

# THE ACADEMY OF CLINICAL EXCELLENCE

PRESENTS

## THE 2026 BILL CAMPBELL CLINICAL CHAMPIONS SYMPOSIUM

**“WHAT IS CLINICAL EXCELLENCE?”**

**Craig Smith, MD**

Johnson and Johnson Distinguished Professor in  
the Department of Surgery  
Valentine Mott Professor of Surgery  
Former Chair, Department of Surgery

AND

## THE ACE CLASS OF 2026 INDUCTION CEREMONY

Thursday, May 7, 2026  
5 – 7 p.m.

# PROGRAM

## INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

### **Katrina Armstrong, MD**

Dean of the Faculties of Health Sciences and the  
Vagelos College of Physicians and Surgeons  
Executive Vice President for Health and Biomedical Sciences  
Harold and Margaret Hatch Professor of the University

### **Deepa Kumaraiah, MD, MBA**

Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer  
NewYork-Presbyterian

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## ACE CLASS OF 2026 INDUCTION CEREMONY

## CLOSE

### **Julie Khlevner, MD**

Chair, ACE Executive Committee  
Associate Professor of Pediatrics at the Columbia University Medical Center

### **Jonathan Susman, MD**

Chair, ACE Symposium and Events Committee  
Co-Chair, Philanthropy Committee  
Associate Professor of Radiology at the Columbia University Medical Center

# ABOUT THE ACADEMY OF CLINICAL EXCELLENCE

The Columbia University Vagelos College of Physicians and Surgeons Academy of Clinical Excellence defines, recognizes, and perpetuates excellence in clinical care by faculty, trainees, and students. The Academy honors the clinical faculty who contribute to the Vagelos College of Physicians and Surgeons through patient care that is marked by evidence-based clinical science and deeply compassionate humanism.

Each member of the Academy exhibits excellence in the following characteristics: reputation, communication and interpersonal skills, professionalism and humanism, diagnostic acumen, skillful negotiation of the health care system, knowledge, scholarly approach to clinical care, commitment to mentoring trainees and junior colleagues, and passion for clinical medicine. All members have met benchmark standards of excellence. Inductees have an active role in the Academy, working on one of the steering committees that support faculty and trainee mentorship, participating in special lectures and events, and assisting with communications.

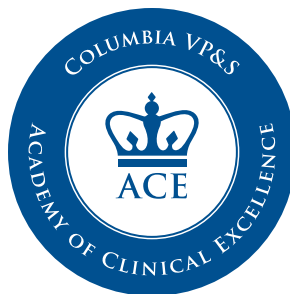
## **Vision**

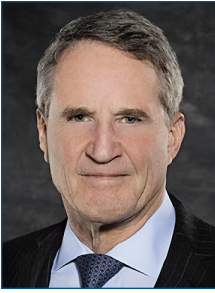
Through the establishment of the Academy of Clinical Excellence, we perpetuate the ability to offer exceptional clinical care to all patients for many generations to come.

## **Mission**

The Columbia University Vagelos College of Physicians and Surgeons Academy of Clinical Excellence exists to define, recognize, and perpetuate excellence in clinical care by faculty, trainees, and students.

[www.vagelos.columbia.edu/ace](http://www.vagelos.columbia.edu/ace)





## **CRAIG SMITH, MD**

**Johnson and Johnson Distinguished Professor in the  
Department of Surgery**

**Valentine Mott Professor of Surgery**

**Former Chair, Department of Surgery**

Dr. Smith graduated Phi Beta Kappa from Williams College in 1970, and was a 1977 graduate of Case Western Reserve University College of Medicine, where he was elected to Alpha Omega Alpha. He received his postgraduate training in general surgery with a Fellowship in vascular surgery at the University of Rochester. After completing his residency in cardiothoracic surgery at Columbia Presbyterian, Dr. Smith joined the Columbia faculty in 1984. Early in his career he was focused on heart transplantation, and inaugurated a successful program in heart-lung and lung transplantation that remains the major program in the region.

Over time his focus shifted to valve repair and replacement, coronary bypass procedures, and operations involving the thoracic aorta. Dr. Smith was appointed Chief of the Division of Cardiothoracic Surgery at Columbia in 1996 and was Chairman of the Department of Surgery from 2010 through 2025. Notable among numerous honors and awards, in 2012 Dr. Smith was the 92nd President of the American Association for Thoracic Surgery. During the first phases of the Covid pandemic in 2020 the daily communiques Dr. Smith wrote to his Department received international attention, out of which grew a book, "Nobility in Small Things," that was released by St. Martin's in late 2023.

## ACE CLASS OF 2026 INDUCTEES

**Justin G. Aaron, MD**

Department of Medicine

**Ana Berlin, MD, MPH**

Department of Surgery

**Kaylan Christianer, MD**

Department of Medicine

**Daniel Fenster, MD**

Department of Emergency Medicine

**Richard O. Francis, MD, PhD**

Department of Pathology & Cell Biology

**Claire C. Holderness, MD**

Department of Psychiatry

**Benjamin A. Miko, MD, MSc, DTM&H**

Department of Medicine

**Ilana R. Nossel, MD**

Department of Psychiatry

**Joseph A. Picoraro, MD**

Department of Pediatrics

**Hilary Yegen Robbins, MD**

Department of Medicine

**Michael S. Snyder, MD**

Department of Pediatrics

**Jessica L. Spellman, MD**

Department of Anesthesiology

**Caryn M. St. Clair, MD**

Department of Obstetrics  
and Gynecology

**Sonia N. Tolani, MD**

Department of Medicine

**Helen M. Towers, MD**

Department of Pediatrics

**Sarah F. Wesley, MD, MPH**

Department of Neurology

# 2026 ACE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND STEERING COMMITTEE LEADERSHIP

## **Jeffrey Ascherman**

Department of Surgery  
*Chair, Clinical Voice Committee*  
*(ad hoc committee)*

## **Nancy Chang**

Department of Medicine

## **Angela Dimango**

Department of Medicine

## **Katherine Fischkoff**

Department of Surgery

## **Maria Garzon**

Department of Dermatology

## **Hanina Hibshoosh**

Department of Pathology and  
Cell Biology  
*Co-Chair, Rising Star Awards Committee*

## **Julie Khlevner**

Department of Pediatrics  
*Chair, Executive Committee*

## **Usha Krishnan**

Department of Pediatrics  
*Chair, Communications and  
Outreach Committee*

## **James McKiernan**

Department of Urology  
*Founding Chair, Executive Committee*

## **William Middlesworth**

Department of Surgery  
*Co-Chair, Rising Star Awards Committee*

## **Russell Miller**

Department of Obstetrics and  
Gynecology  
*Chair, Membership Committee*

## **Vivek Moitra**

Department of Anesthesiology  
*Chair, Simple is Better Initiative*  
*(ad hoc committee)*

## **Sara Nash**

Department of Psychiatry  
*Chair, Mentorship Committee*

## **Maya Rao**

Department of Medicine

## **Carrie Ruzal-Shapiro**

Department of Radiology  
*Immediate Past Chair,  
Executive Committee*

## **Joshua Sonnett**

Department of Surgery

## **Jonathan Susman**

Department of Radiology  
*Chair, Symposium and Events  
Committee and Co-Chair,  
Philanthropy Committee*

## **David Weiner**

Department of Urology  
*Co-Chair, Philanthropy Committee*

## **Natalie Yip**

Department of Medicine  
*Co-Chair, Membership Committee*

## **Ex Officio**

## **Daichi Shimbo, MD**

Vice Dean for Academic Affairs

## **Emily Frey, SHRM-SCP**

Assistant Director  
Office of Faculty Professional  
Development and Engagement

## **Emily Taveras, MPA**

Program Manager  
Office of Faculty Professional  
Development and Engagement



