



A photograph showing three surgeons in blue scrubs and patterned surgical caps performing surgery on a patient. The surgeon on the left is using a red surgical instrument. The surgeon in the center is wearing a white mask. The surgeon on the right is wearing a green and yellow polka-dot cap. The patient is covered with a green surgical drape. In the foreground, a tray holds several pairs of surgical instruments, including scissors and forceps.

Branch for Global Surgical Care

Strategic Plan 2022-2027



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With gratitude, we acknowledge that the University of British Columbia Department of Surgery, Branch for Global Surgical Care is located on traditional, ancestral and unceded territories of Indigenous peoples around the province.



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This Strategic Plan will guide the future priorities of the Branch for Global Surgical Care to ensure the programs and projects are in alignment with the needs of low-resource settings worldwide. These priorities will be achieved through an evidence-based, collaborative and anti-colonialist approach, in alignment with the UBC Faculty of Medicine and Department of Surgery's Strategic Plans.

The Branch for Global Surgical Care considers a low resource setting to encompass all communities and geographic regions that lack access to high quality surgical care, both in low- and high-income countries.



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Our Vision

Universal access to high-quality, safe, affordable, and timely surgical, obstetrical, and anesthetic care.

Our Mission

Build capacity in surgical care through accessible educational graduate programs and pioneering initiatives that are patient-centered, ethical, socially responsible, and planetary conscious.

Our Values

Respect for All, Representative Leadership, Innovative Initiatives, Modelling Inclusivity



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A Message from the Executive Team of the Branch for Global Surgical Care

Since its inception in 2003, the Branch for Global Surgical Care (BGSC) has been successfully advancing global surgical care under the themes of education, research, collaboration, and advocacy through the creation of quality educational programs and meaningful partnerships. Today, in 2022, we are seeing a tremendous growth in and a need for health care providers wanting to get involved in global surgical care through research, innovation, and sustainable partnerships.

The Branch for Global Surgical Care is situated within the Department of Surgery and the Faculty of Medicine, at the University of British Columbia. This year, we are excited to welcome the Global Surgery Lab under the umbrella of BGSC. As our Graduate Courses and Programs continue to shape new surgical leaders in the field, in parallel, the Lab capitalizes on grassroots efforts to improve surgical care on the ground. The existing synergies between the two will further allow the Department of Surgery to promote Global Surgical Care and fulfill its strategic priorities in the areas of research and innovation, education, faculty engagement and development, and creation of sustainable partnerships at the provincial, national and global levels.

We are looking forward to the years ahead as defined by the priorities outlined in this five-year Strategic Plan.

Dr. Brian Westerberg, Medical Director
Dr. Emilie Joos, Associate Medical Director
Cecilia Gruber, Education Manager



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The Branch for Global Surgical Care

The Branch for Global Surgical Care (BGSC) was created in 2003, to advance surgical care globally. It came about as a desire to build on the national interest in surgical care within the realm of global health and the realization of the strength of global activity that already existed among surgical members of various UBC Faculties. Its goal has been, and continues to be, to make sustainable improvements in the delivery of surgical care for the world's most disadvantaged peoples and to build capacity by improving the access and quality of surgical care in low-resource settings.

The Branch for Global Surgical Care has recently re-imagined its structure and activities. It now focuses on two unique roles and responsibilities in promoting and implementing the strategic directions of not only the Branch for Global Surgical Care, but also the Department of Surgery: Education Programs and Global Surgery Lab.

The Education Programs

The BGSC launched its first online course in 2009, followed by unique Certificate (2015) and Master (2018) degree programs in Global Surgical Care shortly thereafter. The courses are designed for graduate students, postgraduate trainees, surgical faculty, and surgery-related health care providers across the globe, are fully virtual courses enabling 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, and build research and leadership skills to advance surgical care in their local context. Our first cohort of Masters students graduated in 2021 and interest and enrolment has grown steadily.



The Global Surgery Lab

In 2021, the Global Surgery Lab (GSL) was created and designed to be an interdisciplinary, inclusive, and diverse group that aims to improve knowledge of and access to surgical care in underserved communities through innovative, anti-colonialist, and equitable educational platforms and research projects.

One of the Lab's first challenges was to address the need for surgical providers in sub-Saharan Africa, where the lack of formal surgical training programs limited the provision of surgical services. A partnership between Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) and BGSC was established to create and disseminate an educational resource for non-surgeon physicians. A GSL team of physicians/surgeons, nurses, students and allied health professionals designed the Essential Surgical Skills (ESS) curriculum, which contained training modules for basic surgical procedures. Through the completion of this course, non-surgeon physicians became equipped with the skills they need to provide safe surgical care to their communities. This curriculum was successfully implemented in South Sudan in 2019-2021.

The Global Surgery Lab rapidly expanded, and now boasts more than thirty students and five principal investigators, all working on education and research initiatives geared towards improving access to quality surgical care in low-resource settings. In 2021, the GSL received a five-year grant from the UBC Strategic Investment Fund to scale up its ESS curriculum to rural and remote regions of B.C.



BGSC Organizational Structure

The leadership team of the Branch (Medical Director, Associate Medical Director and Education Manager) seek guidance from the Advisory Committee. Representatives from various stakeholder groups are appointed to the Branch's Advisory Committee from a wide variety of surgical care specialties, representing the interdisciplinary nature of surgical care.

- Surgery
- Ophthalmology
- Orthopaedics
- Anesthesia
- Obstetrics/ Gynecology
- Urology
- Radiology
- Nursing

In addition, we seek representation from the following:

- Indigenous Community
- Planetary Health Representative
- Low- or Middle-Income Country
- Rural Surgical Care Provider
- Student/Trainee Representative



The BGSC houses individual courses, a Graduate Certificate and a Master degree program in Global Surgical Care. The management of the educational programs and support for the students themselves within the programs are under the direction of the Graduate Program Advisor for the BGSC.

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 BGSC, we value and celebrate the diversity of backgrounds and experiences that each member brings to this growing field of global surgery.



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Branch for Global Surgical Care

Dept of Surgery

Head, Department of Surgery

Director of Administration, Department of Surgery

Medical Director

BGSC

Associate Medical Director

Advisory Committee

Education Programs

Graduate Program Advisor

Education Manager

Strategic Priorities
· Graduate Courses & Programs (GCGSC, MGSC)
· Undergraduate MD Elective

Team:
· Steering Committee
· Admissions Committee
· Awards Committee
· Course Instructors and Course Guest Faculty

Global Surgery Lab

Lead, Global Surgery Lab

Program Manager, Global Surgery Lab

Strategic Priorities
· Research
· Capacity Building
· Advocacy

Team:
· Principal Investigators
· Students, trainees, attendees

Strategic Priorities (2022-2027)

Education

Provide High Quality Educational Programs Accessible to Providers in Low-Resource Settings

Capacity Building

Expand Current Efforts Through the Development of Sustainable and Ethical Partnerships

Research

Promote and Participate in Research Related to Global Surgical Care

Advocacy

Provide Leadership in and Platforms for the Promotion of Universal Access to Surgical Care



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Priority 1: Education

Provide High Quality Educational Programs Accessible to Providers from Low-Resource Settings.

BGSC offers a Graduate Certificate and a Master degree in Global Surgical Care, as well as an undergraduate elective in Global Surgical Care. Over the next 5 years, we are committed to continuously improve our programs and their reach. We are constantly evolving by updating existing courses, creating new content for its programs and by marketing to reach a broader audience.

The key concepts of social responsibility and planetary health are integrated throughout all of our courses. BGSC recognizes that social responsibility includes aspects like planetary health being a central motivation when considering the delivery of health care. Health care is responsible for approximately 5% of global CO₂ emissions, on par with the aviation industry; as a global society our trajectory is one that is not sustainable for our ecosystem. The importance of responding to the pressing needs of climate change requires incorporation of aspects of social responsibility and planetary health into all of our courses, while still promoting ethical behaviour and upholding of human rights.

As well, we will continue to update our course offerings with Indigenous Cultural Safety training addressing the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. This aligns with the UBC Faculty of Medicine's strategic plan which reaffirms the fundamental premise of social accountability, as well as the goal of our educational programs to make a positive impact on people, (particularly underserved, vulnerable and marginalized peoples) and develop new ways of delivering care that result in better outcomes while recognizing traditional and cultural approaches to health.



After building a strong student and alumni base in Canada, BGSC is focused on expanding access to our educational programs for learners from Low- and Middle-Income Countries (LMICs) and rural, remote and Indigenous communities in Canada. The main barrier to accessibility is financial recognizing the tuition costs in many cases are prohibitive. BGSC is seeking to grow our Bursary Award fund, which is funded by both a proportion of the annual tuition allocation paid by students as well as by charitable donations. This fund will provide critical financial support towards engaging a cohort of students who otherwise would not be able to enroll in graduate studies.

The GSL has created the Essential Surgical Skills (ESS) curriculum geared towards non-surgeon physicians in 2019. We are committed to continuously improving this open access educational resource, and scaling it up for use in other low-resource settings including rural Canada. Our curriculum is modular: eight modules (Safe Surgery, Anesthesia, Trauma, Source Control, Orthopedics, Burns, Pediatric Surgery, Obstetrics) of didactic content, accompanied by figures and seven surgical procedure videos. The content is currently being improved by our GSL ESS team and reviewed by our content experts. As well, we are in the process of creating twenty more surgical procedures videos, to meet the needs of our trainees in low-resource settings.



Initiative 1: Broaden the Scope of High-Quality Educational Programs

1.1 Conduct a program/curriculum review for the Graduate Certificate, Master degree program and undergraduate elective with the goal to revise the curriculum as needed, including expansion of focus on surgical care in rural and remote communities.

- Integration of cultural competence and social responsibility into curriculum.
- Incorporation of relevant curriculum related to allied health professionals in the context of global surgical care.
- Integration of planetary health considerations into courses where appropriate.

Goals and Metrics:

- Engage with UBC Centre for Excellence in Indigenous Health and an Indigenous faculty member to lead curriculum changes related to Indigenous communities by 2024.
- Engage with an allied health professional to provide relevant modifications to the curriculum by 2024.
- Incorporate planetary health within SURG 510 by 2023.
- Incorporate planetary health within SURG 514 by 2024.

Initiative 2: Increase Student Enrolment in the Graduate Certificate and Masters Program and undergraduate Global Surgery elective

2.1 Increase student enrolment in educational courses and programs.

- Promote programs to achieve enhanced diversity of students.
- Promote programs to achieve increased representation of students from low resource settings.
- Promote programs through other institutions in high resource settings.
- Increase medical student enrolment in undergraduate Global Surgery elective.



Goals and Metrics:

- Increase representation of students from low resource settings by 20% by 2027.
- Increase the number of medical students enrolled in the undergraduate Global Surgery elective by 20% by 2027, from both UBC as well as other Universities.
- Create a UBC Surgical Foundations (CRASH Course) module in global surgery by 2024.
- Ensure that the Bursary Award Fund is sustainable at >\$30,000 / year by 2027.

Initiative 3: Expand the Essential Surgical Skills Training Program (ESS)

3.1 Publish the ESS as an Open Resource to assist in training for surgical interventions in low resource settings where surgical expertise may be lacking.

Goals and Metrics:

- Publish the open-access ESS by 2023.
- Complete the ESS eight modules content by 2024.
- Complete the ESS twenty videos by 2026.

3.2 Expand the impact of the ESS in collaboration with another partner facility/program.

Goals and metrics:

- Launch ESS in another LMIC by 2026.
- Launch ESS in a site in rural Canada in partnership with the Society of Rural Physicians of Canada by 2026.



Priority 2: Capacity Building

Support and Build Surgical Capacity Through the Development of Sustainable and Ethical Partnerships.

The Branch for Global Surgical Care has established relationships with various organizations such as Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), United Nations Global Surgery Foundation (GSF), Canadian Network for International Surgery (CNIS), Gondar University in Ethiopia and UBC Biomedical Engineering through the Engineers in Scrubs program. Consistent with this, the Global Surgery Lab (GSL) is developing a framework for sustainable Global Surgery Partnerships.

Together with MSF, the GSL has developed an Essential Surgical Skills (ESS) Training Program that is designed to serve as an open access resource for surgical training. A five-year memorandum of understanding between BGSC and the UBC Department of Surgery, and MSF-France was signed in 2021, which is precedent setting for continued collaboration in the future. In partnership with the Digital Lab at BC Children's Hospital (BCCH), the GSL will further develop the ESS program and improve resources available to MSF. The Global Surgery Foundation, one of our partners, is developing a Global Surgery Learning Hub, which will launch in 2023. The BGSC, through the Global Surgery Lab, will aim to contribute to the Content Committee by sharing its educational resources created for the ESS Training Program.

In partnership with the UBC School of Biomedical Engineering, BGSC Faculty participate in the Engineers in Scrubs (EiS) program, that has the objective of providing low-cost innovative engineering solutions to complex surgical problems in low resource settings. We continue to explore further areas for collaboration with the UBC School of Biomedical Engineering through the EiS program and the Department of Surgery annual Surgical Innovation week, created by the Vancouver Coastal Health Learning Health Systems Lab.

Finally, as we are committed to promoted climate-conscious actions to enhance surgical care globally, we are collaborating with the UBC Planetary Healthcare Lab, to integrate environmental sustainability in all our courses.

Initiative 4: Development of a Framework for Sustainable Partnerships

4.1 Finalize a Framework for Sustainable Partnerships.

- Validate results of Delphi consensus for sustainable partnerships.
- Engage with regulatory bodies and associations for validation of framework.
- Publish framework for use with future projects.

Goals and Metrics:

- Publish framework results by January 2023.
- Validate framework with an existing partnership by 2024.

Initiative 5: Cultivate Existing and Create New Sustainable and Ethical Partnerships

5.1 Develop and Formalize New Partnerships with Like-Minded Organizations i.e. MSF, GSF, CNIS, EiS etc.

Goals and Metrics:

- Formalize a partnership with a rural organization/society by 2023.
- Formalize a partnership with an Indigenous organization/society by 2023.
- Formalize a partnership with an LMIC organization or academic institution by 2023.
- Formalize a partnership with the UBC Planetary Healthcare Lab by 2023.

5.2 Enhance existing partnerships.

Goals and Metrics:

- Formalize a partnership with the BCCH Digital Lab by 2023.
- Formalize a partnership with the Joint Standing Committee on Rural Issues, which funds the Rural Coordination Centre of BC (RCCbc) for surgical education for rural physicians by 2023.



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- Formalize a partnership with the Global Surgery Foundation by becoming a member of the Learning Hub Content Committee by 2023.
- Adapt the ESS curriculum to the rural Canadian context by 2024.
- Explore the potential integration of EiS and Surgical Innovation Week with the UBC School for Biomedical Engineering by 2024.

Initiative 6: Expand Opportunities for Academic Career Enhancement

6.1 Empower and Enable Learners from Low Resource Settings to Become Leaders in Global Surgical Care.

Goals and Metrics:

- Conduct a survey of current students to determine leadership training needs by 2024.
- Create a leadership module in the MGSC curriculum, if needed, by 2026.

6.2 Explore Fellowship and Adjunct Professor Opportunities for Physicians from Low Resource Settings.

Goals and Metrics:

- Create a proposal for a UBC Global Surgery Fellowship program by 2027.
- Offer two adjunct professorship positions to qualified physicians from low resource settings by 2027.

Priority 3: Research

Provide Opportunities for Research Collaborations and Bilateral Publications



The Branch for Global Surgical Care believes in not only generating knowledge through research, but also acting on/implementing changes as a result of its research outcomes. Well structured, ethical and multidisciplinary Global Surgery Research allows surgeons and other health professionals in the surgical field to disseminate knowledge and potentially identify innovative solutions to promote and improve surgical outcomes in low resource settings. This evidence-based approach allows the Branch for Global Surgical Care to ensure processes are carried out with equity, social justice, inclusion of non-colonialist methods with adequate collaboration and validation from peers and experts.

The GSL currently has five active research projects, ranging from studying surgical outcomes in Indigenous communities in Canada to the evaluation of our ESS training program in South Sudan. We are successfully recruiting undergraduate UBC FLEX students to our research program and supervised eight for the academic year 2021-2022. Medical students from Brazil, Uganda, and Ghana have now joined our ranks. In 2021, our students presented at local (Chung Research Day), national (Bethune Round Table), and international (World Congress of Pediatric Surgeons) surgical meetings.



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Initiative 7: Build Global Surgery Research Capacity Among Undergraduate Medical Students

7.1 Enable Members of the Global Surgery Lab to Perform Research in the Field of Global Surgical Care by increasing mentorship capacity for Undergraduate Students

Goals and Metrics:

- Create a process to track and manage existing projects
- Create and implement a formal structure and process for project proposals.
- Recruit two more Principal Investigators to the Global Surgery Lab by 2026.

7.2 Foster Bilateral Partnership Opportunities with Physicians in Low Resource Settings

Goals and Metrics:

- Create and implement a structure to facilitate bilateral (between centres) research.
- Create, develop and maintain a program manager role within the Global Surgery Lab.

Initiative 8: Provide Research Leadership Opportunities for BGSC Graduate Students

8.1 Enable graduates from the Masters and Certificate programs to lead research projects through the Global Surgery Lab

Goals and Metrics:

- Recruit and retain one alumnus per year to the Global Surgery Lab.
- Support partnerships with GSL students through managerial support from administrative personnel within GSL.



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Priority 4: Advocacy

Provide Leadership in and Platforms for the Promotion of Universal Access to Surgical Care.

The Branch for Global Surgical Care has the necessary infrastructure to engage faculty, residents, students, and other health professionals interested in an expanded understanding of surgical care in low-resource settings and, importantly, to share its members' own experiences with other faculty and students. In the past, this was predominantly done through BGSC Rounds, Department of Surgery Grand Rounds and Chung Research Day, as well as our Faculty and Advisory Committee members' presentations at conferences. The BGSC, through the Global Surgery Lab, now seeks to be a powerful advocate for alleviating patients suffering from lack of surgical care around the world.

The Global Surgery Lab's Off The Table podcast was created to give a voice to surgical providers on the ground and released seven episodes in 2021. Further podcasts will continue to be developed and promoted over the next few years. A Global Surgery Symposium, connecting health professionals involved with Global Surgical Care will be organized by the Global Surgery Lab commencing in 2023. In rural Canada, we work in close collaboration with the Society for Rural Physicians of Canada and the Joint Standing Committee on Rural Issues which funds the Rural Coordination Centre of British Columbia (RCCbc) to support efforts related to surgical care.

The Branch for Global Surgical Care is now seeking to become a central hub and coordination centre for Global Surgical Care in British Columbia and beyond.



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Initiative 9: Become champions of equitable surgical care

9.1 Advocate for Social Justice, Equity and Inclusion in surgical care through anti-colonialist, evidence-based approaches.

Goals and Metrics:

- Implement selected and appropriate action items from “In Plain Sight” to address Indigenous-Specific Racism and Discrimination in BC Health Care in our graduate and undergraduate courses by 2024.
- Implement learning opportunities related to cultural competence, equity, diversity and inclusion within the ESS by 2024.
- Integrate UBC 23/24 to ESS curriculum in close collaboration with the Center for Excellence in Indigenous Health by 2024.

9.2 Enhance the Visibility and Awareness of the Branch for Global Surgical Care in the Faculty of Medicine and abroad.

Goals and Metrics:

- Increase in social media presence measured by increases on all accounts in the following by 50% by 2024:
 - number of current followers
 - reach
 - mentions
 - number of original posts each month i.e. student, alumni and faculty spotlights, course series, publications series & other series.
- Broadcast three podcasts per year in alignment with our mission, vision and values.
- Double the number of followers of the Off the Table Podcast by 2024.



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- Increase presence/presentations at large conferences and events.
- Participate in one Canadian Global Surgery Trainee Alliance event per year.
- Create an annual UBC Global Surgery Symposium in 2023.
- Broadcast three podcasts per year in alignment with our mission, vision and values.

9.3 Engage populations and surgical care providers in Indigenous Communities and Rural and Remote Canada

Goals:

- Consult with key Indigenous Stakeholders to ensure context-relevance of our graduate courses and ESS curriculum (including, but not limited to, First Nations Health Authority and Centre for Excellence in Indigenous Health).
- Partner with Joint Standing Committee on Rural Issues, which funds the Rural Coordination Centre of BC (RCCbc) by creating a "Rural Surgery Working Group" to assess the needs of the rural community in British Columbia.
- Engage one Family Physician-Enhanced Surgical Skills (FP-ESS) or Family Physician – Obstetrical Surgical Skills (FP-OSS) to instruct one of our Graduate courses by 2024.
- Apply for funding for programs to improve health in rural and Indigenous populations of Canada.



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Thank You

We wish to thank all those whose input helped shape our next five year strategic plan including stakeholders from various organizations, the Department of Surgery, and our faculty and Advisory Committee.

We thank you for your ongoing support of the Branch for Global Surgical Care and our programs.

The next steps will be implementation of the priorities over the next five years through the actions outlined in this plan. We will be creating project plans to guide our efforts in each of our four strategic priority areas and will be checking in twice per year through reports to the Advisory Committee and Department of Surgery to ensure we are reaching our targets and being accountable for progress towards reaching milestones and measures we have set.

This strategic plan will be a living document and we will continue to seek input from our alumni, students, faculty and staff to ensure continual check ins and adjustments if required to ensure improvement and progress towards our goals.

The field of global surgical care is rapidly evolving and through our educational programs and our Global Surgery Lab, the Branch for Global Surgical Care will continue to evolve to meet the complex challenges of ensuring access for timely, safe and equitable surgical care to all who need it around the world.

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