quality Improvement Program (NSQIP) 2017 Semi-annual Report data, and more. Members are:

Dr. Emil Schemitsch, Department of Surgery Chair/Chief  
Dr. Patrick Colquhoun, Council Chair  
Dr. Mackenzie Quantz, Cardiac Surgery  
Dr. Steven Latosinsky, General Surgery  
Dr. Ted Vasarhelyi, Orthopaedic Surgery  
Dr. Leslie Scott, Paediatric Surgery  
Dr. Aaron Grant, Plastic & Reconstructive Surgery  
Dr. Richard Malthaner, Thoracic Surgery  
Dr. Nicholas Power, Urology  
Dr. Luc Dubois, Vascular Surgery  
Dr. Andrew Parrent, Neurosurgery  
Dr. Ramiro Arellano, Anesthesia & Perioperative Medicine  
Dr. Jacob McGee, Obstetrics and Gynecology  
Dr. Julie Strychowsky, Otolaryngology  
TBD, Ophthalmology  
Dr. Joe Armstrong, Dentistry  
Dr. Graham King, St. Joseph’s Site Chief  
Dr. Neil Parry, LHSC VH Site Chief  
Dr. Doug Naudie, LHSC UH Site Chief  
Cathy Vandersluis, VP, LHSC  
Karen Perkins, VP, St. Joseph’s  
Carla Cormack, Director of Surgery, LHSC UH  
Anne Marie McIlmoyl, Director of Perioperative Services, St. Joseph’s  
Cheryl Churcher, Director of Surgical Care, LHSC VH  
Kathryn Ellett, Research Associate Quality Improvement  
Joanna Gaebel, Surgical Clinical Reviewer, NSQIP  
Celia Dann, Surgical Clinical Reviewer, NSQIP

American College of Surgeons (ACS) Quality Conference: July’s meeting introduced LHSC’s Surgeon Champion and NSQIP staff to several quality improvement opportunities. The Improving Surgical Care and Recovery program will begin data measurement in the fall of 2017 for colorectal surgery on process measures such as VTE prophylaxis, clear liquid up to two hours before abduction, time the patient first walks, and more and outcome measures such as ileus, length of stay, and morbidity. The Quality In-Training Initiative aims to equip all surgical residents with the skills needed to address quality improvement. The Coalition for Geriatric Surgery is a group of hospitals and stakeholders working on standards and measure development for elderly surgical patients.

Quality Improvement Initiatives at UH: Informed by NSQIP data, UH’s first Surgical Quality Improvement Plan (SQIP) aims to improve the timing and administration of antibiotic prophylaxis before surgery. 3M will be auditing surgical preparation and pre warming techniques for all services at UH to improve quality of care and reduce the risk of surgical site infections. Additionally, general surgery will be auditing and looking at consistency of catheter placement and length of catheterization in order to reduce catheter-acquired urinary tract infections rates (CAUTIs).

NSQIP research: As a NSQIP hospital participant, LHSC is able to access and use the Program’s research database. Please find the Participant User File (PUF) and instructions at this link (https://www.facs.org/quality-programs/acs-nsqip/program-specifics/participant-use). The 2015 PUF contains 885,502 surgical cases submitted from 603 NSQIP-participating hospital sites, and User Files are available back through 2005. Please contact Kathryn.Ellett@lhsc.on.ca, Research Associate in Quality Improvement Department of Surgery, for further details.
2017 PGY 1 Surgery Resident Boot Camp

Twenty-nine PGY 1 surgical residents from the specialties of Cardiac Surgery, General Surgery, Neurosurgery, OB/GYN, Oral Maxillofacial Surgery, Orthopaedic Surgery, Otolaryngology – Head & Neck, Plastic & Reconstructive Surgery, and Urology attended the PGY 1 Surgical Resident Boot Camp for two weeks in July at CSTAR.

Interactive lectures, simulation sessions, and technical skills sessions covered a wide range of topics. The Boot Camp was designed to orientate the residents to Surgical Foundations, and to teach and assess the competencies included in the “Transition to Discipline” phase of Surgical Foundations.

Surgical Foundations will transition fully to a competency-based curriculum on July 1, 2018.
Study results indicate need for use of modern IEDs to be banned

The study, “Injury profile suffered by targets of antipersonnel improvised explosive devices: prospective cohort study,” recently published in the journal BMJ Open (http://dx.doi.org/10.1136/bmjopen-2016-014697) by Smith et al., illustrates the devastating injuries resulting from the use of modern antipersonnel improvised explosive devices (AP-IED).

Lead authors Drs. Shane Smith, PGY 4, Division of General Surgery, and Vivian McAlister, Professor, Division of General Surgery, compared the injury patterns resulting from victims of AP-IEDs to the injuries recorded for antipersonnel mines (APM), finding that AP-IED victims — including children — more often suffered multiple amputations or genital injuries. Additionally, victims could also be left battling unusual antibiotic resistant soil organisms such as Acinetobacter baumannii.

“What we found is the worst set of injuries ever recorded in a cohort of patients — that’s how bad it is. It’s terrible, and the outlook for the world is appalling if they allow this to go on,” Dr. McAlister said to Western News.

In 1997 the Ottawa treaty was signed by 162 countries with the goal of ending the use of land mines. The authors note that a significant factor giving strength to the campaign to end landmine use was the clinical descriptions of injuries caused by APMs as reported by Robin Coupland and Adriaan Korver for the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), and hope their study will have a similar effect.

Full story available in the September 7 issue of Western News (http://news.westernu.ca/).
Welcome to our new faculty members

RYAN DEGEN, MD, MSC, FRCSC
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, DIVISION OF ORTHOPAEDIC SURGERY

Dr. Ryan Degen joined the Division of Orthopaedic Surgery in July 2017 as an Assistant Professor at the Fowler Kennedy Sport Medicine Clinic.

After completing his undergraduate degree in Biology at Western University, Dr. Degen received his medical degree at the Michael G. DeGroote School of Medicine at McMaster University. Dr. Degen returned to Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry, Western University for his residency training in orthopaedic surgery, where he also obtained his MSc in Medical Biophysics. Following residency training, Dr. Degen completed fellowships in Sports Medicine and Shoulder surgery, and Adult Reconstruction at the Hospital for Special Surgery in New York, NY and Western University, respectively. While in New York, Dr. Degen was the assistant team physician for the New York Red Bulls (MLS), the New York Rangers (NHL), and the New York Liberty (WNBA).

Dr. Degen has published over 50 peer-reviewed articles and book chapters. He has given more than 40 research presentations and has been recognized with several research awards. His clinical practice will focus on sports medicine injuries of the hip, shoulder and knee. His research interests include hip impingement and resultant joint biomechanics, and clinical outcomes following surgical treatment of hip injuries.

DR. PETER WANG, MD, FRCSC
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, DIVISION OF UROLOGY

Dr. Peter Wang joined the Division of Urology in July 2017, at London Health Sciences Centre’s Victoria Hospital, specializing in paediatric urology.

After graduating from the University of Toronto, Dr. Wang received his medical degree from the University of Alberta School of Medicine. He completed his residency in urology at Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry, Western University followed by a fellowship in paediatric urology at the University of California Irvine. He is currently enrolled in a Master of Education program at John Hopkins University.

Dr. Wang has a strong interest in medical education, which includes surgical simulation, assessment and feedback, and curriculum design.

Pictured left: Dr. Wang and Kara Lammiman, Medical Secretary
JEFFREY HAWEL, MD, FRCSC
ADJUNCT PROFESSOR/MD, DIVISION OF GENERAL SURGERY

Dr. Jeffrey Hawel joined the Department of Surgery as an Adjunct/MD and Locum in the Division of General Surgery at London Health Sciences Centre’s University Hospital.

Dr. Hawel received his Honours Bachelor of Medical Sciences in Medical Biophysics from Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry, Western University, where he continued his medical training. After completing his general surgery residency, Dr. Hawel undertook fellowship training in minimally invasive surgery and therapeutic endoscopy/ERCP at Dalhousie University in Halifax.

Dr. Hawel’s clinical interests include therapeutic gastrointestinal and biliary endoscopy, and minimally invasive surgical approaches to foregut diseases. His research interests include the development and application of new technologies in endoscopy, in addition to pursuing further studies in medical biophysics.

TANYA DELYZER, MD, FRCSC
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, DIVISION OF PLASTIC & RECONSTRUCTIVE SURGERY

Dr. Tanya DeLyzer joined the Division of Plastic & Reconstructive Surgery this September. She will be providing support for other services for complex wound reconstruction. She will act as the Plastic Surgery lead for the Lower Extremity Reconstruction group, as well as Clinical Leader for Burn Care at Victoria Hospital.

After graduating from the University of Calgary with an Honours Bachelor of Science in Cellular and Molecular Biology, Dr. DeLyzer received her medical degree and completed a residency in Plastic & Reconstructive Surgery at the Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry, Western University. She then went on to complete her fellowship training in Breast Reconstruction at the University of Toronto.

Dr. DeLyzer has received several research awards and presented at numerous conferences. Her research focus includes surgical education and clinical outcomes in Plastic & Reconstructive Surgery.

Alumni Spotlight: Dr. Antonio Caycedo MD, FRCSC, FACS, MSc

Dr. Antonio Caycedo, Associate Professor, Northern Ontario School of Medicine, has been named one of Canada’s most influential Hispanics (http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/sudbury/sudbury-surgeon-claims-award-1.3907275).

Dr. Caycedo came to Canada from Bogota, Colombia, where he completed medical school. After attending the University of Ottawa for his residency training in general surgery, Dr. Caycedo went to Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry, Western University for a clinical fellowship in colorectal surgery in the Department of Surgery’s Division of General Surgery.

Dr. Caycedo’s clinical practice is based in Sudbury at Health Sciences North, where he is the Surgical lead for the Enhanced Recovery After Surgery program and the regional head for Cancer Care Ontario for the North East of the province.

PHOTO FROM: COLORECTAL SURGERY NORTH HTTPS://WWW.CSNORTH.CA/
The Dr. Robert Zhong Department of Surgery Research Day was held in June 2017 at the Shuttleworth Auditorium in St. Joseph’s Hospital and had over 200 attendees.

A morning poster session kicked off the day’s events, followed by award-winning research paper presentations by residents, fellows, and MSc in Surgery students. Dr. Jeremy Burton, Miriam Burnett Chair in Urological Sciences, gave an informative talk on the microbiome and what it means for a surgeon.

Dr. Clifford Ko, Director of the Division of Research and Optimal Patient Care and Director of the National Surgical Quality Improvement Project, American College of Surgeons, was this year’s keynote speaker. His lecture, “Achieving Surgical Quality: Observations from the American College of Surgeons” highlighted initiatives taken by the College on helping hospitals use data to track and improve the quality of surgical care provided, and the resulting benefits.

The day concluded with an exciting debate between Drs. Ken Faber, Associate Professor, Division of Orthopaedic Surgery, and Rob Leeper, Assistant Professor, Division of General Surgery, on the “Merits of Simulation Based versus Hands on Operative Training of Residents in the Face of CBME and Quality-Based Outcomes.”

**Research Day Award Winners**

**RESIDENT/FELLOW BEST PAPER:**
Dr. Supriya Singh, Division of Orthopaedic Surgery

**BEST CLINICAL POSTER:**
Dr. Melissa Huynh, Division of Urology

**BEST BASIC SCIENCE POSTER:**
Dr. Aymon Naushad, Division of Urology

**Thank you to all our industry sponsors for the day:**
- Medtronic
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- Baxter
Congratulations to all department members on their latest achievements:

**LAWSON INTERNAL RESEARCH FUND SPRING 2017**

Dr. George Athwal, “A novel method towards prevention of Propionibacterium acnes surgical site infection using botulinum toxin.” $13,914

Dr. Jeremy Burton and Sarah Donnelly, “Development of MagA-labelled bacteria for magnetic resonance imaging of biofilm and microbiome.” $15,000

Dr. Alan Getgood, “Investigating ligamentous contributions to knee stability and reconstruction using a hybrid experimental-computational technique.” $15,000

Dr. Alp Sener, “The role of mitochondria targeting H2S donor molecules in euthermic (21c) organ preservation.” $15,000

Dr. Nina Suh, “Improving outcomes of partial wrist fusions for wrist arthritis.” $15,000

**EARLY RESEARCHER AWARDS**

Dr. Louis Ferreira, “Development of mechatronic systems for joint replacement surgical applications.” $150,000

**CANADA FOUNDATION FOR INNOVATION**

Dr. Alan Getgood, “Mechanobiological solutions to joint injury and degeneration.” $320,000

**AMOSO OPPORTUNITIES FUND**

Dr. Alan Getgood, “Investigating ligamentous contributions to knee stability and reconstruction using a hybrid experimental computational technique.” $162,500

**ALBERT TRILLAT YOUNG INVESTIGATOR AWARD**

Awarded by the International Society of Arthroscopy, Knee Surgery and Orthopaedic Sports Medicine to Dr. Alan Getgood.

**CANADIAN UROLOGICAL ASSOCIATION AWARDS AND APPOINTMENTS**

Dr. Gerald Brock - President
Dr. Hassan Razvi - Secretary
Dr. Jonathan Izawa - Chair, CUA Scholarship Foundation
Dr. Nicholas Power - Scientific Chair, 2018 Annual Meeting
Dr. Joseph Chin - Lifetime Achievement Award

**SOCIETY FOR VASCULAR SURGERY**

Dr. Audra Duncan was awarded the SVS President’s Citation Award for her work with the resident/student committee.

Dr. Luc Dubois was awarded second prize for his talk, “Higher surgeon annual volume, but not years of experience, leads to reduced rates of perioperative complications and reoperations following open AAA repair” at the SVS 2017 Annual Meeting.

**AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR SURGERY OF THE HAND**

Poster “An Anthropometric Assessment of Proximal Hamate Autograft for Scaphoid Proximal Pole Reconstruction” by Dr. Nina Suh and colleagues Clare Padmore, MEng, Dr. Kitty Wu, MD, and Emily Lalone, PhD has been named the winner of the Top International Guest Hand Society Poster award.

**WORLD MASTERS SWIMMING CHAMPIONSHIPS**

Congratulations to Ms. Terri MacDougall, Education Coordinator, Department of Surgery, on her recent success at the World Masters Swimming Championships held this past August in Budapest, Hungary.

With three top ten finishes, MacDougall came home with a silver medal in the 50m Breaststroke, bronze medal in the 100m Breaststroke, and placed 8th in the 200m Breaststroke setting a new Ontario record for her age category.

In addition to the World Masters, MacDougall competed in the 2016 Pan Pacific Masters Games held in Gold Coast, Australia, where she earned Gold medals in the 50m, 100m, and 200m Breaststroke, as well as a Bronze medal in the 50m Freestyle, setting a new Pan Pacific Record in the 50m Breaststroke, and also competed in the 2017 Canadian Masters Swimming Championships in Quebec City, placing first in the 50m, 100m, and 200m Breaststroke and Bronze in the 50m Freestyle for her age category.
All members of the Department are invited to submit story ideas, articles, photos, or comments for the winter issue. Please send them to: Dinah.Frank@lhsc.on.ca, or call 519.633.3349 ext. 32361

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