

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Fellowship Program Name: University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Fellowship Program Director: Elizabeth Geller, MD

Fellowship Coordinator: Doris Woods

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Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology

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Description: The fellowship program in Female Pelvic Medicine and Reconstructive Surgery at the University of North Carolina is a three-year program. One fellow is accepted at the first year level each year. The educational objectives are:

- 1) To prepare the Fellows to provide excellent clinical care, medical and surgical, in the comprehensive evaluation and management of women with pelvic floor disorders, including urinary incontinence, pelvic organ prolapse, neurogenic bladder, defacatory dysfunction, fecal incontinence, and complex benign conditions such as vesicovaginal and rectovaginal fistulas and congenital anomalies.
- 2) To provide the fundamental research and analytical skills necessary for a successful career as an academic leader in Female Pelvic Medicine/Reconstructive Surgery and to nurture a drive towards independent scientific investigation.
- 3) To promote skills in teaching, curriculum development, and management essential for excellence as future educators, mentors, and leaders in this field.

The goal of the Fellowship is to train physicians to assume the role of consultant as clinicians and surgeons while promoting the academic goals of teaching and research within this rapidly advancing subspecialty. This is accomplished through a multidisciplinary team approach to patient care involving nationally and internationally recognized experts in GI Medicine, Urology, Colorectal Surgery, and Neurology. The diverse referral patient population cared for by this team allows for training in multiple surgical modalities including vaginal, abdominal, laparoscopic, and robotic approaches. In addition, the medical care offered to patients allows for advanced training in physical therapy, pain management, neuromodulation, and pharmacotherapy. This collaborative effort encourages a diverse range of clinical and scientific viewpoints and experiences.

Requirements: Completion of Residency in Obstetrics and Gynecology or Urology in an accredited program.

Other Curricula Offered: University Biostatistics, Epidemiology courses, and Excellence Course.

Program Length: 3 years

Number of Fellows: One fellow per year (3 years).

Urogynecology Faculty: Jennifer Wu, MD and Division Director, AnnaMarie Connolly, MD, Alexis Dieter, MD, Ellen Wells, MD

GI Medicine Faculty: William Whitehead, PhD, Yolanda Scarlett, MD

Urology Faculty: Kristy Borawski, MD

Colorectal Faculty: Timothy Sadiq, MD

Neurology Faculty: James Howard, MD

Application Process: ERAS. In addition to the completed ERAS application we request three letters of recommendation with one from the Chair of your current program, a personal statement and a photograph.

A major strength of the program is the diversity of experience and expertise within the faculty.

Core Faculty

Elizabeth Geller, MD is an Associate Professor as well as **Fellowship Program Director** and **Medical Director** of the Rex Office in the Division of Female Pelvic Medicine and Reconstructive Surgery. She is board-certified in Obstetrics and Gynecology and Female Pelvic Medicine and Reconstructive Surgery. She received a Bachelor of Science degree from Duke University, then completed medical school at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and residency in Ob/Gyn at the University of California at Irvine. She completed her Fellowship at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 2008. She has established an expertise in robotic and minimally invasive surgery and is a member of UNC's Computer and Robotic Enhanced Surgery (CARES) Center, where she chairs the Education Committee. She is Ob/Gyn Clerkship Director for the Physician Assistants Training Program, and Course Director for two medical school electives. She also directs the Interstim Neuromodulation Program and serves on the UNC Data Safety Monitoring Board. Her national leadership roles include the position of Vice Chair of the Program Directors Committee, membership on the AUGS Program Committee, and Programming Chair for the AUGS Fellows Day held during the AUGS annual scientific meeting. During residency at the University of California at Irvine she also served as Chief Administrative Resident, ACOG Section Chair, and Lead Fellow for the AUGS Fellows Task Force. Her teaching excellence is demonstrated by receiving the Berlex Best Teaching Resident Award at UC-Irvine, the Fellows Teaching Award at UNC and the annual Golden Tar Heel Teaching Award as faculty at UNC. Her research interests include clinical outcomes with robotic pelvic reconstructive surgery, minimally invasive surgery for incontinence and pelvic floor dysfunction, neuromodulation, cognitive function with the use of anticholinergics, and predictors of chronic pain after mesh implant.

Jennifer M. Wu, MD, MPH is an Associate Professor in Obstetrics and Gynecology and the **Division Director** in the Division of Female Pelvic Medicine and Reconstructive Surgery. She earned her B.A. in Biology from Harvard University and her M.D. from the University of California at San Francisco. She trained in Obstetrics and Gynecology at Brigham and Women's Hospital & Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston, MA and then completed a fellowship in Female Pelvic Medicine and Reconstructive Surgery at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Concurrently, she completed the NIH T32 Triangle Clinical Research Fellowship in Reproductive Health and received her Masters in Public Health in Epidemiology at the UNC School of Public Health. After graduating from fellowship in 2007, she served on the faculty at Duke University until 2013, when she decided to rejoin the UNC-Chapel Hill Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology. Dr. Wu is a former Building Interdisciplinary Research Careers in Women's Health (BIRCWH) K12 scholar and was then funded by a NICHD K23 career development award to

evaluate the genetic epidemiology of pelvic floor disorders. She is actively involved with NIH-funded studies, industry-sponsored trials and investigator initiated studies. She is involved nationally as a Board Member for the American Urogynecologic Society, a NIH study section, and the editorial board of the Female Pelvic Medicine and Reconstructive Surgery journal. She has a substantial amount of time protected for research which affords her the necessary time to dedicate to mentoring fellows. She is heavily invested in training fellows in all aspects of research and in providing career development advice. Her long-term career goal is to train future leaders in FPMRS and to substantially improve women's health in the field of urogynecology through translating research findings into improved clinical practice.

AnnaMarie Connolly, MD is a Distinguished Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology in the Division of Female Pelvic Medicine and Reconstructive Surgery and also serves as the **Vice Chair for Education**, the **Residency Program Director**, and the **Education Division Director**. She is board-certified in Obstetrics and Gynecology and FPMRS and completed her fellowship in Urogynecology and Reconstructive Pelvic Surgery at the University of North Carolina. Her areas of research include nationally recognized work in medical education as well as work on the effects of pregnancy and childbirth on the pelvic floor, particularly on voiding function and anal sphincter integrity after delivery. Dr. Connolly's commitment to education has also been recognized by both the School of Medicine and the University with multiple awards and leadership roles. For the past 13 years, she has served as the Director of the UNC-CH Teaching Scholars Program, a monthly educational faculty development seminar series for 12-15 participating faculty members from the School of Medicine. On the national level, she serves as the Vice Chair for the OBGYN and FPMRS Review Committee (RRC) and as a Board Examiner for the American Board of Obstetrics and Gynecology. She is the immediate past Council Chair of the AUGS Education Council and serves as the co-director of both the ACOG Robert C. Cefalo Leadership Institute as well as the CREOG Residents As Teachers and Leaders Program. With support of the Foundation for Excellence in Women's Health Research, Dr. Connolly is responsible for the development of the myTIPreport program, a web-based program for "real-time" work-place feedback on milestones and surgical skills currently in use nationally in over 150 residency and fellowship programs across OBGYN, FPMRS, other OBGYN subspecialties, as well as other specialties such as Urology, Plastic Surgery, General Surgery, Anesthesia, and Diagnostic Radiology as well as other specialties.

Alexis Dieter, MD is an Assistant Professor and **Research Director** in the Division of Female Pelvic Medicine and Reconstructive Surgery. Originally from Boulder, Colorado, Dr. Dieter completed her undergraduate studies at MIT with a major in Brain and Cognitive Science and obtained her M.D. from Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons. She completed her internship in OB/GYN at NYU and in 2009 she moved to North Carolina where she completed her OB/GYN residency and then her FPMRS fellowship at Duke University. Her research experience has encompassed clinical and basic science studies with her current research focusing on optimizing perioperative outcomes, overactive bladder pathophysiology and treatment, stress urinary incontinence therapy and exploring the role of the urinary microbiome in lower urinary tract disorders. Most recently she was selected to join the AUGS Junior Faculty Research Network and was awarded a UNC 2017 IBM Faculty Development Award. Her areas of surgical expertise include robotic-assisted and vaginal reconstructive surgery both with and without mesh augmentation, as well as neuromodulation procedures including sacral neuromodulation. She is a member of the AUGS Scientific Committee and the SGS Systematic Review Group and acts as the Director of the FPMRS clinical clerkship for medical students

Ellen C. Wells, MD is an Associate Professor and **Medical Director** of the Hillsborough Office, the Past President for the N.C. Obstetrical and Gynecological Society and previous Division Director and Fellowship Program Director of Female Pelvic Medicine and Reconstructive Surgery in the Division of Female Pelvic Medicine and Reconstructive Surgery. She joined the faculty at UNC in 1993 and led the development of the Division of Female Pelvic Medicine and Reconstructive Surgery which has seen dramatic and consistent growth in research, clinical, diagnostic and surgical care volume during her tenure. Under her leadership the Division became the sixth fellowship in Urogynecology and

Reconstructive Pelvic Surgery recognized by the American Board of Obstetrics and Gynecology in 1997. The fellowship has subsequently been jointly accredited by the American Board of Urology under the new title: Female Pelvic Medicine and Reconstructive Surgery. Dr. Wells has extensive clinical knowledge and research experience in female pelvic floor disorders including urinary incontinence, pelvic organ prolapse and lower GI dysfunction. She has specific expertise in surgical techniques, performing vaginal and abdominal reconstructive surgeries, fistula repairs, and reconstructive surgeries for congenital genitourinary anomalies. Her research has been supported by external funding from a number of sources including NIH and the pharmaceutical industry. She was a co-investigator and principal gynecologist for the UNC site of the NIH sponsored Women's Health Initiative for 10 years and a co-investigator at the UNC site of the Pelvic Floor Disorders Network for 5 years. Other previous research areas include trials in medical management of incontinence, efficacy of biofeedback therapy, hormonal influences in post-menopausal women, and effects of childbirth and parturition on the pelvic floor. Current interest includes outcome measures for efficacy of prolapse surgeries, physical activities in women undergoing and after prolapse surgery, and alternative treatments for overactive bladder.

Maggie Wilkins, NP is a Clinical Nurse Practitioner in Women's Health in the Division of Female Pelvic Medicine and Reconstructive Surgery. She received her undergraduate Nursing degree from Clemson University and received her graduate Nurse Practitioner degree from Emory University. She previously worked at Duke University as the Urogynecology Lead Nurse for 3 years and worked in the Duke OB/GYN Department assisting with gynecology consultations. Ms. Wilkins is excited to return to this specialty - in large part due to the patient population and focus on improving quality of life. As a nurse practitioner, she hopes to build on this knowledge, play an active role in research, and explore her clinical interests in sexual dysfunction.

Kristy Borawski, M.D is a Clinical Assistant Professor of Surgery in the Department of Urology. She completed her Fellowship and Residency at Duke University Medical Center in Durham in June 2010. Dr. Borawski received her Bachelor of Science and Doctor of Medicine in a combined BS-MD program at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and Albany Medical College in 2003. She completed her Urology residency in 2009 at Duke University Medical Center and then stayed for a fellowship in Urodynamics, Reconstructive Urology and Incontinence. She joined UNC Urology as an Assistant Professor in 2010 and has served as the Director of Urodynamics since August 1, 2010. She has expertise in Female Urology, Reconstructive Urology and Neurourology, with a special interest in the urologic management of spinal cord injured patients.