Council on University Relations Nominee Statements

Clinical Department Nominees (vote for 8)

**Ethan Buhr, Ph.D., Research Associate Professor, Ophthalmology**
Ethan Buhr, Ph.D. is a Research Associate Professor in the Department of Ophthalmology. I have close associations with the clinical and research branches of the department. I have routine interaction and collaborations with clinicians as well as other researchers which may be a benefit to this committee. I also represent faculty ineligible for tenure (WOT) as part of Research-track faculty in a clinical department. This may also be a needed perspective within the committee. My research is focused on issues related to eye disease and physiology influenced by light. I perform this research with postdoctoral fellows, medical students, medical residents, and undergraduate students.

**Aaron Bunnell, M.D., Associate Professor, Rehabilitation Medicine**
No statement provided.

**Delphine Chen, M.D., Professor, Radiology**
I am a nuclear medicine physician scientist who leads the Fred Hutch Cancer Center Molecular Imaging and Therapy program and who has led and supported NIH funded projects in lung inflammation and theragnostic development. I have served on a number of committees in the UW Department of Radiology and Fred Hutchinson Cancer Center, as well as externally in professional societies and the ACGME, charged with strategic planning, program development, and mentoring. These committees involved representatives from multiple groups within and across institutions. I also have extensive clinical experience working in multidisciplinary clinical care settings. These efforts have required clear communications to identify opportunities for advancing science or clinical care and creating and executing plans to capitalize on those opportunities. I believe my broad range of experience in effectively working with diverse groups will enable me to be an effective participant in fulfilling the charge of the School of Medicine Council on University Relations.

**Beth Ebel, M.D., Professor, Pediatrics**
I would be delighted to represent you on the SOM Faculty Council for University Relations. As Professor of Pediatrics and Adjunct Professor of Epidemiology and Health Services, I have appreciated many aspects of faculty life: delivering clinical care for seriously injured children at Harborview, taking care of new babies and parents at the UW nursery, teaching students and residents with interests in medicine, injury prevention, health equity, and global health through the Harborview Injury Prevention & Research Center. In my past years on the Faculty Senate, I’ve been proud to support meaningful changes, including the meaningful work on integrating clinical faculty more fully and fairly into faculty ranks. Prior to becoming a physician, I worked as an economist with UNICEF in Florence and Quito, Ecuador. This background was grounded in policies to support health equity. Interests in equitable care and getting the financial incentives right for strong policies led to interest in the financial and business aspect of our academic lives: how to financially support retention as well as recruitment and ensure competitive reimbursement so that each of us can build upon the amazing work being done at the University of Washington. I have appreciated learning from each of you, and am optimistic that our joint work will continue to strengthen UW faculty and the great care, research, and teaching each of us contribute.

**Susan Ferguson, Ph.D., Professor, Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences**
I am a neuroscientist by training and Professor in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences. My research focuses on using preclinical animal models to understand how patterns of substance use that lead to addiction change brain circuits and behavior. I am co-Director of a postbaccalaureate training program in Addiction Neuroscience as well as a T32 training grant program for graduate students and postdoctoral fellows. I also serve as the Director of the Addictions, Drug and Alcohol Institute, where our work aims toward improving the lives of those
affected by substance use through advances in research, education and training. In my various leadership roles, I serve as a liaison between trainees, staff, faculty and leadership. In addition, I regularly work with university relations teams to support funding raising efforts, media requests and interfacing with government officials.

David Horne, M.D., Associate Professor, Medicine
The Faculty Council on University Relations serves a vital role as a conduit between the School of Medicine, including the Dean, SOM councils, and SOM faculty, and the University of Washington as whole. The importance of this Council is demonstrated by its role in developing the new Clinical Practice Faculty title, recent changes to the non-compete clause, and providing faculty representation in the Dean search process.

I have been part of the UW SOM for almost 20 years and am grateful to be part of a dynamic School of Medicine within the larger university and the opportunities this affords. At times, the distance separating the School of Medicine from “Upper Campus” feels much greater than the width of NE Pacific St. If elected to the Faculty Council on University Relations I will work to actively listen and understand SOM faculty priorities, communicate our perspectives and preferences to the faculty senate, and advocate for our faculty with SOM leadership.

When I started at UW, I was struck by the collegiality across disciplines, Divisions, and Departments, openness to collaborations, and respectful discourse. This initial impression has been reaffirmed over the years as I’ve worked with people from clinical and non-clinical departments in a variety of settings. If elected, I look forward to learning from and representing SOM faculty priorities.

Zin Khaing, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Neurological Surgery
My name is Zin Khaing and I am a neuroscientist working in the area of mammalian neuroplasticity with a focus on spinal cord injury repair. I hold an associate professor position in the department of neurological surgery and I co-chair of the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion committee in my department. I seek your nomination to be on the Faculty Council on University Relations (FCUR) in the upcoming election. My scholarly work involves developing cutting edge and innovative solutions to uncover the next generation of clinical treatments for neurological diseases. In these roles, I work with clinicians, scientists, engineers, and regulatory bodies to develop new treatment options for our patients. The communications and listening skills I have developed to converse across different disciplines in my work for the last two decade will lends itself well in the FCUR, as this body serves as the liaison between SOM faculty and leadership. I aim to advocate for all SOM faculty’s interests, especially in matters relating to policies that affect our scholarship and clinical practice.

Gavriel Kohlberg, M.D., Assistant Professor, Otolaryngology - Head and Neck Surgery
Thank you for considering me for the School of Medicine Council on University Relations. I am an assistant professor in the Department of Otolaryngology – Head and Neck surgery. In this Council role, I would aim to be an effective communicator and to support the School of Medicine.

George Sandison, Ph.D., Professor, Radiation Oncology
Dear voting faculty thank you for reading the statements I and other elected faculty senators who are selected nominees for the School of Medicine Elected Faculty Council (EFC on University Relations). The members of this council act as your advisory voice to our school’s dean from rank and file faculty not having administrative positions within the School. I am asking you to vote for me to become a member of this council. I have a great deal of experience in University Governance and have previously served as the University Faculty Senate Chair representing all faculty on the three campuses of UW and in that role was invited to join all the meetings of the UW Board of Regents during my tenure. I have continuously served on the Faculty Senate Committee on Planning and Budgeting (SCPB) since 2017 and was Chair in 2019-2020. Among many planning and budgeting matters, the SCPB advises on the expenditure of the approximately 9 billion dollars annual budget of UW of which about half is the annual budget.
for running the UW Medical System. It is very important that advice to our dean from the EFC on University Relations includes a member with in-depth knowledge of how the university works and the finances of both the University and School of Medicine itself. I will represent you well in this role.

**Surojit Sarkar, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Pediatrics**

Dr. Sarkar is an Associate Professor in the Department of Pediatrics, with an adjunct appointment in the Department of Lab Medicine and Pathology. His research and teaching programs are built around fundamental and translational immunology, specifically in the context of infections and cancer. Dr. Sarkar got his PhD from the University of Pittsburgh and did his fellowship training at the Emory University School of Medicine in Atlanta. He has been a Principal Investigator at the Seattle Children’s Research Institute and on the faculty of UW SOM since 2015.

Dr. Sarkar is a basic scientist faculty member, in a clinical department. He hopes to bring the unique perspectives, challenges and opportunities for basic scientists to the Council for Faculty Relations. His guiding philosophy of service on university committees is to recognize the huge burden of responsibility, and be humbled by the privilege of being entrusted to represent the interests of his colleagues. Dr. Sarkar hence surrounds himself with people who talk about visions and ideas, and listens with the intent of understanding.

**Alex Skokan, M.D., Assistant Professor, Urology**

I am entering my fifth year on faculty and sixth year at the University of Washington. In my time on faculty, I have contributed to the growth of our Transgender/Nonbinary (TGNB) care program and have established a new multidisciplinary service line offering critical surgeries to this marginalized population. I serve as the simulation lead for the Urology Residency Program and serve on several clinical advisory committees within Harborview Medical Center and the UW Department of Urology. I have personally experienced some of the unique challenges facing faculty in early career growth, ranging from hurdles navigating numerous clinical sites and developing new service lines to the unique challenges of securing housing and longitudinal child-care in our highly competitive region. My goal on the Faculty Council on University Relations would be to gather input from and serve as a voice for my faculty peers across the SOM; as we face evolving challenges locally, regionally, and nationally, it is critical that we act strategically with a strong focus on faculty wellness and fruitful career growth to ensure that we can continue to recruit and retain the very best talent in all of our fields. Thank you so much for considering my candidacy and for the potential opportunity to represent you in this important work.

**Garret Stuber, Ph.D., Professor, Anesthesiology and Pain Medicine**

I am a full Professor in the Departments of Anesthesiology and Pain Medicine and Pharmacology at the UW School of Medicine. With six years at UW and previous experience as an Assistant and Associate Professor at UNC Chapel Hill School of Medicine, I have dedicated my career to advancing our understanding of neural systems for motivation and reward processing. My lab’s research, which holds significant implications for brain health and disease, particularly in the areas of addiction and substance use, has been funded by multiple NIH grants and has resulted in over 100 published papers. In my current role, I oversee the training of numerous graduate students and postdoctoral fellows, ensuring the next generation of scientists is well-prepared for their careers. Additionally, I have served as a faculty senator for three years, gaining valuable experience in university governance and policy matters.

Growing up and attending public educational institutions within Washington state, my higher education journey began with a BS degree from the University of Washington in 2000, followed by a PhD from the University of North Carolina in 2005, and the completion of my postdoctoral training at UCSF in 2010. This diverse educational background, coupled with my extensive research and teaching experience, equips me with a broad and deep understanding of the academic and research environments within our medical school.

I am particularly interested in joining the SoM Council on University Relations to provide a voice for basic scientists, physician-scientists, and translational scientists on the faculty. My expertise in research administration, including
institutional review boards, animal use in biomedical research, and trends and opportunities in national federal funding for research, positions me to contribute valuable insights. I am also well-versed in the training needs of physician-scientists, PhD students, and postdoctoral trainees. As a member of the council, I aim to advise the Dean and MSEC on legislative and policy matters, particularly those impacting faculty salaries, budgets, and other areas of faculty concern. My goal is to facilitate effective representation of the School of Medicine in the Faculty Senate and ensure that the voices of our faculty are heard and considered in all relevant deliberations.

Thank you for considering my nomination. I am eager to continue to contribute to the success and excellence of the University of Washington School of Medicine.

**Daytheon Sturges, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Family Medicine** (second term)
I'm Daytheon Sturges, an Associate Professor in the Department of Family Medicine at the University of Washington School of Medicine. I serve as the Vice Chair for Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI), and I'm the Associate Program Director for Regional Affairs and JEDI, within the MEDEX Northwest PA Program. My career has been deeply rooted in advancing health justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion in all aspects of my work, both administratively, instructionally, and clinically.

I'm seeking a third term on the Faculty Council on University Relations (FCUR), where I've been an active member. I was also recently re-elected to continue as a faculty senator for the Department of Family Medicine, a role I have served in since 2021. As a sitting member of the FCUR, I have been an integral member of this dynamic group in creating, advocating, and achieving equitable actions. Here are some examples of the collective effort of the group, for which I am grateful to be a part.

- I supported the Faculty Senate initiative to create a new academic job title for clinical practice faculty, which afforded clinical faculty longer contracts and similar voting rights/privileges as other faculty titles. This accomplishment was fostered with the hopes to improve recruitment and retention.
- As a FCUR member, I was involved in discussions advocating for the removal of non-compete clauses from contracts across all clinical departments, which resulted in the UW Physicians and Children’s University Medical Group removing non-compete clauses for most SoM clinical departments. My support here was through an equity lens and considering the current manifestations of historical marginalization and how our clinicians and under-resourced communities may be affected by these clauses.
- I, along with the FCUR members, attend regularly scheduled meetings with the Dean to discuss SoM policy and process for implementing department-level unit salary adjustments. I ask thoughtful questions and propose recommendations rooted in transparency, JEDI principles, and tenets that foster belonging.
- Lastly, I was a part of the recently concluded search and interview process for the Dean, Executive Vice President for Medical Affairs, and CEO of UW Medicine. Again, bringing an equity perspective to the table, I contributed, along with the FCUR, in selecting our new Dean.

In addition to my roles as Vice Chair, Associate Professor, and Associate Program Director, my extensive JEDI work underscores my commitment to fostering an inclusive and equitable academic and clinical environment. My leadership and advocacy within the FCUR have been instrumental in driving positive changes that benefit the entire SoM community. I would appreciate your support in re-electing me as a member of the Faculty Council on University Relations. Thank you!

**Savitha Subramanian, M.D., Professor, Medicine**
I have been a longstanding and dedicated member of the university faculty community and have seen our academic institution morph over the past 20 years. Having worked as a clinician-liaison between specialty and primary care clinicians in diabetes care for our institution, I believe in collaborative decision-making. I am committed to teamwork and fostering positive engagement amongst all stakeholders. I am grateful for the opportunity to serve and contribute on this council.
**Ivana Thompson, M.D., Associate Professor, Obstetrics and Gynecology**

I stepped into my role as the Associate Chair of Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion for the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at the University of Washington with a goal of growing and guiding our department’s faculty, staff, and trainee efforts to cultivate, nurture, and sustain a diverse and inclusive environment for our patients, learners, and staff. Once here, I appreciated that the good work we are doing to bend our OB/GYN spaces to be more inclusive, supportive, and welcoming were efforts, that if expanded throughout the medical center and university, could make our collective spaces more inclusive, supportive, and welcoming for all folks.

Being a member of the Faculty Council on University Relations will allow me the opportunity to advocate for policies and changes that will push our campus and our broader university to be more inclusive and welcoming. I appreciate that systemic change is not accomplished in silos. I center humility to ensure all voices and perspectives are shared and considered. I build relationships and multidisciplinary collaboratives to accomplish shared goals. As I work, I continually assess verbal and non-verbal cues to remain nimble and help my teams shift to accommodate changing needs. On the Faculty Council on University Relations, I will represent the collective needs and priorities of the medical school community to the University. I would be grateful for the opportunity to use my skills to advocate for and advance our community efforts to realize the School of Medicine’s mission and the shared values we hold dear.

**Jay Vary, M.D., Ph.D., Associate Professor, Dermatology**

As an Associate Professor of Dermatology, I see patients six sessions each week as well as teach students and residents in our clinics since finishing residency at UW in 2009. In my current role as the Vice Chair for Clinical Operations in Dermatology, I advocate for our faculty to improve efficiencies in our clinical practice while also supporting their roles in education and research. The Faculty Council on University Relations provides an opportunity to expand this work by representing our diverse faculty interests in the SOM within the larger University. By informing the faculty and SOM leadership of initiatives and issues being addressed at the University level as well as bringing SOM faculty concerns for consideration to the University, I’m excited to maintain an effective relationship between upper and lower campuses of UW.

**Biomedical Research Department Nominees (vote for 4)**

**Abraham Flaxman, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Health Metrics Sciences**

As a faculty member in the Health Metrics Sciences and Global Health departments, I have an interdisciplinary perspective built on my training in mathematics, computer science, and public health. My research has led me into rewarding collaborations with colleagues across the medical sciences as well as other departments and schools across UW. It is from this work and the connections it has fostered that I am drawn to the Faculty Council on University Relations. I have a commitment to social justice, and I am dedicated to resisting austerity that would negatively impact our school, university, and society. As a member of the Faculty Council on University Relations, I would work to strengthen the School of Medicine’s connections within and beyond the university, while advocating for equity and sustainable funding in higher education and public health.

**Michael Holt, Ph.D., Assistant Teaching Professor, Biochemistry**

I am in my second year as an assistant teaching professor within the Department of Biochemistry, teaching both lecture and lab based classes. This is my fourth year at the University of Washington, previously working as a research scientist and instructor in the same department. Although I will be a new member of the Faculty Senate, I look forward to the opportunity to serve on the Faculty Council on University Relations, with the hope of contributing to effective, equitable, and meaningful dialogue and action in support of current and future faculty interests. During such work, I will make sure that my relative youth or inexperience is not exploited at the expense of the faculty.
**Barry Lutz, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Bioengineering**
Barry Lutz is an Associate Professor in the Department of Bioengineering with primary appointment in the School of Medicine. Based on his service as a member of the Faculty Senate for 2022-2024, he is familiar with Senate processes, recent history, and ongoing issues likely to re-emerge in Senate deliberations. He also serves on the Bioengineering Policy Committee, where Senate actions intersect with the department.

**George Sanders, D.V.M., Teaching Professor, Comparative Medicine**
As a current member of University of Washington Faculty Senate, I am asking for your vote to be added to the School of Medicine Council on University Relations as a representative from the Department of Comparative Medicine. As this will be my 3rd cycle as a Faculty Senator, I would like the opportunity to assist in the work to facilitate bidirectional inquiries, initiatives, and matters of concern between the School of Medicine Faculty and the Dean via the Faculty Senate for the 2-year term starting September 16, 2024.

**Helene Starks, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Bioethics and Humanities** (second term)
It has been an honor to serve on this committee for the past 2 years and welcome the opportunity to continue for another term, in part to keep continuity on the FCUR as several members have rotated off. I am a health services researcher by training and Associate Professor in Bioethics and Humanities. My scholarship focuses on palliative and end of life care and building systems to integrate these services into usual care for people with serious illness. I also serve as the Academic Research Coach for the Division of General Internal Medicine. In all these roles, I take a systems’ view and work to find solutions to bridge individual and systems needs and challenges. This dovetails well with the FCUR, that serves as the liaison between SOM faculty and leadership. In the past 2 years, the FCUR has advocated for the new Clinical Practice faculty track, reversing the non-compete agreements for most SOM faculty, and advising the Dean on merit adjustments. I will continue to advocate for SOM faculty’s interests and support School and Senate initiatives that promote well-being, scholarship, promotion and fair compensation.

**Mahesh Thapa, M.D., Professor, Radiology**
Dr. Thapa is Professor of Radiology at the University of Washington, and currently serves as Director of Clinical Operations and Director of Musculoskeletal Imaging at Seattle Children’s Hospital, Department of Radiology. He has authored over 100 peer reviewed publications and given over 150 invited national and international lectures. He is past President of the Alliance of Clinician-Educators in Radiology (ACER), and was awarded the ACER Achievement Award in 2017 for his many contributions to radiology education. In 2019, The Society of Pediatric Radiology presented Dr. Thapa with the Jack O. Haller-Thomas L. Slovis Award for Excellence in Pediatric Radiology Education, their highest honor for educators. Dr. Thapa is also a former Fellowship Program Director of Pediatric Radiology and Chair of the first year Medical Student Radiology/Anatomy Correlation course where he worked hand in hand with leaders in the Department of Biological Structure at the University of Washington School of Medicine.

**David Watkins, M.D., Associate Professor, Global Health**
No statement provided.

**Mark Whipple, M.D., Professor, Neurological Surgery** (second term)
I am a Professor of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery and of Biomedical Informatics and Medical Education (BIME) and graduate of the UW School of Medicine. I have served as the Faculty Senate representative for BIME for the past three years and currently serve on the Faculty Council on University Relations and the Senate Executive Committee. I have previously served on the Faculty Council for Academic Affairs, and have served administratively as the Associate Dean for Curriculum and the Assistant Dean for Clinical Education in the School of Medicine. During the past year on the FCUR I am proud to have contributed to the creation and approval of the Professor of Clinical Practice track and made progress on addressing the non-compete clause for many clinical faculty. I am excited to continue this work if re-elected as well as advocating for all SOM faculty.
Elia Tait Wojno, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Immunology (second term)
Elia Tait Wojno is an Associate Professor in the Department of Immunology. She has served as a faculty senator and on the SOM Faculty Council on University Relations since 2022. She also serves as the Director of Mentor Education in the Office of Research and Graduate Education. Her research focuses on mucosal immune responses during allergy and parasite infection. In her service at UW SOM and in the Faculty Senate, she seeks to promote faculty development through mentor education and DEI and to represent the needs of SOM faculty, trainees, and staff.