



2025-2026 ANNUAL REPORT

2025 - 26 Executive Committee



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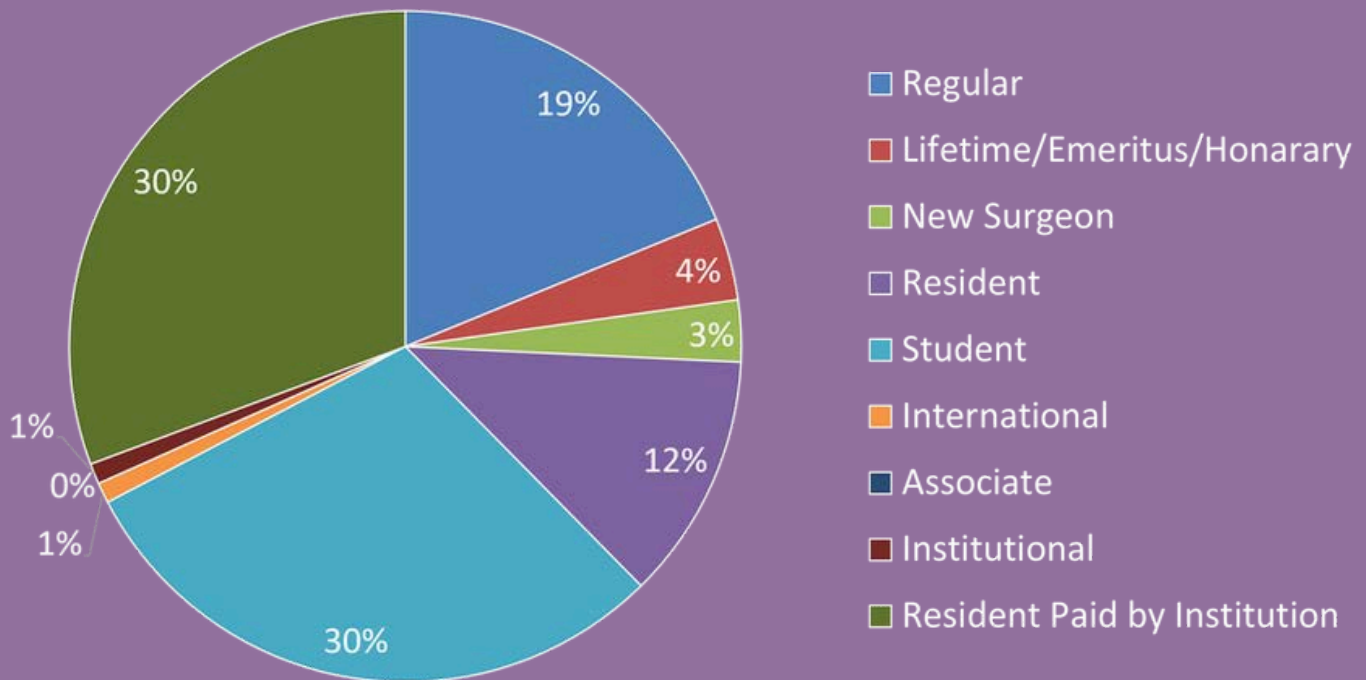
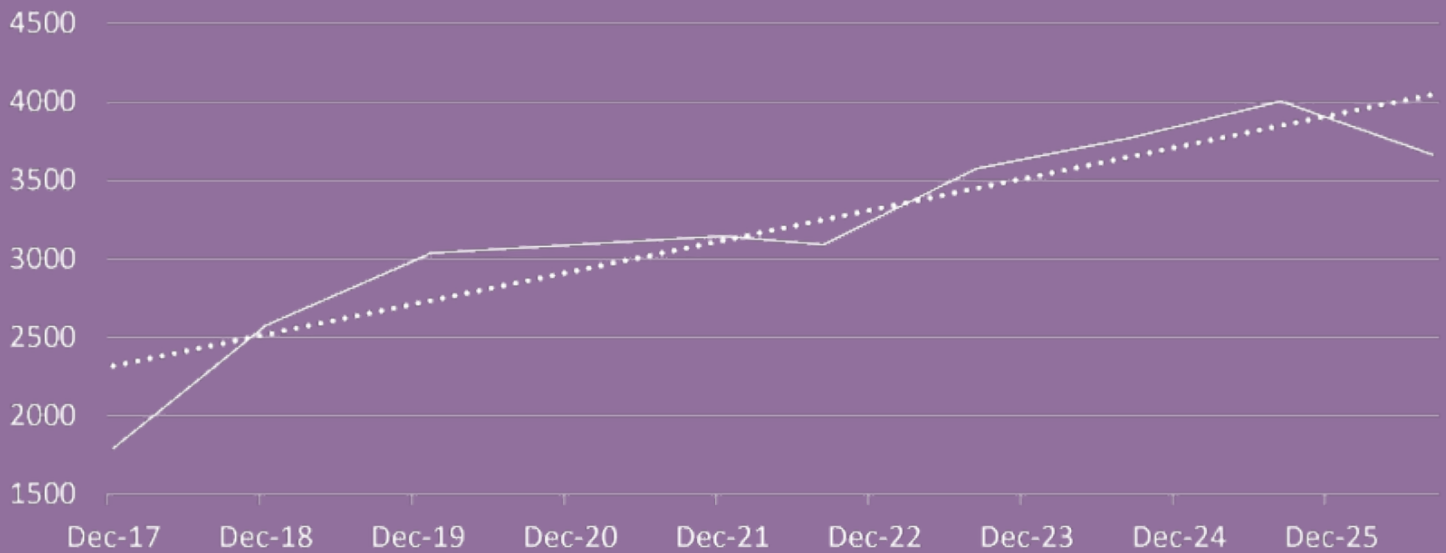
Marybeth Hughes
MD, FACS
ACS Governor



Nancy Gantt
MD, FACS
AWS Foundation Chair

AWS Membership

Total Members



Career Development Committee



**Emily Keung,
Chair**

Established FY2026 through FY2027 committee calendar of activities:

- CDC's calendar of activities is outlined in shared Google Docs
- Requested current and new members to review/commit to the expectations and requirements at the 1st committee meeting after the AWS 2025 annual meeting.

Building Academic Foundations Webinar Series:

- Hosted a joint webinar with the Residents and Fellows Committee (Finding and Negotiating Your First Job) on February 24, 2026.
- Remainder of BAF series on hold to align with overarching trajectory and realignment of the organization re: webinars.
- Purpose: Participants gain mentorship and exposure to topics important for planning and establishing their early academic faculty careers
- Funding: none

Signature Speaker Series:

- 2026 cycle application reviewed and participants selected and in program
- Purpose: Participants gain formal training from a speaking coach and in designing presentations to provide more effective and engaging talks
- Funding: Intuitive grant for 2026

Breaking Glass Ceiling Program:

- (FY27 committee will discuss/consider alternating this every other year with Shining Star Program)
- 2026 cycle application reviewed, participants selected and in program
- Purpose: Participants can attend leadership development courses
- Funding: Intuitive grant for 2026
- Will work with Dr. Mamta Gautam as 2026 coac

Career Development Committee (cont.)

Shining Star Program

- (FY27 committee will discuss/consider alternating this every other year with Breaking Glass Ceiling Program)
- 2026 cycle applications to be reviewed and participants selected at June 22 CDC meeting.
- Purpose: Executive coaching for those approaching mid-career transition
- Funding: Intuitive grant at \$20,000 for 2026

AWS Research Grant

- 2026 LOI review planned June 22 2026, invited full application review occurred in early September 2026 with awardee selected (notifications pending)
- Committee decided to be more clear in future cycle on eligibility criteria (junior faculty, rather than trainees) and also establish a LOI step followed by inviting 3 applicants based on LOI review to then submit a full application/research proposal. Help decrease review burden on committee members and also allow committee members reviewing to provide feedback on invited full applications. After exec discussion, eligibility criteria will remain unchanged.
- Purpose: Seed funding for surgeon-scientists
- Funding: 3M for \$27,500. Applied to Ethicon again and rejected. Issue with sustained funding from 3M

Working with Communications Committee on AWS blog pieces, podcasts, and InstaReels (Grace Lawson, Nimmi Kapoor, Jennifer Whittington)

- Established an expectation for applicants to the above programs in 2026 and in future cycles that recipients/awardees will be expected to submit a blog piece or interview for podcast/social media describing the impact and their experience participating in the relevant AWS opportunities
- Put out podcasts highlighting AWS CDC programs and have additional podcast material generated/saved.
- Identified committee member(s) who will assume this role/leadership of this from Grace Lawson

Clinical Practice Committee



Lisa Reid,
Chair

The Clinical Practice Committee (CPC) supports and promotes female surgeons in different practice areas to include those in academics, private practice, military and rural surgery.

The Clinical Practice Committee (CPC) continued to support and promote female surgeons in different practice settings in the last year, primarily with 2 programs:

- SCALPELS - Surgeon Career and Leadership Professional Education Lecture series
 - Virtual summer program with educational talks and panels on topics relevant to medical students, residents, and attending surgeons at different stages in their careers
 - 2026 program focused on Maintaining Physical, Mental and Emotional Intelligence during the career of a surgeon
 - Speakers included many highly regarded surgeons who shared their knowledge and expertise on the topic
- AWS Coaching Program
 - Led by Dr. Sharon Stein
 - Coordinated with Stephanie Wood, MD
 - The program trains surgeons as peer coaches, with an in-person training session at the annual meeting and then subsequent virtual training. The surgeon coaches are paired with resident coachees who apply to the program
 - The 2026 program is underway with applications sent for both new coaches and coachees.
 - The first coach training session is this weekend
 - The program continues to be well received by the participants, with positive feedback from both the coachees and coaches regarding the benefits for both

Communications Committee



**Tiffany Sinclair,
Co-Chair**

The Communications Committee continues to engage members with unique content across all of its accounts including Instagram, Facebook, Blog, Podcast, Twitter/X, LinkedIn, and YouTube. Our Instagram page has 63K lifetime followers with 586K views in the past 3 months and remains one of the platforms with the most engagement.



**Erin King-
Mullins,
Co-Chair**

We continue to celebrate our members with #FeatureSurgeonFriday and we are excited to initiate a new series featuring our AWS medical student chapters very soon. Instagram content also continues to be shared to Facebook for our followers who prefer that platform. The blog has entered its 12th year of publication and continues to provide a voice for our members to write about topics that are important to them. We had an impressive 11K new users this quarter with 12K engagements.

In collaboration with the Medical Student Committee, two additional episodes of the “Knots and Thoughts” podcast were produced and hope to develop additional podcast series over the coming years.

As the social media landscape evolves, we have scaled back our original content creation for Twitter/X, Bluesky, and LinkedIn, although HQ announcements continue to be posted across all platforms.

Editorial Committee



**Catherine
Hambleton**

**Davis
Co-Chair**

This year we are graduating the 5th cohort of the AWS-SURGERY Reviewer Academy, a year-long mentored curriculum designed to provide women surgical trainees with the necessary skills to perform high-quality scientific peer review.

We received over 107 abstract submissions for consideration in the annual AJS-AWS special issue. These are currently being processed. A complimentary American Surgeon issue will review and consider for publication any manuscripts not selected for publication in this special issue.

Our committee processed 11 manuscripts written by AWS committees, helping to refine them with pre-reviews to facilitate likelihood of publication in peer-reviewed journals.



**Libby
Weaver,
Co-Chair**

Reviewer Academy Mentors and Mentees for 2026

Amelia Maiga - *Chair*
Samantha Ruff - *Vice Chair*

Mentors

Samantha Ruff
Amelia Maiga
Libby Weaver
Catherine Davis
Lauren Nosanov
Megan Delisle
Rishi Dholakia
Jennifer Plichta
Maymona Choudry
Christina Colosimo
Lindsey Saint
Jasmine Walker
Akiko Chiba

Mentees

Evelyn Alexander
Sukaina Alikhan
Ali Eakes
Michela Fabricius
Katherine Foley
Qingwen Kawaji
Sarah Klapman
Olga Ostrovetsky
Emily Siegler
Latoya Stewart
Ozge Vural



**Nancy Gantt,
Chair**

Foundation

AWSF Roster 2025 – 2026

Chair: Nancy L. Gantt, MD
Chair-Elect: Christine Laronga, MD
Vice-Chair: Kristalynn Gallagher, DO

2026 Awards Gala

Sunday, September 27, 2026, immediately following the ACS WiSC-sponsored cocktail reception at the Hyatt Regency McCormick Place in Chicago.

Resident Travel Awards

Support travel for four surgical residents to the annual AWS conference.

Kim Ephgrave 2026 Visiting Professor Program

Visiting Professor: Gayle DiLalla, MD

2026 Host Site: Prisma Health, Columbia, South Carolina

AWS/ACS Women Scholars Program

In partnership with ACS H.O.P.E. supports women surgeons in Africa to travel to and take their mandatory COSECSA examinations. Up to fifteen Women Scholars are supported yearly.

AWSF WiSA Travel Grants

Support two African women surgeons to attend the annual WiSA and COSECSA meetings.

AWSF LMIC Travel Grant

Allows a surgeon to participate in an educational event. The 2026 recipient is Dr. Mesale Solomon Abate, to attend a 2027 leadership program in South Africa. She is a General and Colorectal surgeon in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

African Women Surgeons Professional Development Program/”Collective Wisdom in Action”

Being developed in conjunction with Yale and African surgical leadership for African women surgeons and OB/GYNs. Roll out in December 2026 with fifteen participants.

2026 AWS Foundation Award Recipients



Madhulika (Mika) G. Varma, MD, FACS

Dr. Nina Starr
Braunwald Award



Allan D. Kirk, MD, PhD, FACS

Past Presidents
Honorary Member
Award



Laura E. Witherspoon, MD, FACS

Dr. Charles W. Putnam
Distinguished Member
Award



Areeba Saif, MD

Dr. Hilary Sanfey
Outstanding Resident
Award



Amalia Cochran, MD

Dr. Olga Jonasson
Distinguished Member
Award



Jade Tso, MD

Dr. Patricia Numann
Medical Student
Award



Christine Laronga, MD, FACS

Dr. Sally Abston
Distinguished Member
Award



Gayle DiLalla, MD, FACS

Dr. Kim Ephgrave
Visiting Professorship

Medical Student Committee



Colby Mallett,
Chair

The Medical Student Committee (MSC) continues to support and elevate female medical students interested in surgery, working toward greater representation and equity in the field. This year our committee grew from 28 to 34 medical students worldwide, with regional representative positions expanding from 14 to 19. We restructured committee leadership to keep pace with our growing scope of work.

Highlights:

Regional representatives grew our global footprint by approving new US chapters, recruiting new chapters across the Middle East, Africa, Canada, and Latin America, and increasing annual regional conference and Data Mania engagement.

Expanded the Starr Research Forum from 2 to 6 sessions for the 2026 Annual Conference and opened submissions to include practicing surgeons.

Q1 quarterly event with AAMC leadership drew 150+ registrants, focused on ERAS application updates and IMG research support.

Launched a national GroupMe network for paid AWS student members, with national and regional channels to boost connection and visibility of student programming and membership benefits.

Wrapped Year 1 of the Journal Club Curriculum with strong engagement and will begin the Year 2 cycle in the fall.

Continued the impactful Dorothy Brown & Maria Garcia Sancho Mentoring Program and grew our Knots and Thoughts podcast audience, with incredible guest stars.

Medical Student Committee (cont.)

Continued collaboration with AWS's Publications, Outreach, and Resident Committees, CEC Webinars, and outside organizations, including SBAS, ACOS Student Committee, and TROGSS.

Excited to host the Rebecca Crumpler Outreach Program with SBAS at the Annual Conference, introducing ~50 high school students from URiM backgrounds to careers in medicine and surgery through 1:1 mentorship, workshops, and networking, and will continue this work with the National Day of Service event later in the year.

Member Services Committee



**Deepika
Koganti, Chair**

The Member Services Committee had a very productive year led by Dr. Koganti, Dr. Haney, Dr. Small (Institutional Members Sub-Committee Chair), Dr. Ubesie (Recruitment Sub-Committee Chair), and Dr. Feather (Lapsed Members Sub-Committee Chair).

The Committee submitted a new membership category, the Allyship Membership, to include surgeons who wish to advance the mission and vision of AWS. The Committee also continued to review and approve surveys.

Institutional Members Committee

- Quarterly Institutional Membership “Top Ten” Email
- Ongoing successful outreach to current and lapsed Institutional Members
- Recruitment of new Institutional Members

Recruitment Committee

- Monthly Meet the Surgeons Videos with inspirational interviews shared on social media
- Connecting AWS Medical Student Chapters
- Outreach through other organizations

Lapsed Members Committee

- Continued email outreach to retain members
- Ongoing auto-renewal initiative to increase membership

Outreach Committee



**Christen
Russo,
Co-Chair**

The Outreach Committee continues to expand programming that advances mentorship, professional development, and collaboration across the surgical community.

We are continuing the AWS Cutting Edge Conversations Series, a national virtual educational program featuring practical discussions on leadership, sponsorship, negotiation, financial literacy, wellness, and career development—topics often underrepresented in traditional surgical training. We are applying for grant funding to expand this well-received program.

The committee continues AWS mentorship initiatives and highlights these through our Mentor Moments series. We also continued the Cross Mentoring Better Mentor, Bigger Impact series to help bolster the mentoring experience. We have received Intuitive grant funding to support this for another year, and added CME credits to the program.



**Shannon
Small,
Co-Chair**

To streamline the AWS Visiting Professor Program, we have developed an updated common application that standardizes the submission process, reduces administrative burden, and improves consistency for participating institutions. We plan to launch the common application for the next cycle, announcing at this year's annual meeting.

Finally, we again gave AWS Travel Awards to liaison societies to support attendance at the AWS Annual Conference.

Publications Committee



**Lisa
Cannada,
Chair**

The publications committee has had a productive year. We worked closely with the Editorial Committee and Executive Committee to further develop the work of the two committees.

We collaborated with multiple AWS committees and organizations throughout the year on Webinars and Papers. We try to cover and publish on a wide range of topics pertinent to our mission and members. Some of our webinar topics were: Skill Acquisition at All Levels; Global Women in Surgery and most recently with SAGES and the Outreach Committee, we covered Depression, Anxiety, ADHD and Dealing with Chronic Disease and the hot topic of Data Privacy with Language Learning Models.

We published several papers, including important papers on Fertility Preservation in Surgical Training: A Call to Action and Pregnancy Complications among Female Surgeons in JAMA Surgery and highlighted on Doximity! We do not shy away from important topics, including Wellness and Burnout, Proposing Next Steps for a More Inclusive American Board of Surgery Exam, Mentoring and Coaching, and NIH Funding Disparities.

We finished a three-part series on Surgeon Innovators, continuing to work on the Emotional Intelligence series, and are following up with a new NIH Funding paper: Why Supporting Women in Research Benefits Everyone. We are working on cutting-edge papers on Gender Gaps in Publishing and Pay and What Women Bring to Surgery. We collaborated with AOSA on Transgender Patients undergoing Non Gender Affirming Procedures: Improving Workflow, with more papers forthcoming, and are also handling papers on Artificial Intelligence.

We are looking for new members to join and contribute ideas. We are grateful to the committee members and AWS staff for all their work to make a difference!

Resident & Fellow Committee



Alizeh Abbas,
Chair

The Resident and Fellow Committee continued to support surgical trainees through education, scholarship, mentorship, and community-building. We maintained regular committee calls and expanded trainee-focused programming through collaborations across AWS.

Educational activities included four webinars: on ABSITE preparation (named “Scrubbed in for the ABSITE”), Personal Branding (with the Publications Committee), Interviewing and Negotiating Your First Job (with the Career Development Committee), and a Financial Planning session (with the Medical Student Committee). Our final webinar for this term on Postpartum and Lactation Resources in Residency and Fellowship is in development for the Fall.

The committee amplified trainee voices through the Resident and Fellow Corner and several AWS blog posts, including Scrubbed In for the ABSITE, Crafting Your Research Years, Self-Advocacy as a Trainee: The Grace to Grow, and financial planning tips for trainees. Another blog post is currently in preparation for submission in the fall on transitioning from research years back to clinical training.

Our scholarship also advanced: the collaborative American Journal of Surgery paper on fertility preservation was published, and an AWS statement on fertility preservation is currently in progress. Committee members have also been working on an opinion piece on successful family leave.

We continued partnering with the Medical Student Committee on mentorship and prepared trainee-centered programming for the 2026 Annual Conference. There were several new initiatives this year, including a welcome packet for newly matched residents to welcome them to the field of surgery and the supportive AWS community.

Resident & Fellow (cont.)

Through our meetings, we have also seen a growth in our engagement with our general members beyond the leadership group.

Looking ahead, we are excited to continue nurturing engagement in our community of trainees through multiple channels, including our webinars, monthly meetings, our Whatsapp group for general members, and through other planned projects.

One example of another new project launching this year is of an informal social series, “Tea Time”, serving as drop-in zoom gatherings for trainees to share daily experiences, commiserate, and form personal connections outside of their institution.



**Tatiana Hoyos
Gomez, Chair**

Latino Surgical Society

The Latino Surgical Society (LSS) and AWS continue collaborating to expand mentorship, professional development, and career opportunities for Latino/a surgeons and trainees, while advancing representation and inclusion in surgery. Through the AWS–LSS Visiting Professor Program, Dr. Helen Johnson was selected as visiting professor and Northwell Health as the host institution, fostering mentorship and academic collaboration among surgical leaders, trainees, and faculty.

AWS–LSS also supported the next generation of surgeons by providing travel sponsorships to 2 trainees, a medical student and a surgical resident to attend the AWS annual meeting, facilitating access to networking, mentorship, and professional development opportunities. We also hosted a Cutting-Edge Webinar on immigration and building a surgical career in the U.S., featuring surgeons with firsthand experience and immigration attorney Melina LaMorticella, offering practical guidance on visas, sponsorship, residency pathways, and career planning for international medical graduates.

Association for Academic Surgery



**Christie
Buonpane,
AAS Liaison**

Over the past year, the AAS/AWS Liaison has continued to strengthen collaboration between the Association for Academic Surgery (AAS) and Association of Women Surgeons (AWS). The liaison serves as an active member of the AWS Outreach Committee, participating in committee meetings and contributing to its broader initiatives and activities.

A major accomplishment was the development of the inaugural AAS/AWS Joint Travel Award. The award supports an AWS faculty member attending the AAS/SUS Surgical Investigator's Course, with AAS providing registration and AWS supporting travel and lodging. The inaugural award was presented in 2026 to Dr. Madeline Torres, and the program has been approved to continue in 2027.

Educational collaboration has also expanded, including the Cutting Edge Conversation, "Academic Promotion, Research Resources/Funding and the Associated Bottlenecks Specific to Women in Academic Surgery." The liaison continues to improve cross-promotion between the organizations by sharing AAS opportunities through AWS email, social media, and other communication channels while promoting relevant AWS programs to AAS members. The liaison also represents and promotes AAS at the annual AWS Stryker Networking Breakfast, providing another opportunity to connect AWS members with AAS programs and resources.

Moving forward, priorities include expanding shared awards, educational programming, and cross-promotion while continuing to build a strong and productive partnership between AAS and AWS.

Society of Asian Academic Surgeons



**Annabelle
Fonseca SAAS
Liaison**

AWS and SAAS continued their collaboration to expand mentorship, professional development, and academic opportunities. Through the joint travel award program, Kristin Goodsell (University of Washington) received the SAAS–AWS Resident Research Travel Award to attend the SAAS Annual Meeting. Nicole Lin (Westchester Medical Center) received the SAAS–AWS Medical Student Joint Travel Award to attend the AWS Annual Conference. These awards provide trainees with opportunities to present their work, build professional networks, and engage with mentors across both organizations.

AWS and SAAS are also relaunching their joint Visiting Professorship, which will be announced at AWS in September this year with applications administered through SAAS website. The program is intended to foster mentorship, institutional exchange, and academic collaboration among surgeons at different career stages.

In recognition of Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month, AWS featured blog posts by Dr. Connie Shao and Dr. Linda Ding. AWS & SAAS hosted a joint Cutting Edge Conversation in 2026, “Finding and Maintaining Mentorship and Sponsorship,”. The program featured perspectives from surgeons at different career stages and provided practical guidance on seeking mentorship, building reciprocal relationships, and distinguishing mentorship from sponsorship.

We are also planning a Cutting Edge Conversation, “Finding Your Voice in Surgery,” for May 2027 to coincide with AAPI month. The webinar will provide practical guidance for medical students and surgical trainees on developing confidence, communicating effectively, navigating hierarchy, and building an authentic professional identity.

Council Liaisons



Lauren Nosanov
MD, FACS
Women In Surgery



**Patricia Martinez
Quinones, MD, PhD**
Resident & Associate



Christie Buonpane
MD
AAS



Amy Vertrees
MD, FACS
ACS General Surgery



Annabelle Fonseca
MD
SAAS



Aeryn Kangas-Dick
MD
AOSA



Tatiana Hoyos-Gomez
MD, FACS
LSS



Christine Castater
MD, FACS
SBAS

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Association of Women Surgeons ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2026

WASHINGTON, DC • SEPTEMBER 25-26, 2026

Advocacy Speaking Out and Scaling New Heights for
Our Patients, Our Profession, and Ourselves.

2026 Conference Chair Sponsors

The Association of Women Surgeons (AWS) is grateful for the ongoing partnership of institutions that support our mission to empower women surgeons, residents, and medical students to reach their personal and professional goals. We would like to thank the surgical faculty, departments, and institutions who have already committed to generously support our organization this fall:

Gold Sponsors

- Department of Surgery at UC Davis Health: Diana Farmer, MD, FACS, FRCS, FAAP
- Columbia University Department of Surgery: Emile A. Bacha, MD
- University of Miami Department of Surgery
- Weill Cornell Medicine Department of Surgery: Fabrizio Michelass, MD, FACS

Silver Sponsors

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- University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine: Ronald P. DeMatteo, MD, FACS
- Virginia Commonwealth University, Department of Surgery: Vigneshwar Kasirajan, MD

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- University of Pittsburgh Department of Surgery: Timothy Billiar, MD
- West Virginia University: Carl Schmidt, MD, FACS