

## RESIDENCY PROGRAM UPDATE

- J. DREW PROSSER, MD



It has certainly been an interesting year in resident education! I can honestly say that I did not anticipate many of the challenges we faced this year as a program when I took over from Dr. Groves as Program Director. But as occurs with overcoming any challenge, we have emerged an even stronger program than before and I have certainly learned a lot.

Along with the typical Program Director duties, shepherding the residency program through the many hoops that our accrediting body, the ACGME, sets forth, we have learned how to accomplish many of our educational activities in a virtual format. We also have learned ways to improve surgical education outside of the OR by investing in

simulation technology, thanks to a generous donation from MCG alumnus Dr. James Bush ('69), focusing on sinus surgery and facial plastic surgery. These two areas were particularly impacted by the COVID related OR shut downs. The residents have been absolutely amazing and resilient adjusting to new methods of learning and even caring directly for COVID patients in the ICU during OR shut downs! All of these efforts did not go unnoticed as the ACGME again awarded our Program with continued accreditation without any citations for the seventh year in a row.

Despite all of that, my biggest relief came this year on Match Day, when I found out that we matched two MCG superstars Jack Owen and Faris Mirza. We are very excited to welcome them in July and are confident they will continue to impress us just as they have done over the past four years as intelligent, hard-working medical students. All of the credit for our match success should go to our phenomenal program coordinator Caroline Cook who managed to pull off setting up a packed virtual interview day, coordinating multiple virtual "interview rooms", a virtual hospital tour, and even a virtual tour of Augusta all packed into a half-day session. I can't stress enough how thankful I am for the work she put in and the expertise she showed in running these sessions. In summary, it has been a wild and crazy year to kick off my first year as Program Director. Fingers crossed, the upcoming year brings fewer challenges.



*Otolaryngology Residents  
Photo by David Russell Photography*

## CONSULTANT OF THE YEAR



We are delighted to announce that Amy Blanchard, M.D. was the selection for the Department of Otolaryngology Consultant of the Year for 2021. Dr. Blanchard was unanimously selected by the Otolaryngology Faculty for her work on numerous sleep study consultations over the past year. The department also recognizes her hard work and resilience over the last year as she led the MICU through the COVID surge.

Dr. Blanchard was appointed Assistant Professor in the Pulmonary Critical Care Division of the Department of Medicine at the Medical College of Georgia at Augusta University in 2000 and rose to the rank of Associate Professor in 2005. She is a graduate of Medical College of Georgia, where she completed residency in Internal Medicine and Fellowship in Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine. Dr.

Blanchard has been Medical Director, of Augusta University's Sleep Disorders Center since 2002 and Medical Director, Augusta University Medical Center's, Medical Intensive Care Unit, since 2006. She specializes in the treatment of adult and pediatric sleep disorders.