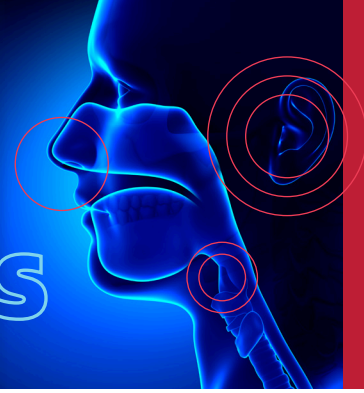




Department News



Chair's Welcome

Spring 2023



As a parent, I enjoy regaling my children with personal stories of what life was like when I was their age. A world without cell phones or texting. Movie rentals on VHS tapes from an actual store that need rewinding ('Be kind, Rewind') before returning. My children can't imagine

a time when Amazon sold only books and Netflix delivered DVD movies in your mailbox. From nostalgic memories, it is not a big leap for me to then think about their future and imagine what world my children will inhabit when they reach my age. This past October, our two PGY-1 interns, Dr. Lauren Malaya and Dr. Maddie St. Peter, delivered healthy babies within weeks of each other. Also in the month of October, two more healthy babies joined our otolaryngology family, Brooks Barber (son of alumnus Samuel Barber) and Claire Adams (daughter of Chris Adams, PA-C), and in August, Dr. Chen welcomed a beautiful daughter, Daisy, into the world. In an annual rite in March, on Match Day, two senior medical students learned their future for the next 5 years will be as otolaryngology residents at the University of Arizona. Recent happenings in our department lead us to consider what future world awaits these newborn babies and what future careers await these newest young aspiring otolaryngologists.

When you consider the future, are you an optimist or pessimist? If one follows the latest news, it can be easy to become despondent about our shared future. Wars continue endlessly across the globe. National and now even many state and local governments hopelessly deadlocked, the political dialogue increasingly poisoned and hostile. Gun violence and mass shootings take countless lives on a near daily

basis. Our collective attention, so recently dominated by a global health crisis, has now shifted to other new and depressing post-pandemic trends. The great resignation. Quiet quitting. In healthcare, recent reports that more than 100,000 nurses have quit in the last two years, and an additional 800,000 nurses say they plan to quit in the next 5 years.

Yet for all the steady stream of pessimistic news that dominates the headlines, there is plenty of reason for optimism that a brighter future for all is within reach. You might have missed all the good news that's been happening in the last few years. A COVID vaccine developed and distributed in record time is only one example of a recent slew of other life-saving vaccines for major human diseases like malaria and RSV that have recently become available. While global wealth inequity remains a serious challenge, the proportion of the world's population in extreme poverty has actually decreased over the past decade to its lowest level ever. Healthier, more abundant crops and better energy efficiency has reduced widespread hunger and decreased the number of people suffering from food insecurity in spite of the overall increase in the world's population. I'm not saying that there aren't real risks that continue to threaten our future, but humanity has a resiliency that has repeatedly shown the ability to respond to whatever unique and diverse challenges that are thrown our way.

So I choose to be an optimist about the future world for my children. For the otolaryngology specialty, similarly, I believe the future is bright. While far from ready to put away my scalpel, I've been around long enough to sometimes marvel at the innovations and new practices in otolaryngology that have occurred during my career so far -- minimally invasive and endoscopic approaches for skull base and thyroid surgery, transoral robotic surgery, targeted therapies for head and neck cancer

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Alumni Update – Jonnae Ostrom, MD

After finishing her residency in Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery at the University of Arizona in 2019, Dr. Jonnae Ostrom completed a fellowship in Facial Plastic & Reconstructive Surgery at the University of Washington. She currently lives and practices in Tucson, Arizona. She fell in love with the Sonoran Desert during her residency and decided to stay. She works at Tucson Ear, Nose & Throat as a double board-certified Otolaryngology Head & Neck surgeon as well as Facial Plastic & Reconstructive Surgeon.

Dr. Ostrom is the mother of a very busy one-year-old boy and is expecting a baby girl at the beginning of May. Her family loves to spend time outside in the garden and with their two dogs. Dr. Ostrom also travels back home to Alaska frequently to visit friends and family.



Dr. Wang celebrates birthday with family.

and allergic rhinosinusitis, and surgical implants for treatment of obstructive sleep apnea are just a few examples, and I can't wait to see what's in store for us in otolaryngology in the decades ahead. Advances in technology and innovations in surgical technique, along with continuing increasing anticipated need for otolaryngologic care, means young otolaryngology physicians in training or just beginning their practice can look forward to a future career that is satisfying, interesting, and busy. When I see our residents, both new and almost graduated, I am optimistic that the future of our otolaryngology specialty is in good hands.

In this issue of our newsletter, our faculty spotlight is on Dr. Heather Coffman who explains what she enjoys about her practice in Tucson as an otologist in the UArizona Dept of Otolaryngology and tells us why she chooses to make a 280-mile commute to work from Flagstaff every week. There is an interview with Sonia Romo, our residency program coordinator who has been with the department since its inception. We catch up with recent UArizona residency graduate Dr. Jonnae Ostrom and recent activities of the department are reported, including an article describing the recent annual ENT in the Desert conference and other meeting highlights featuring presentations by department faculty and residents.

Here's to the future!

The Otolaryngology Family is growing! We experienced a baby boom in 2022. Congratulations to all the new parents!



Brooks Barber,
Born to Residency Program Graduate Samuel Barber.



Oscar Malaya
Son of PGY-1 Lauren Malaya.



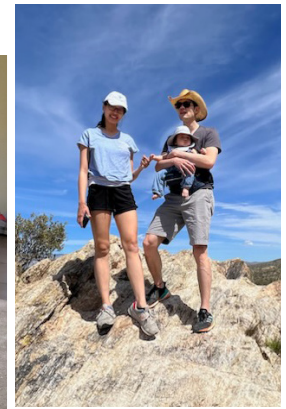
Claire Adams
Daughter of Chris Adams, PAC.



Thomas Vail VI
And his mom, PGY-1 Madeleine St. Peter.



Daisy Chen
Right: Proud parents Dr. Rosie Zhang
and Dr. David Chen hiking with Daisy.



ENT in the Desert 2023

The University of Arizona Department of Otolaryngology proudly held its 10th annual ENT in the Desert Conference on February 2-4, 2023. It has been a privilege to host this three-day CME course for ten years. ENT in the Desert attracted over 140 registrants this year, and was co-directed by Dr. Steven Wang, MD, Professor and Chair, and Dr. Eugene Chang, MD, Professor and Vice Chair.

Distinguished Faculty for ENT in the Desert 2023 included: James Palmer, MD, Professor and Director of Rhinology at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania; Jeffrey Sharon, MD, Associate Professor of Otolaryngology at the University of California San Francisco School of Medicine; Kathleen Sie, MD, Professor of Otolaryngology at Seattle Children's Hospital; C. Kwang Sung, MD, MS, Associate Professor of Otolaryngology at Stanford University; and Theodoros Teknos, MD, Professor of Otolaryngology at University Hospital Cleveland Medical Center.

These distinguished guests were joined by the faculty of the University of Arizona in discussing current trends and common challenges in the field of Otolaryngology. Session topics included Facial Plastic Surgery, Laryngology, Otology, Head and Neck, and Pediatric Otolaryngology. In addition, the conference featured two in-depth Rhinology sessions, one exploring surgical therapies and tips, and another focusing on nasal polyps. Each session incorporated a panel discussion with opportunities for members of the audience to ask questions.

For the second year in a row, the conference took place at beautiful Loews Ventana Canyon Resort in the foothills of the Catalina Mountains north of Tucson. We were lucky to have particularly nice weather this year, with the biggest turnout to date for our group hike in Ventana Canyon, as well as our Shotgun Golf Tournament. We hope to see everyone back again next year.



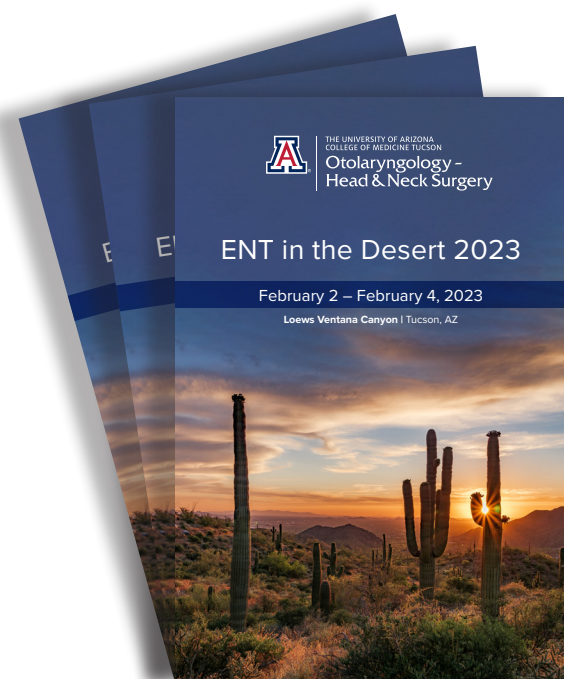
Dr. Steven Wang



Rhinology Speakers



Otology Speakers

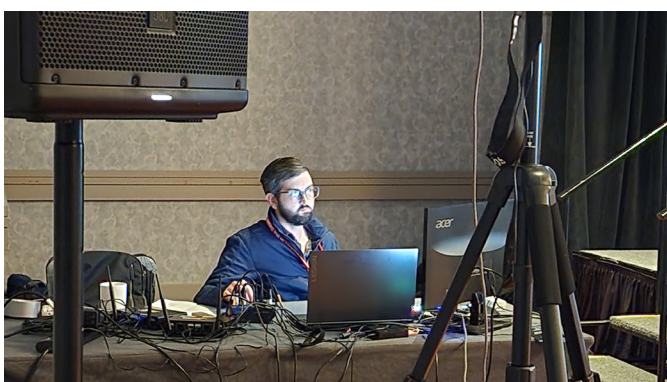




Pediatric Otolaryngology Speakers



We had a record turnout at this year's conference.



Chris Adams, PAC, did a fantastic job providing A/V support.



Congratulations!!!

Dr. Shethal Bearely
was promoted to Associate Professor

**Dr. Jonathan Skirko
and Dr. Carrie Liu**
received their Certification in Complex Pediatric
Otolaryngology from the American Board of Otolaryngology-
Head and Neck Surgery

Dr. Steven Wang
named the Secretary/Treasurer for the Society
of University Otolaryngologists

**Dr. Audrey Baker
and Dr. Shethal Bearely**
received the Specialty Advisor Award for Otolaryngology
from the UArizona College of Medicine – Tucson.

Dr. Steven Wang
named the Chair of the Cutaneous Malignancies Section
for the American Head and Neck Society



Faculty Spotlight – Dr. Heather Coffman

How did you decide to become an Otolaryngologist sub-specializing in Otology?

When I decided I wanted to be a surgeon in medical school I was a little surprised and overwhelmed; that was not what I originally thought I would be doing when I entered medical school. Once I decided, I looked around at some of the surgery options and found that ENT was a great fit for me. It has so much to offer. ENT treats all people with many different problems – we see young and old patients; we develop relationships with our clinic patients, and we cure diseases in the OR. I have a fellowship in otology, so I focus on ear disease and perform surgery under a microscope, but I have also been trained to do endoscopic surgery in the nose and large neck dissections. It is such an amazing, diverse field. I am so lucky to have found it!

Why do you practice at Banner University Medical Center in Tucson?

The Banner University Medical center is a great place to work. I love teaching the residents in the OR as well as working with them in our temporal bone course and didactic lectures. I also like working with our large, amazing faculty of well-trained physicians to share ideas and to learn from. Our clinical, OR and academic staff support me well so I can do my job.



What, Flagstaff?

Sometimes it seems silly to drive down from Flagstaff every week to work in Tucson but I think it is worth it. I really like Tucson; it is a beautiful city with so much to do! But I grew up in Fargo, ND and when my husband, Brian, and I were looking for a place to raise our 3 children we were looking for a small town, and Flagstaff is a great fit! We love the beautiful mountains for hiking and skiing. We love the four seasons, although the snow was a lot this year! I am able to balance a part time job in Tucson and when I am home, I am full time mom – appointments, volunteering at school, crafts, baking, cooking! I am glad my family and my work have allowed me to find this balance. I do wish I was in Tucson more to hang out more with my great colleagues, however!

Your husband is an emergency physician; does this bring an interesting dynamic to your relationship?

Definitely! Usually, it is an asset because I can call him with any non-ENT issues: when patients have unexpected side effects from their athlete's foot cream or I find a heart murmur when they were booked for ear pain. But, sometimes it can be an impediment, like when we are arguing over whether and what antibiotics we should give our sick child instead of bringing them to the pediatrician. We often have lively conversations around the dinner table, but he typically wins with the most heroic save or the grossest story. As we all know, there are few dramas about the valiant replacement of the smallest bone in the body.



Medical Students Learn ENT Exam

As a Mentor in the Societies Program at the University of Arizona College of Medicine, Dr. Audrey Baker has been instrumental in guiding and training the next generation of doctors. Under her leadership, “Introduction to Head and Neck Exam” was incorporated into the required curriculum for University of Arizona medical students this year. This is an exciting opportunity for second year medical students to receive ENT training in the spring semester of their second year, before starting clinical rotations, when they are still relatively young in their medical education. The first training took place in February, and groups of 4-5 students were paired with an Otolaryngology faculty member and a Society Mentor to receive an hour of instruction. We are hopeful that the program will be expanded to include ER residents and other physician trainees in the future.



Dr. Shethal Bearely teaching a group of 2nd year medical students.

Oral, Head and Neck Cancer Screening Event

April is Oral, Head and Neck Cancer Awareness Month. After being sidelined for several years due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the University of Arizona Otolaryngology Department was excited to hold a free cancer screening on Saturday, April 15, 2023, for the first time since 2019. The screening was held at the Banner University Medicine North Clinic, in partnership with the University of Arizona Cancer Center. Otolaryngologist Steven Wang, MD, and Radiation Oncologist Jared Robbins, MD, presented an introduction to the subject of oral, head and neck cancer, which focused on causes, treatment, and the importance of early detection. Perhaps the highlight of the event was hearing from three patients who generously shared stories of their personal experiences with head and neck cancer. Thank you to all the providers, clinic staff, and volunteers who donated their time to provide this free service to the public. We are looking forward to another successful event next April!



Our Oral, Head and Neck Cancer screening team, from left to right: Dr. Shethal Bearely, Dr. Jared Robbins, Dr. Hayden Ansinelli, PGY5, Dr. Steven Wang, Dr. Claire Gleadhill, PGY3, and Dr. Austin Lever, PGY2

Medical Student Research

Conducting research is an entirely different skill set from practicing clinical medicine, but it teaches us to critically evaluate the efficacy of new surgical techniques, medicines, or technologies. Every year, eager medical students seek opportunities to engage in research in order to learn more about the field. The UArizona Otolaryngology Department conducts a variety of clinical, translational, and basic science research, and fortunately we have numerous faculty mentors who love working on projects with medical students. Dr. Shethal Bearely explains that it can be a challenging task because many students may not have had prior research experience: “As mentors, our goal is to guide and support the students throughout the whole scientific process: hypothesis generation, study design, data collection and analysis, manuscript writing, and conference presentations. Though the process can be full of ups and downs, it’s gratifying when a medical student publishes his/her first paper.”

Incoming PGY-1 Resident Zachary Elwell participated in several research opportunities with the department as a medical student, including a case report entitled “Unilateral Cysticercosis of the Parotid Gland: Case Report, Diagnosis, and Clinical Management,” published in Case Reports in Otolaryngology. He collaborated with PGY-2 Matt Groysman and Dr. Shethal Bearely on another project, “Evaluation of Aerosolization during Open and Percutaneous Tracheostomy using a Medium-Fidelity Porcine Model,” which was submitted for publication in the journal Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery. Dr. Bearely also served as UArizona COM-T faculty supervisor on a project that Zach Elwell performed with another faculty mentor from Phoenix Children’s Hospital, Dr. Patrick Scheffler. This project was entitled “Mandibulectomies in Children - A National Database Perspective,” and was presented as a poster presentation at the AAO-HNS/F 2022 meeting in Philadelphia, PA, with the abstract published Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery.

Fourth-year medical student David Ahmadian has been involved in both clinical and translational research projects with several faculty members of the department. Some of his clinical projects include: the utility of routine preoperative CT scans for differentiating between otosclerosis/SSCD, cochlear implantation outcomes in the very elderly, predictors of treatment response to subglottic stenosis, and clinical outcomes for chronic cough patients. David Ahmadian’s translational research is focused on creating virtual-reality (VR) models of patient-specific anatomy for the purposes of surgical education and preoperative planning. He plans to take a research year to continue work on these projects before applying for residency programs next year.

Residency Spotlight: Residency Program Manager Sonia Romo

Sonia Romo is a long-time Wildcat with an undergraduate degree in Political Science and MA in Library & Information Sciences, both from the University of Arizona. She began her career at UArizona in December of 2010 as the Program Coordinator for the Radiation Oncology Department’s Residency Program.

In 2013, the interim Chair of Surgery, Dr. Alexander Chiu, recruited Sonia to run the residency program for the Division of Otolaryngology in addition to her role in Cardiothoracic Surgery. She transitioned to working fulltime for the Otolaryngology Department when it was founded in October 2014. The fledgling residency program had only two residents; since that time, the Otolaryngology Department has celebrated the graduation of six residents, and the complement of residents has grown to eight for the 2023-2024 academic year. Sonia’s combination of experience, attention to detail, and wisdom are a mainstay of the department, and her wealth of institutional knowledge is vital to its day-to-day operations. In addition to running the residency program, she is the lead organizer for the annual ENT in the Desert Conference.

Sonia loves the family atmosphere of working in a small department. She is proud of how the residency program has grown, but also misses the early days when she saw the residents every day. She lives with her partner, Kendra, Kendra’s son Alejandro, and their three dogs, Molly, Halo, and Boomer. She enjoys an active lifestyle that includes hiking, camping, road trips, working out, reading, and board games. Sonia is also a bit of a foodie and is the best person to ask for recommendations regarding Tucson-area coffee shops and restaurants.



Audiology Dinner – Spring 2023

Our Otology Division holds quarterly outreach dinners that are open to audiology professionals in the community. For the Spring Otology Audiology Dinner, the agenda was a round-table discussion about over-the-counter hearing aids, which are rising in popularity but present a number of challenges. Attendees enjoyed a taco buffet at Reforma Modern Mexican Restaurant while debating ways to better educate patients and finding solutions to the world's hearing aid conundrums.



Spring Meetings



Dr. Steven Wang introduces PGY-3 Claire Gleadhill at the Triological Society Combined Sections Meeting in San Diego, California, January 26-28, 2023.



Dr. Steven Wang with co-panelists on the topic "The Changing Landscape of Cutaneous Cancers of the Head and Neck."



PGY-3 Claire Gleadhill presented a research study led by Dr. Helena Yip, "In-office Intralesional Steroid Injection for Subglottic Stenosis."



Dr. Nick Dewyer and Dr. Helena Yip both presented lectures at the Arizona Society of Otolaryngology Annual Meeting in Phoenix, AZ on January 13, 2023.



UArizona faculty with recent residency graduate Dr. Sam Barber at the Poster Reception.

Otolaryngology Residency Match Results

Welcome New Residents



ZACHARY ELWELL, MD

My name is Zachary Elwell. I was born and raised in Phoenix, Arizona. I attended Arizona State University, where I obtained undergraduate degrees in Biochemistry and Spanish Literature and Culture. After graduating, I spent two years as a medical scribe in Pediatric Otolaryngology at Phoenix Children's Hospital (PCH). I then attended medical school at the University of Arizona College of Medicine – Tucson (UArizona). As a medical student, I continued to pursue Otolaryngology through research partnerships at the UArizona and PCH and a fantastic fourth-year rotation with the UArizona Otolaryngology team. Additionally, I developed a passion for global surgery through leadership in the Global Surgery Student Alliance and the Global Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery Initiative. I am thrilled to join the UArizona team and learn from incredible physicians committed to providing the best possible care for their patients.

What attracted you to Arizona?

I was attracted to the UArizona program because of the faculty's incredible commitment to resident training and education in a friendly, tight-knit environment. The camaraderie between residents and faculty is one of this program's most outstanding features.

In addition, because of this program's small size, you frequently work one-on-one with attendings in the OR and clinic. These working relationships allow for a learning experience tailored to each resident because the attendings know you and your skillset well. Finally, UArizona's commitment to research and education is exciting! As a resident, I look forward to learning from this incredible team as I develop my operative, research, and teaching skills.

What is your favorite surgery to be involved in?

Currently, my favorite surgeries are reconstructive procedures, including pediatric airway reconstruction and paramedian forehead flap nasal reconstruction. I look forward to gaining more operative experience during residency and finding new surgeries to love!

What do you enjoy doing in your spare time?

Outside the hospital, I enjoy hiking, trail running, and spending as much time outdoors as possible in Tucson's beautiful Sabino Canyon. I also enjoy cooking and spending time with my family and friends.

What are your long-term goals?

I am currently interested in pursuing fellowship training in either Pediatric Otolaryngology or Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery. However, I am excited to explore all subspecialties of Otolaryngology throughout residency training. After residency, I aspire to use my training to advance global Otolaryngology care through research, education, and clinical practice in environments with limited Otolaryngology care. My ultimate goal is to work with others to build sustainable partnerships that provide equitable access to high-quality Otolaryngology care for all.



ROYAL PIPALIYA, MD

My name is Royal Pipaliya. I was born in New Jersey soon after my parents immigrated from India. However, I grew up and spent most of my life in South Carolina. I received my undergraduate degree in Biology from the College of Charleston. Afterwards, I attended the Medical University of South Carolina to begin my medical training. I was introduced to otolaryngology early on in medical school by shadowing a head and neck surgeon in the operating room. I ultimately chose to pursue the specialty because of the diversity of surgical techniques and the profound impact an otolaryngologist can have on the lives of their patients.

What attracted you to Arizona?

I was fortunate to have the chance to complete an away rotation at Arizona while in medical school. One of the first things that stood out about the program was the camaraderie between residents and faculty. Even as a visiting student, I immediately felt welcomed and an important part of the team. I believe that the small class sizes at Arizona allow faculty to provide high quality, individualized mentorship to each resident in the operating room and clinic. I was also drawn to the fact that residents operate early and often throughout their five years. I believe that the strong emphasis on resident

education coupled with the depth and variety of surgical cases offered at Arizona makes it an incredible opportunity for a budding otolaryngologist such as myself!

What is your favorite surgery to be involved in?

My favorite surgeries so far are neck dissections and cochlear implantations.

What do you enjoy doing in your spare time?

During my spare time, I'm almost always rock climbing. I also love hiking, traveling to new countries, and board game nights with a good group of friends.

What are your long-term career goals?

I'm currently undecided with my fellowship and career goals after residency. I'm excited to see where the next five years in Tucson takes me!

Spouses at work



Three of our favorite couples on a triple “work” date at the clinic.



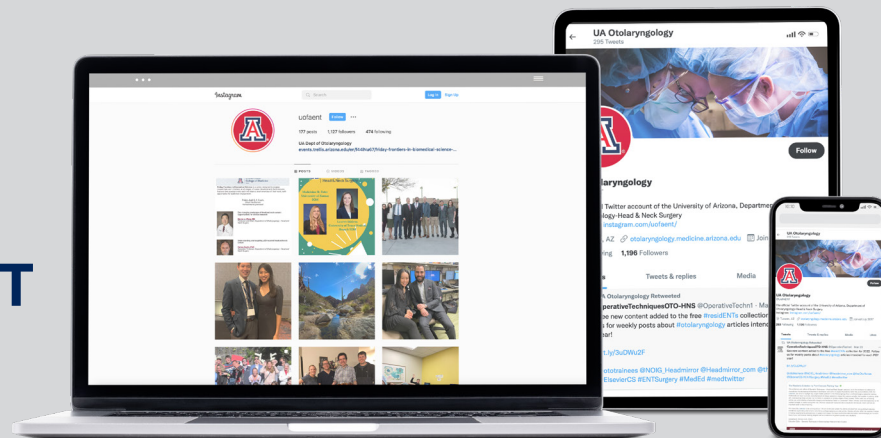
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