



2020

Annual Report



THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Branch for International Surgical Care
Department of Surgery | Faculty of Medicine

TABLE OF CONTENTS

About Us	3
2020 Highlights	10
Our Community	19
BISC Operations	25
Projects and Collaboration	30
Looking Ahead	36

ABOUT US

The Branch for International Surgical Care (BISC) was created to advance surgical care in international health. It came about as a desire to build on the national interest in surgical care in international health and the realization of the strength of international activity that already exists among surgical members of the UBC faculty.

We believe the best way to make sustainable improvements in the delivery of surgical care in the world's most disadvantaged countries is to build capacity within the field of surgery on the provision of care in low-resource settings. To achieve this, the BISC launched an innovative educational program in 2009.

Our program is designed for graduate students, postgraduate trainees, surgical faculty, or surgery-related health care workers across the globe. The fully online course format enables individuals from all around the world and at all stages of their surgical care careers to expand their knowledge of surgical care in low-resource regions.

Confronted by the reality of underserved populations, we will lead, partner, educate and serve to realize safe surgical care for all.

Our Mission

BISC would like to acknowledge that our administrative office (UBC VGH Campus) is located on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) and səlilwətał (Tseil-Waututh) peoples.



DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Dear colleagues, staff, and students,

As we look back on 2020, it is no exaggeration to say that it was a year which challenged us all in multiple ways, due to the COVID-19 pandemic which rapidly spread across the globe.

In particular, I am grateful for our faculty, students and staff for their resilience and flexibility as they adapted to working under new and difficult conditions, and many changing circumstances, including the significant challenges of delivering education and care at the frontlines of the pandemic. I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks for your efforts to ensure the continued delivery of our graduate education programs and administrative operations, while also continuing to provide care to patients during this trying time. You have much to be proud of.

During 2020, BISC continued its operations virtually and as our courses are online, we were able to continue delivery of our programs seamlessly. The Branch had many achievements in 2020, including continuing to grow our Master and Graduate Certificate in Global Surgical Care, the only programs of their kind seeking to address the global need for surgical care in vulnerable and underserved communities of the world. We successfully launched a new course, SURG 517: Clinical Research Methods for Surgical Procedures with Global Surgical Comparisons. We also made important updates to two of our foundational courses, SURG 510: Surgical Care in International Health and SURG 518: Surgical Care in Canada's Rural and Remote Indigenous Communities with Global Comparisons.

In the 2020/21 academic year, we welcomed a new cohort of 12 students into our Graduate Certificate (GCGSC) and 8 students into our Master's (MGSC) program. These students are allied health professionals involved in or aspiring to be involved in global surgical care from multiple disciplines including general surgery, anesthesiology, obstetrics and gynecology, midwifery, neurosurgery, nursing, orthopedics, etc.

In addition, our Associate Director, Dr. Emilie Joos, developed and launched, with the support of UBC Continuing Professional Development and Extended Learning, a free, online course, Safe Surgical Care: Strategies during a Pandemic, which provided vital information to surgical care providers around the world during the onset of COVID-19. We also developed and launched for the first time a new online global surgical care elective for fourth year MD undergraduate students at UBC.

We look forward to 2021 with more exciting developments in our educational programs including our first cohort of students graduating from the MGSC who will use their newfound knowledge and skills to enhance capacity in global surgical care around the world. We will also be working to develop our new five-year Strategic Plan 2022 - 2027 and begin planning to host the Bethune Roundtable in 2022.

Thank you again for all of your continued support towards the Branch. I wish everyone a safe, healthy, and happy 2021.

Sincerely,

Brian D. Westerberg, MD
Medical Director, Branch for International Surgical Care

Member Departments

BISC has representation from a wide variety of surgical care specialties: Surgery, Ophthalmology, Orthopaedics, Anesthesia, Obstetrics/ Gynecology, Urology, Radiology and Nursing.



Faculty Members and Advisory Committee

BISC currently offers 8 courses spanning topics of global surgery, instructed by 17 experienced faculty members in the global health field. The BISC Advisory Committee consists of 15 members in various disciplines and meets biannually to discuss collaboration and development opportunities for BISC. Learn more on our [Faculty](#) and [Advisory Committee](#) pages.

BISC STRATEGIC PLAN

BISC is beginning work on developing a new five-year Strategic Plan for the Branch from 2022 - 2027. Stakeholder consultations will take place with the global surgical care community in British Columbia as well as globally, in order to understand the priorities for this field that the Branch may focus on and areas of potential growth for our programs and activities.

In 2021, in lieu of a strategic planning in person retreat, Zoom calls will be held with our Advisory Committee to discuss the new plan. The first of these took place in February. A special session was held to kick off our discussion with guest, Dr. John Meara. Original author of the Lancet Commission on Global Surgery and Founder and current Director of the Harvard Program for Global Surgery and Social Change (PGSSC), Dr. Meara spoke to his journey in global surgery and, more importantly, his vision for PGSSC, which we hope will inspire our discussions for BISC's future priorities. A facilitated retreat is planned in May 2021.



ADVOCACY

To realize safe surgical care for all, we increase understanding of the global status of unmet surgical need.



EDUCATION

Our courses and programs are designed to meet the growing need for professional development in global surgical care.



RESEARCH

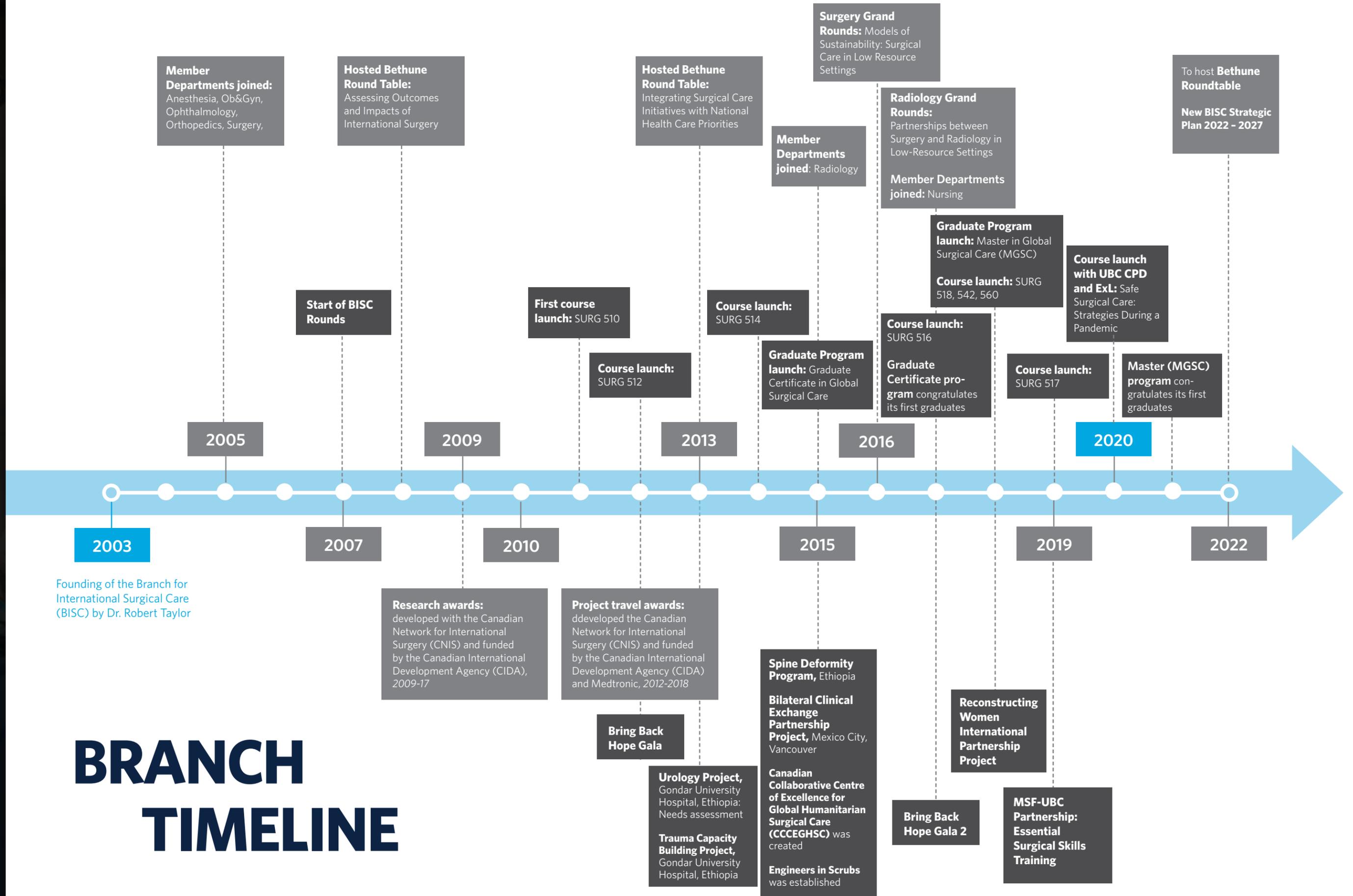
Targeted investigation, collaboration, and innovation explore current issues of global surgical care.



PROJECTS

Lead local and international projects, serving communities globally.

BRANCH TIMELINE



2020 HIGHLIGHTS

2020 unfolded as a challenging year for health systems around the globe. Nevertheless, as we reflect upon the unprecedented year, there were moments of achievements at the Branch that we would like to recognize and celebrate. We look forward to continue our endeavours in global surgery education to build capacity in the areas of the world where it is most needed.

2020

Our Students

CARDIOVASCULAR SURGERY
GLOBAL HEALTH RESEARCH

PAEDIATRICS
BIOCHEMISTRY

ORTHOPAEDICS
BIOMEDICAL ENGINEERING

GENERAL SURGERY
UROLOGY

PLASTIC SURGERY
RADIATION THERAPY

ANESTHESIOLOGY
ORAL & MAXILLOFACIAL SURGERY

NURSING

OBGYN
TRAUMA
FAMILY MEDICINE

MEDICAL STUDENT
NEUROSURGERY

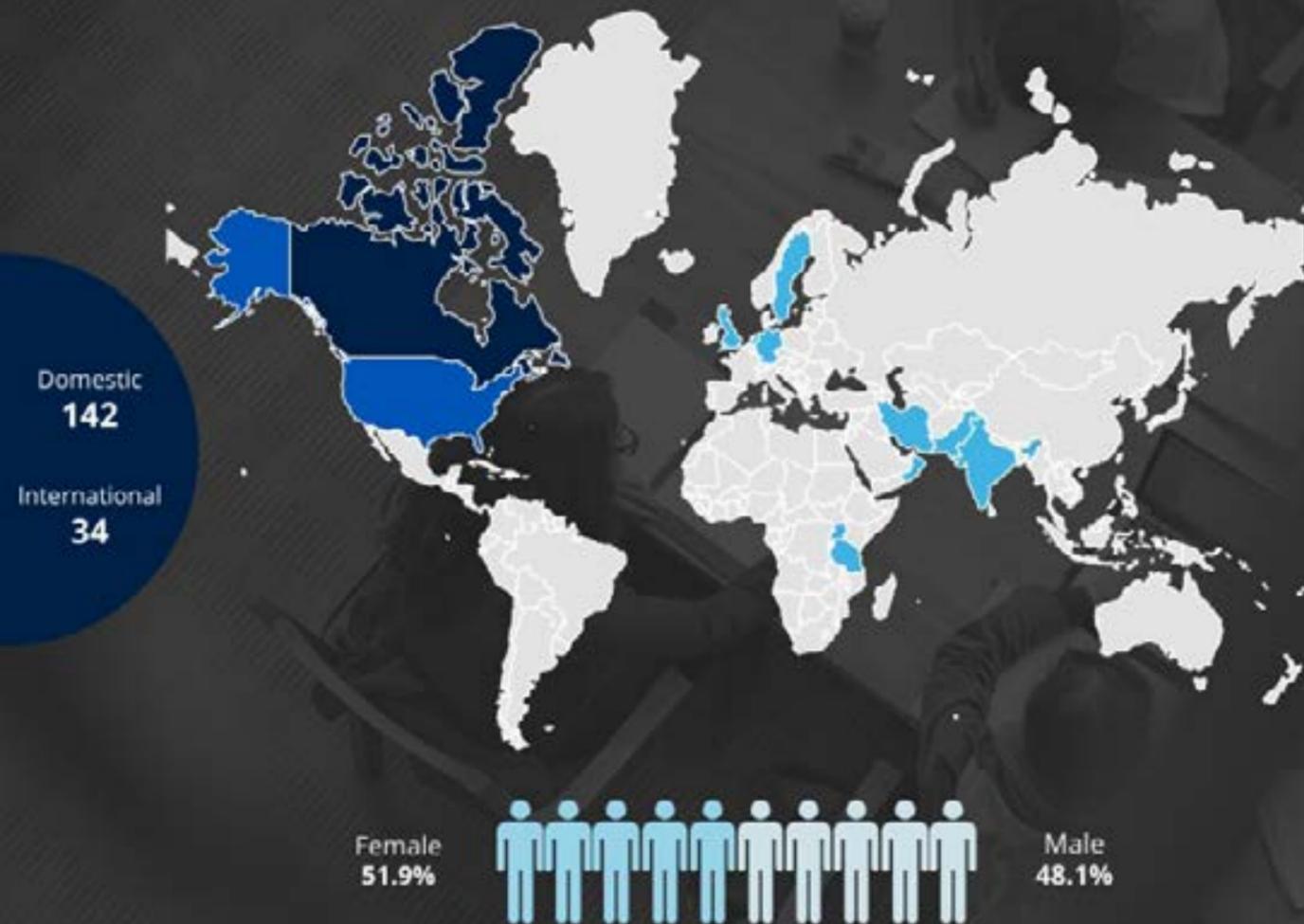
THORACIC SURGERY
ONCOLOGY

VASCULAR SURGERY
FAMILY PHYSICIANS-ESS

CLEFT & CRANIOFACIAL SURGERY

With surgical care clinicians, trainees and allied health professionals in various disciplines, our online classroom fosters collaborative learning between diverse expertise.

Since 2009, we have had 179 students enroll in our courses



In the 2020/21 academic year, we welcomed a new cohort of **12** students into our Graduate Certificate (GCGSC) and **8** students into our Master's (MGSC) program.



Global Surgery Elective

In September, 2020, BISC launched the [Global Surgery Elective Course](#) for 4th year students in the UBC MD program who are interested in learning more about global surgical care. In this 2-week course, students have the opportunity to explore global surgery with the direct support of an experienced BISC faculty member as a preceptor.



SINCE OUR LAUNCH...

9

students

7

preceptors

PARTICIPATED

The undergraduate elective consists of 2 online modules. The first module defines global surgery, its place in global health and its evolution in the past decades. For the second module, students are given the opportunity to select a key aspect of global surgery of their interest. Options include:

- The global burden of surgical disease and disability
- Trauma: a global pandemic
- Global maternal mortality



Pandemic Course

In the early months of COVID-19, UBC Branch for International Surgical Care, Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and Extended Learning developed a free, online course, [Safe Surgical Care: Strategies during a Pandemic](#).

Launched in May 2020, the pandemic course successfully engaged healthcare communities around the world during the times of COVID-19, when the importance of surgical care is more urgent than ever. This course aims to inform surgical teams of the risk during pandemics, prepare them to respond appropriately, give them tools to ensure their safety, build pathways to maintain specific surgical services and anticipate and mitigate long term impacts. The course can be accessed on [UBC CPD](#).

Topics include:

- **Module 1: What a Surgeon Should Know About Pandemics**
- **Module 2: Surgical Surge Response for Pandemics** —Learn step-by-step, the measures that need to be implemented and what factors need to be taken into consideration.
- **Module 3: Protection of the Surgical Healthcare Workers** — Proper planning and prevention strategies to protect health care providers involved in the delivery of surgical care.
- **Module 4: Defining and Maintaining Essential Services** —Design pathways for maintenance of access to specific essential surgical services.
- **Module 5: Global Impact and Ethical Considerations** —Demonstrate leadership in the surgical response to pandemics and identify the relevant local, national and international key actors in the pandemic response.



Specialty Medicine



COVID-19



Surgery



Online

Safe Surgical Care: Strategies During a Pandemic

Online Course

COURSE FEEDBACK

« The whole course empowers us, workers in the OR, to have a better understanding of the current and evolving situation, allowing us to gain a bit of confidence in this uncertain phase. All as one in this battle. »

« Invited one of my colleague to attend this course. So we are both determined to make the necessary changes in our power to help deliver health services in a safer way for both our team and patients. »

« It has improved staff morale to share what I have learned with the rest of the team, who felt that the hospital administration were more or less unaware of the existence of the operating room and were providing no guidance for us. »

« Our practice in Costa Rica has adequately implemented many of the measures that stand out in the course, however we still have a long way to go, and this course has given me new material to incorporate into my practice. »

« Be a more involved leader. »

« I will have to attend a lot of meetings to implement change. »

« I will speak up to provide as safe an environment as possible for the staff and patients. »

« I will be able to plan the protocol for surgical processes in our institute. »

In September 2020, Dr. Emilie Joos, our Associate Director, was invited to attend the [BC COVID-19 Research and Collaboration Symposium](#).

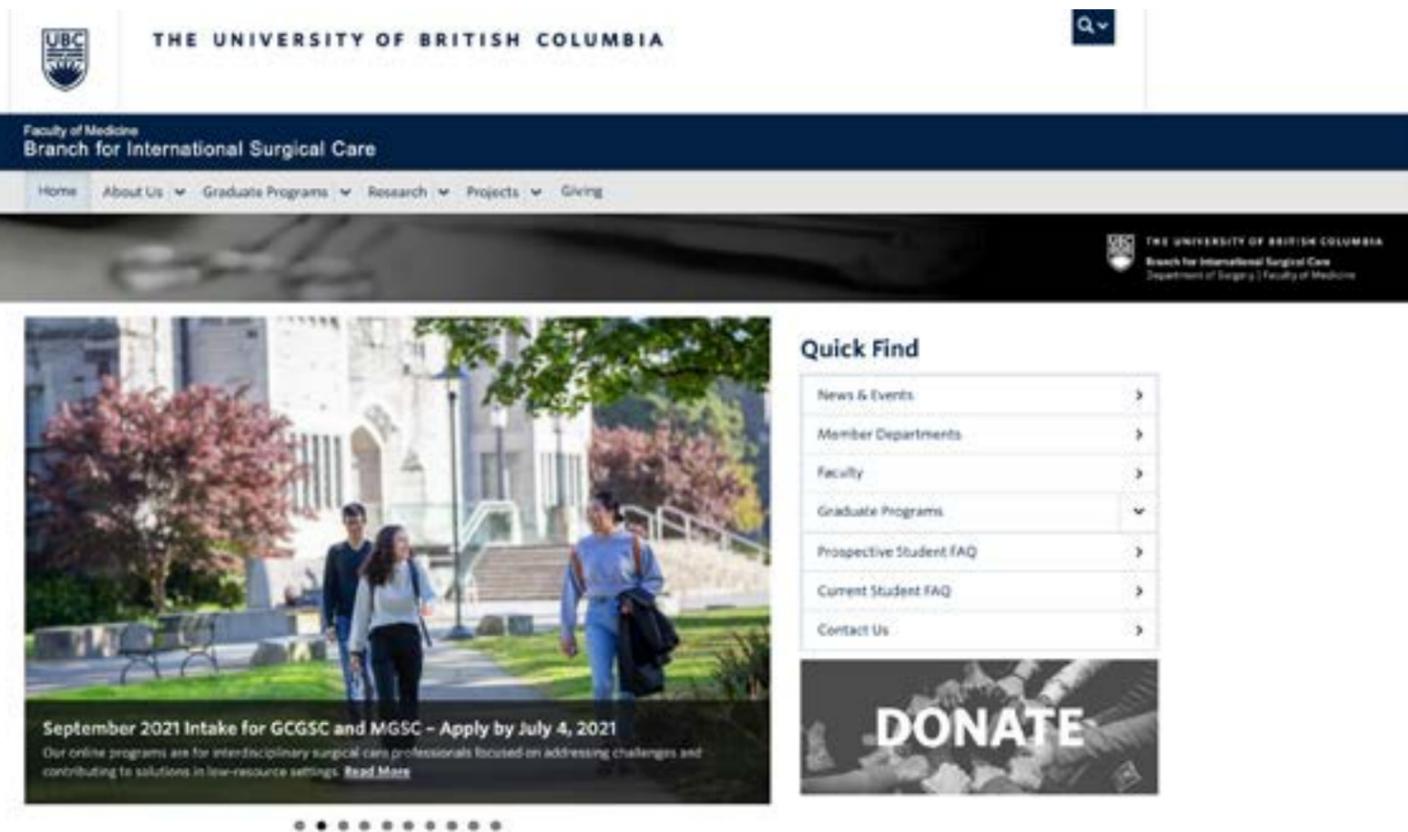
During the session, Dr. Joos shared about the direct and indirect impacts of COVID-19 on surgery, the importance of multidisciplinary collaboration and surgical leadership for an effective response, and the development of this course. The recording of the symposium can be accessed [here](#).



Communications

Over Summer 2020, the BISC website was redesigned to improve visual identity, ease of navigation and content organization. We have also increased our online presence through our e-newsletter and social media platforms.

Stay up-to-date with the latest news and announcements on our website [here](#).



COMMUNICATION METRICS

2
NEWSLETTERS

116.3K
TWITTER IMPRESSIONS

↑52.7%
compared to 2019

9.5K
WEBSITE VISITS
↑38.2% compared to 2019

1,965
FACEBOOK LIKES
As of Dec 31, 2020

NEW INSTAGRAM





Advisory Committee Meetings

In 2020, two Advisory Committee meetings were held by Zoom in April and November.

Some highlights discussed included:

- Introductions of new members: Dr. Robert Baird, Dr. Damian Duffy, Dr. Harvey Hawes, Dr. Shahrzad Joharifard, and Dr. Andrea McNeill,
- Status of projects and collaborations; inability to travel has restricted some activities due to COVID-19 and how to continue activities in light of this.
- Course instructors/faculty shared updates on their courses and lessons learned and best practices with one another including using Zoom, and incorporating different multimedia into Canvas courses, and different methods of evaluation of learners.
- Several courses have been significantly updated including SURG 510 and SURG 518. Discussed approaches to synergize SURG 517, SURG 542 and SURG 560 which all focus on research, literature reviews, methodology etc.
- Role of academic advisors / coaches / mentors for MGSC students.
- Discussion on UBC hosting of Bethune Roundtable 2022, Strategic Plan development for 2022 - 2027 and review of BISC Terms of Reference.
- Discussion on new course development - ethical frameworks and climate change and surgical care. Pandemic course (Safe Surgical Care: Strategies During a Pandemic) may be updated with new information, and is still open and free for anyone to access. Existing courses to be updated to reflect new developments related to COVID-19.
- Exploring more flexibility for learners in terms of grading systems and lower tuition fees for LMIC students.
- Conducting a global surgery inventory of UBC.



OUR COMMUNITY

We have a unique online community connecting students, researchers and partners from around the world. We are joined by surgical care clinicians, trainees, and allied health professionals from a range of different disciplines and global health settings. At BISC, we value and celebrate the diversity of backgrounds and experiences that each member brings to this growing field of global surgery.



Featured Profiles

To engage our learning community, we launched a new series of featured profiles to showcase valuable stories and experiences of our faculty members and students.

See all featured profiles on our website [here](#).

FACULTY



Dr. Robert Baird
MSc, MDCM, FRCPC, FACS
Instructor for SURG 542



Dr. Hossam Elsharkawi
PhD | Instructor for SURG 514



Dr. Jane Lea
BSc, MD, FRCSC
Instructor for SURG 518

New BISC Members

We would like to extend a warm welcome to our new faculty and advisory committee members, who each bring in unique expertise to shape the future of BISC.



Robert Baird
MSc, MDCM, FRCPC, FACS

Faculty, Advisory Committee Member
Dr. Robert Baird is an Associate Professor of Pediatric Surgery, Surgical Director of the Pediatric Trauma Program, and Fellowship Program Director at the University of British Columbia. He holds double Master's degrees from McGill University (Experimental Surgery) and Oxford University (Evidence-Based Health Care). He worked in Kenya while completing his surgical training and currently supports the Uganda-Vancouver surgical partnership through in-person camps, virtual teaching and curriculum building for learners from low-resource environments. He is particularly focused on bidirectional opportunities to enhance surgical training as well as evidence-based capacity building.

"The program has been evolving since I started, and me with it."
- Ryan Falk, FPESS (MGSC Student)



Ryan Falk
MGSC Student



David Stockton
Project Travel Award Recipient

STUDENTS



Damian Duffy
MSc (Global Health Policy)

Advisory Committee
Mr. Damian Duffy is the Executive Director of the Office of Pediatric Surgical Evaluation and Innovation at BC Children's Hospital and has been with the Faculty of Medicine at the University of British Columbia since 1994. Damian recently completed a Master of Science in Global Health Policy at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and hopes to use his education to help advance the goals of the partnerships in which BISC is involved.



Harvey Hawes
BSc, MSc, MD

Advisory Committee, Trauma Surgery

Dr. Harvey Hawes is a Trauma surgeon at Vancouver General Hospital, and an innovator and humanitarian dedicated to improving the health of people around the world. Based in Vancouver, he is Director of Operations for Innovative Canadians for Change and co-founder of Metric Technologies. He received a Doctor of Medicine, MSc in Respiratory Physiology and a BSc in Cellular and Molecular Biology from the University of Calgary. His specialist General Surgery training and Acute Care Surgery Fellowship at the University of Alberta was followed by a Trauma Surgery fellowship at Memorial Hermann Hospital at the University of Texas at Houston. Dr. Hawes is a Fellow of The Royal College of Physicians of Canada and an Adjunct Professor at the University of Texas at Houston.



Andrea MacNeill
BSc (Hon), MSc, MD

Advisory Committee, Planetary Health

Dr. Andrea MacNeill is a surgical oncologist at Vancouver General Hospital and BC Cancer, and a Clinical Associate Professor at the University of British Columbia where she specializes in sarcoma and peritoneal malignancies. She completed General Surgery residency at the University of British Columbia, fellowship in Surgical Oncology at the University of Toronto and pursued additional fellowship training at the Istituto Nazionale dei Tumori in Milan, Italy, the Royal Marsden Hospital in London, UK and Basingstoke, UK. Furthermore, she completed a Master of Environmental Change and Management at the University of Oxford. Dr. MacNeill is committed to designing health systems for optimal planetary health and educating health professionals to be agents of change.



Shahrzad Joharifard
MD, MPH

Advisory Committee, Conflict and War Surgery

Dr. Shahrzad Joharifard is a Pediatric Surgeon and Clinical Assistant Professor of Surgery at BC Children's Hospital, with a passion for global health, particularly in conflict and post-conflict settings. She has extensive experience in sub-Saharan Africa, including working with the International Rescue Committee in Liberia, Democratic Republic of the Congo and Sierra Leone. She has also worked in the Extreme North of Cameroon, South Africa, Rwanda and Ethiopia. Dr. Joharifard holds an AB in History cum laude from Princeton University, an MD from Duke University, and an MPH in Clinical Effectiveness from the Harvard School of Public Health. She completed her residency in General Surgery at the University of British Columbia and fellowship in Pediatric Surgery at CHU Sainte-Justine at the Université de Montréal.



Melanie Morris
BSc, MD, FRCSC

Faculty

Dr. Melanie Morris is an Indigenous surgeon at the Children's Hospital at the Health Sciences Centre in Winnipeg, specializing in urology and pediatrics. She is currently an Associate Professor at the University of Manitoba, fellow of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada and member of the Indigenous Physicians Association of Canada. She is the Founder and Medical Director of the University of Manitoba Global Surgery Office and has done extensive work and teaching in Kenya and Uganda. She has founded the Pediatric Surgery of the North program which is being funded by the Winnipeg Foundation and the Children's Hospital Foundation to create Indigenous initiatives in the Children's Hospital in Winnipeg.



BISC OPERATIONS

Instructor Appreciation

Based on the academic year, we have recognized contributions of our faculty members through Instructor Appreciation announcements.

In 2020, we have recognized the following 4 co-instructors. View their profiles on our website [here](#).



Dr. Norgrove Penny
CM, MD, FRCSC, FCS(ECSA)



Dr. Dan Poenaru
MD, PhD, MHPE, FRCSC, FACS, FCS(ECSA)

2019-2020
Co-Instructors for **SURG 512 - Global Disability: A Surgical Care Mandate**



Dr. Brian Cameron
MD, DipMedEd, FRCSC



Dr. Jana MacLeod
MD, MSC, FRCS(C), FACS, FRC(ECSA)

2020-2021
Co-Instructors for **SURG 510 - Surgical Care in International Health**

The following section will highlight operational updates from the executive team. Led by BISC Director and Associate Director, BISC staff carry out various aspects of program operation including program administration, course support, communications and marketing.





Administration & Communications

Since March 2020, BISC staff have been currently working remotely and will continue to do so until it is safe to return to the office.

We continue to review our online course content and make necessary updates and revisions to help our instructors to deliver their courses and learners to achieve their learning outcomes. BISC operations are currently supported by an Education Manager (Cecilia Gruber) and by a new UBC Work Learn student (Rachel Ma) whose position is focused on marketing and communications. The staff are led by the BISC executive management team, Director (Dr. Brian Westerberg) and Associate Director (Dr. Emilie Joos).

The Education Manager manages and implements the educational programs, related databases, and training initiatives with the aim of maintaining smooth operations and delivery of the education programs. She supports the education program’s course delivery and operations, including contributing to course design, content creation, assignments, and online modules updates. She also supports the administrative and operational systems and processes of the education programs, marketing and promotions of the education programs as well as student support including student records, advising, registration and admissions.

With the assistance of the Marketing and Communications Assistant, updating and enhancing our online and social media presence was a primary focus in 2020. We also updated our brand to reflect a UBC “look and feel” and to align with UBC Branding and Marketing guidelines. Important updates to our website were made including instituting a new spotlight section on faculty and students and updating the look and feel. We began an instructor appreciation program to recognize the important contributions of instructors each term.

We continue to track analytics on our website to increase our understanding of our users and help shape the development of our new website to enhance usability and ensure that the website supports our marketing efforts. We also look at analytics for our social media which saw tremendous growth. In 2020, BISC opened an Instagram account which has also seen a great deal of growth and engagement. Furthermore, BISC sent out two newsletters in 2020 and will continue to send out regular newsletters in 2021.

Program Marketing

We have continued to actively market our graduate programs and our goal is to expand international enrolment.

We reach out across our member departments at UBC as well as other affiliated departments, and to Program Directors of surgery-related programs who play an important role in promoting the course to residents. We also actively encourage associations such as the Canadian Association of General Surgeons (CAGS), Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada, Canadian Network for International Surgery (CNIS), Canadian Association of Global Surgical Trainees (CGSTA), Canadian Centre for Global Health Research (CCGHR), International Student Surgical Network (InciSioN), Global Surgical Students Alliance (GSSA), G4Alliance, Coalition of Universities of Global Health (CUGH), Canadian Red Cross (CRC) and International Federation of the Red Cross (IFRC), Médecins sans frontières (MSF).

We have worked actively to increase awareness of the Branch in the last year at UBC, across Canada and globally. We have updated promotional materials including our program flyers and also developed new course catalogues, which you can view below.





News & Announcements

BISC participates in the UBC global health related activities and also contributed to a survey on global health heat mapping across UBC. We look forward to seeing the results of this survey which may spur further collaborations and potential for future faculty who may act as practicum hosts or advisors for our students, as well as the launch of the new UBC global engagement strategy.

On November 18th, SURG 518 Co-Instructor Dr. Melanie Morris, a Pediatric Surgeon and Pediatric Urologist, and Assistant Professor, University of Manitoba presented at the 2020 Virtual Chung Lectureship on the topic Something to Imagine: Equity in Pediatric Surgery. [View recording here.](#)

Several of our faculty, students and leadership published papers this year.

- North-South surgical training partnerships: a systematic review (Tim Greive-Price, Robert Baird)
- Feasibility of Fine-Needle Aspiration Biopsy and Rapid On-Site Evaluation for Immediate Triage in Breast Cancer Screening in Tanzania (Godfrey S. Philipo)
- Virtual learning in global surgery: current strategies and adaptation for the COVID-19 pandemic (Emilie Joos)

[See more](#)

Evaluations of our courses take place each term and this year, we featured some positive testimonials on our course pages.

“My exposure to global surgery is not that much [so] it was nice learning from other peoples’ experience as it illustrates their personal experiences.”

- Student Feedback for SURG 512



Giving and Funding

We continue to fundraise for donations to our BISC Operations Fund and MGSC Bursary Award Fund.

The MGSC Bursary Award fund is funded by an annual tuition allocation and donations. This fund will provide critical support towards engaging a cohort of students who otherwise would not be able to enroll in graduate studies. This award will allow surgeons and trainees from low-income countries to take the online Master’s program, ultimately equipping them to address the growing need of surgical care for those who need it the most.

Donations to the BISC Operational Fund provides critical support towards BISC operational support and administration, course instruction and development including updates to course materials. Learn more on our [Giving page.](#)

MGSC BURSARY AWARD

BISC OPERATIONAL FUND

This year, the Department of Surgery provided financial support available for qualified students who are approved for the Master of Global Surgical Care. Candidates must demonstrate academic excellence and experience in global surgical care, reside and work in a Low or Middle Income Country and/or in an underserved area and will remain in country to practice and apply the skills and knowledge gained in the MGSC to further enhance surgical care in an LMIC and/or underserved area. BISC remains extremely grateful to the Department of Surgery for this support and for their ongoing support of our operations.

PROJECTS AND COLLABORATION

Partnerships allow us funding and support for our academic and research activities and, more broadly, to tackle the challenge of the burden of the lack of surgical care. Due to limitations and restrictions on travel in 2020, many project activities were on hold. Please see the next section for highlights of 2020.

Ongoing Partnerships

Through sustained and expanding collaboration, we continue to realize our mission to provide global surgical care in the areas most needed.

BISC would like to recognize our ongoing partners from all around the world. More information on current projects and collaborations can be found on [our Projects page](#).



Since 2011, BISC has had agreement with the **Canadian Network for International Surgery (CNIS)**, a Vancouver-based not-for-profit. CNIS provides surgical and obstetrical training enabling African practitioners to prevent suffering and deaths of millions each year. This contributes to the broader CNIS program goal of reducing death and disability from surgical and obstetrical disorders in selected African countries. CNIS hosts the Bethune Round Table (BRT) each year with a Canadian host academic institution.



BISC partners with **Engineers in Scrubs (EIS)** in the **UBC School of Biomedical Engineering**. Through this program, sessions are organized each fall which are opportunities for Faculty to present an idea about a problem they have encountered in a LMIC healthcare facility that might be solved by a novel biomedical engineering solution. BISC Faculty and stakeholders presented a summary about the problem they would like to address to students at two MedTech Café Events by Zoom. Biomedical engineering students from UBC select which idea they wish to work on.



The **Reconstructing Women International** program is aimed to treat patients in their local communities by international women plastic surgeons through the use of local medical facilities. This project is led by BISC Advisory Committee member, Dr. Nancy Van Laeken. This year fundraising was cancelled and also there has been no travel due to COVID-19. Teams have been coordinating tele-education sessions principally in Sub-Saharan Africa at Aga Khan Hospitals. Plastic surgery rounds are being held once a month to present and discuss difficult cases.



Founded in 1994 by ophthalmologist and BISC Advisory Committee member Dr. Paul Dubord, **Eyesight International** is dedicated to eliminating blindness and bringing self-sustaining eye care to rural communities in the developing world. In 2020 when the COVID-19 pandemic hit, the eyebank was shut down almost immediately. However, operations have resumed and are now up to 5,000 transplants a year. Eyesight International partners are currently building an eye facility in Liberia.



MSF Partnership

There is a shortage of surgical providers in Sub-Saharan Africa, and especially in countries that do not provide access to formal surgical training programs, such as South Sudan.

One of the potential solutions to this shortage of providers is training and validating non-surgeon physicians (NSP) to perform surgical procedures, which is called task-shifting or task-sharing. In 2019, a partnership between MSF Operational Center Paris (OCP) and UBC-BISC was formalized to create a surgical task-sharing curriculum, in order to help build capacity in MSF-surgical projects in South Sudan. A team of UBC affiliated professors designed an Essential Surgical Skills (ESS) curriculum, targeted for implementation in Aweil, South Sudan. Experienced specialists were chosen for designing each module, based on their expertise in their field as well as global surgery experience.



With the support of the Hearing Foundation of Canada this project addresses the rising incidence of noise-induced hearing loss in young people. Sound Sense educates children about the dangers of noise exposure allows us to reduce the risk of noise-induced hearing loss for children in the First Nations communities of Bella Bella, Tofino, Kitkatla, and Hartley Bay, and other Northern B.C. communities. BISC Director, Dr. Brian Westerberg and BISC Faculty Dr. Jane Lea have been travelling to First Nations communities to deliver this outreach program.



A second partnership between UBC Department of Surgery and Gondar University Hospital in Ethiopia continues. BISC teams have continued returning to Gondar University Hospital for Primary Trauma Care (PTC) courses and continued monitoring and evaluation. The team planned to go to Ethiopia in February, 2020 but the trip was cancelled due to COVID-19 and all projects are on hold for now due to international travel restrictions. Funding for this project has been generously provided by the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC).

The training officially began July 1, 2019. This project is led by BISC Associate Director, Dr. Emilie Joos, who was scheduled to travel to Aweil in March 2020 to supervise and support the training program, however this was cancelled due to COVID-19. Most of the training is online so training is expected to be completed as planned in December 2021. A five-year memorandum of understanding between UBC Department of Surgery and MSF-France has been signed in 2021 which will pave the way for continued collaboration in the future.



LOOKING AHEAD

The Branch is excited about the future of global surgical care and our educational programs. 2021 will see the formation of a Planning Committee for the Bethune Roundtable in 2022 as well as consultations around the development of our new Strategic Plan.

We also look forward to updates and potential expansion of our courses to help meet the needs of our learners and address new innovations and priorities in the field.

Our first cohort of students will graduate from the Master of Global Surgical care in May 2021 and we are very excited about their future careers in global surgical care! BISC continues to follow up with our alumni community and feature their stories. Stay tuned to our website for more profiles on our graduates, current students, faculty and alumni!

Please visit our website and social media channels for more information.

Bethune Round Table 2022

BISC is very proud to announce that we will be hosting the 2022 Bethune Round Table, in association with the Canadian Network for International Surgery (CNIS). The event will be held on June 16- 18, 2022.

The Bethune Round Table (BRT) is an annual interdisciplinary meeting aimed at addressing the challenges of providing accessible, high-quality surgical care to marginalized patients in low-resource settings. By bringing health professionals across a variety of disciplines together, we are able to share strategies and create solutions for improving surgical care to these under-served regions.

Stay tuned for more information on the conference theme, abstract submission and event registration on [our Bethune landing page](#).

THEME: DECOLONIZING GLOBAL SURGERY





2021 SPRING GRADUATION

In May 2021, the first cohort of students will graduate from the [Master of Global Surgical Care](#) and several students will also graduate from our [Graduate Certificate of Global Surgical Care](#).

BISC is very excited to see where they will take their newfound skills and learnings and how they will apply them to a career in global surgical care in the future. They will be empowered to contribute towards enhancing safe surgical care in low-resource settings globally and to reduce the global health burden of unmet surgical care. While this year's graduation ceremony will be virtual and we cannot gather in person, we wish our graduates a heartfelt congratulations and all the very best. We will continue to follow up with them and feature their stories and involvement in Branch activities in the future!

Please visit our website and stay tuned for the upcoming Spring 2021 [newsletter](#) for features on this year's graduates.

Photo Credits

- F Stock / Shutterstock
- 2 Hover Collective / UBC Brand & Marketing
- 3 Stock / Unsplash
- 4 Stock / Unsplash
- 5 Stock / Unsplash
- 6 Top, Bottom, Hover Collective / UBC Brand & Marketing
- 7 Top, Hover Collective / UBC Brand & Marketing
- 7 Overlay, Stock / Masterfile
- 8 Stock / Unsplash
- 10 Stock / Unsplash
- 11 Martin Dee / UBC Brand & Marketing
- 12 Martin Dee / UBC Brand & Marketing
- 13 Top, Paul H. Joseph / UBC Brand & Marketing
- 13 Banner, Stock / Unsplash
- 16 Top, Stock / Unsplash
- 16 Banner, Jamil Rhajjak / UBC Brand & Marketing
- 17 Stock / Unsplash
- 18 Stock / Unsplash
- 19 Hover Collective / UBC Brand & Marketing
- 20 Martin Dee / UBC Brand & Marketing
- 21 Martin Dee / UBC Brand & Marketing
- 22 Hover Collective / UBC Brand & Marketing
- 23 Hover Collective / UBC Brand & Marketing
- 24 Don Erhardt / UBC Brand & Marketing
- 25 Hover Collective / UBC Brand & Marketing
- 26 Hover Collective / UBC Brand & Marketing
- 27 Hover Collective / UBC Brand & Marketing
- 28 Hover Collective / UBC Brand & Marketing
- 29 Top, Stock / Unsplash
- 29 Icon, Left, Paul H. Joseph / UBC Brand & Marketing
- 29 Icon, Right, Martin Dee / UBC Brand & Marketing
- 30 Stock / Unsplash
- 31 Don Erhardt / UBC Brand & Marketing
- 34 Stock / Unsplash
- 35 Stock / Unsplash
- 36 Martin Dee / UBC Brand & Marketing
- B Stock / Shutterstock



Stay connected!
surgery.international@ubc.ca

internationalsurgery.med.ubc.ca
facebook.com/intsurgicalcare
twitter.com/surgicalcare
instagram.com/intsurgicalcare

Mailing Address

Faculty of Medicine
Room 11135
2775 Laurel Street
Vancouver, BC Canada V5Z 1M9

Tel: 604 875 4111 (ext. 23110)
Fax: 604 675 3553



THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
Branch for International Surgical Care
Department of Surgery | Faculty of Medicine