

University of CINCINNATI

UNIVERSITY OF CINCINNATI COLLEGE OF MEDICINE

DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY MEDICINE



CHAIR'S MESSAGE

March marks an exciting time for our department as we conclude another highly successful recruitment season and prepare to welcome a new class of residents. Each year, Match season offers a meaningful opportunity to reflect on our impact, how our faculty train, how our residents lead, and how our collective efforts shape the future of emergency medicine. This year's applicant pool demonstrated exceptional talent, curiosity, and heart, and I am confident that those who match with us will further elevate our community.

As we enter a period filled with transitions, celebrations, and continued growth, I want to express my sincere appreciation for the people who make UC Emergency Medicine exceptional. Spring invites us to renew our commitments to our LEAD pillars of Leadership, Education, Advocacy and Discovery, and we are doing so by revisiting our department's strategic plan in May 2026. I will keep you posted on how this strategic plan takes shape as we prepare to lead the speciality of emergency medicine in years to come. I am deeply grateful for the excellence you demonstrate each day. Thank you for advancing the mission that keeps our department thriving.

With gratitude,
Gregory J. Fermann, MD
Professor
Richard C. Levy Endowed Chair
Department of Emergency Medicine
University of Cincinnati College of Medicine

Inside this Issue

Residency Match.....1

Department News & Innovations.....2

Alumni Spotlights.....3 & 4

Visiting Professorship.....4

TamingtheSRU.....5

SAEM Social Hour.....5

Opportunity to donate to the EMREEF.....5

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Residency Match 2026

55 YEARS OF EMERGENCY MEDICINE RESIDENCY
1970–2025

MATCH DAY OVERVIEW

Match Day was on March 20th, and our department is excited to welcome 14 new Emergency Medicine residents to the program. For our department, it brings fresh faces, new perspectives, and renewed energy that strengthen both our clinical teams and academic mission

INTERVIEW SEASON SUMMARY

Our interview season remained strong and consistent with previous years. The program interviewed just under 160 applicants which is typical for our usual range of 150–160 interviewees. These numbers reflect the continued competitiveness and stability of our recruitment efforts.

NEW STRATEGIES & LOOKING AHEAD

This season also included four well-attended "second look" opportunities, giving applicants the chance to visit Cincinnati and spend time with our residents. These visits were a highlight of the year, showcasing the supportive, family-like culture that defines our program.

While broader recruitment strategies and upcoming leadership changes are still being finalized, we look forward to sharing more program updates. Stay tuned for our June 2026 issue, where we will provide a full breakdown of our Match outomes. Click HERE to see the exceptional individuals who will be joining our residency program.

Department News & Innovations

University of CINCINNATI

Empowering Emergency Medicine Educators with Structured Resources for On-Shift Teaching



Jessica Baez, MD

One of our Assistant Program Directors, Jessica Baez, created a web-based smartphone app designed to support educators in maintaining high-quality resident education during times of boarding and crowding in the emergency department. As this challenge has continued to grow in the post-COVID era, our residency leadership remains deeply committed to ensuring that the educational mission not only persists, but adapts to the evolving reality of emergency medicine, often centered in the lobby.

The app, ShiftED, provides practical, high-yield educational tools for use on shift, including case discussions, interactive games, EKG review, and other teaching resources. By meeting residents and educators where they are, ShiftED helps supplement the resident educational experience during periods when traditional bedside teaching may be limited due to operational constraints. Click **HERE** to access the app for free!

Addressing Clinical Gaps: The Development of PelPal

While working in the emergency department, Dr. Sierra Hajdu, Dr. Jazmyn Shaw, and Dr. Jessica Baez identified a recurring issue during sensitive pelvic exams: the continued reliance on upside-down bedpans for patient positioning. This improvised approach was uncomfortable for patients and inefficient for clinicians, yet persisted due to the lack of a practical alternative.

Rather than accepting this as standard practice, the group chose to address it directly. They formed an independent LLC and developed PelPal, a clinician-designed solution intended to improve positioning, patient comfort, and exam quality during pelvic exams. The team completed the UC 1819 Venture Lab accelerator program and has progressed from concept to prototype development, working with local vendors in Cincinnati. The device is currently patent pending.

PelPal is now approaching clinical use, with plans to begin implementation with patients in the emergency department in the near future. The project reflects the type of graduates the program produces, clinicians who recognize gaps in care and take initiative to improve everyday clinical practice through thoughtful innovation.

EIP Team Wins Award for Outstanding QRT Outreach and Engagement



The Early Intervention Program (EIP), a longstanding emergency department–based initiative that provides HIV and Hepatitis C prevention counseling, testing and linkage to care, as well as screening, intervention and linkage to care for substance use disorders, was honored with the Outstanding Quick Response Team (QRT), Outreach, and Engagement Initiatives: EMS-led Team award for its work with the Cincinnati Street Medicine Program.

This recognition was presented at the Ohio Deflection Summit, where the team showcased their project, “Street Medicine as Novel Platform for Harm Reduction.” EIP continues its mission of identifying and supporting individuals at highest risk and connecting them to essential community resources.

Team members who accepted the award: Dr. Alexis Kimmel, Kathy Legg, Sanaa Kahloon, and Katie Hallinan.



Sierra Hajdu, MD, Jazmyn Shaw, MD, Jessica Baez, MD

Alumni Spotlight
Dr. Diane Gorgas, MD, Class of 1994

University of CINCINNATI

Introduction
We are thrilled to feature Dr. Diane L. Gorgas as one of our distinguished alumni spotlights. Dr. Gorgas is a nationally respected leader in emergency medicine whose career reflects a profound commitment to education, mentorship, and lifelong learning. We had the opportunity to learn more about her professional journey, including the challenges and defining moments that led her to a career in emergency medicine and shaped her impact on the field.

Path to Emergency Medicine
Dr. Diane Gorgas was drawn to emergency medicine by its energy, variety, and balance of hands-on procedures with rapid decision making. Over time, her appreciation deepened as she embraced the discipline required to care for patients who arrive vulnerable, undifferentiated, and in crisis. After completing her residency at the University of Cincinnati, her career expanded into education, leadership, and service. Emergency medicine has remained a constant source of purpose throughout her professional life

It is a career choice I am still happy every day to say I made."

Academic Career and Global Health Leadership
Since joining The Ohio State University faculty in 1994, Dr. Gorgas has built a career at the intersection of emergency medicine, education, and health equity. A defining milestone was applying educational principles to global health work, focusing on sustainable and partnership-driven training. As Executive Director of OSU's Office of Global Health and Center for Global Health Sciences, she has collaborated with colleagues in East Africa and Haiti to advance emergency care education, neonatal resuscitation, and faculty development. She has also worked to integrate global health into medical education at home, helping learners better understand disparities, systems of care, and global responsibility.

Education and Training Philosophy
Dr. Gorgas views education as a team effort that requires strong mentorship and active learner engagement. Her leadership roles, including residency director and Vice Chair of Academic Affairs, shaped her belief in honest self reflection, collaboration, and motivation as cornerstones of training. She hopes emergency medicine education continues toward individualized, competency based models that emphasize mastery, formative feedback, and lifelong learning rather than time based benchmarks alone.

One of Diane Gorgas's favorite axioms that represents her philosphy towards individual learning and education:

"If you want to go fast, go alone.
If you want to go far, go together."



ABEM Presidency
Serving as President of the American Board of Emergency Medicine is both a profound honor and significant responsibility for Dr. Gorgas. In March 2026, ABEM launched a new Certifying Exam following a six year development process that began with a nationwide listening initiative. Dr. Gorgas led exam development and administration, ensuring the assessment reflects the full scope of skills required of emergency physicians and strengthens the long term value of ABEM certification.

Advice for Future Leaders
Dr. Gorgas encourages trainees and early career physicians to stay curious, say yes to opportunities that foster growth, and seek mentors who both challenge and support them. Leadership paths are rarely linear, and many meaningful roles arise from a willingness to contribute. She emphasizes the importance of clinical excellence, communication, teamwork, and understanding systems of care. Leadership, she notes, is a marathon rooted in service, flexibility, and supporting others along the way.

Sustaining a Meaningful Career
Curiosity has been central to Dr. Gorgas's longevity in emergency medicine, from learning cutting edge medicine to understanding each patient's journey to the emergency department. Resilience, reflection, and maintaining alignment between personal values and professional work have also been essential. Together, these qualities have allowed her career to remain not only long, but deeply fulfilling.

Mentors Who Made an Impact
Dr. Gorgas credits many mentors from her UC and OSU years whose influence continues today. She highlights Mel Otten's curiosity, Bill Barsan's insistence on bedside care, Rashmi Kothari's collaborative leadership, and Steve Carleton's humility and dedication to family.

W. Brian and Anne Marie Gibler Leadership in Emergency Medicine Visiting Professorship

Our Emergency Medicine residency alumni continue to shape the future of emergency medicine. Terry L. Vanden Hoek, MD, FACEP (UCEM Residency '95), now Professor and Head of Emergency Medicine at the University of Illinois College of Medicine, has spent his career redefining how we understand and treat cardiac arrest.

A respected national leader, Dr. Terry Vanden Hoek visited as the W. Brian and Anne Marie Gibler Leadership in Emergency Medicine Visiting Professor, presenting at Grand Rounds on Transforming Cardiac Arrest Care. Dr. Vanden Hoek's leadership has driven major advances in resuscitation research, including innovative therapies, community CPR initiatives, and system level improvements in survival. His presentation underscored the critical role of research, public health partnerships, and strong clinical leadership in improving outcomes. We are proud to recognize his enduring impact on emergency medicine and the countless lives influenced by his work.

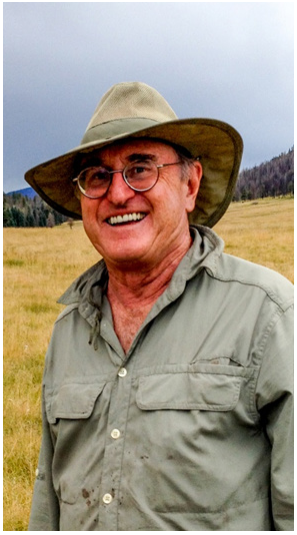


Mentors who Made an Impact Cont.
She also acknowledges Brian Gibler, Steve Dronen, and Richard Levy for modeling effective leadership within complex systems and shaping her approach to national service.

Thank you, Dr. Gorgas

Alumni Spotlight
Dr. Paul Freitas, MD, Class of 1977

University of CINCINNATI



Introduction

With a 47-year career in emergency medicine, Dr. Paul Freitas has lived a professional life defined by adventure, adaptability, and an unwavering commitment to patient care. From working in small mountain hospitals and major trauma centers to serving as a ship physician in some of the world's most remote locations, his experiences reflect the remarkable range of modern emergency medicine and the resilience required to thrive in it.

A Career Defined by Unforgettable Moments

When asked what stands out most after nearly five decades in EM, Dr. Freitas laughs: "So many experiences." Every day brought something new, and the constant change kept him deeply engaged. Some moments remain especially vivid such as managing a major crisis aboard a ship 300 miles off the Hawaiian coast with limited resources and more than a thousand passengers on board. Or treating a fracture dislocation while en route to Nepal. These challenges shaped not only his clinical skill but also his ability to perform calmly under pressure. Much of his most meaningful work, he reflects, happened outside the traditional hospital setting, especially later in his career as he transitioned into expedition and cruise ship medicine.

Witnessing the Evolution of Emergency Medicine

Over the decades, Dr. Freitas watched the field transform dramatically. When he began practicing, basic tools like rapid pregnancy tests were just emerging. As medicine advanced, emergency physicians were expected to manage increasingly complex acuity at a relentless pace. "Working in the ED became harder when we started seeing primarily complex cases. Seeing some simple ED cases provided a break in tension, and that relief helped prevent burnout."



Life After Retirement: Exploration & New Passions

Since retiring in 2022, Dr. Freitas has leaned fully into adventure. From 2008 until the COVID-19 pandemic, he served as a shipboard physician and traveled extensively. In retirement, he has also acted as a field assistant on research projects in primatology and archaeology, contributing to work in Sri Lanka, Costa Rica, Uganda, Hawaii, Easter Island, and New Mexico. He jokes that he has had "several retirements," gradually reducing shifts to 4–6 per month while still embracing new experiences, including work in tiny community hospitals with close-knit staff.

Today, he is active in several men's organizations that fund scientific research and global expeditions. He also credits his "beautiful and brilliant wife" for keeping him socially engaged and adventurous. Despite a full retirement life, he admits: "I miss the medicine, the people, the excitement and especially being part of a team." Above all, he emphasizes that the ultimate goal of a career in EM is to reach retirement with your family intact and your joy preserved.

A Look Back at Residency

Dr. Freitas was part of a six physician residency class in the early days of the program. "We were so close to the beginning," he recalls. Classes were small, tight knit, and full of camaraderie. We did kayaking trips, shared stories, and all shared the collective thrill of learning a rapidly evolving specialty. His advice for today's residents is timeless

- "This is a marathon, not a sprint."
- "Make it to the end with your family intact."
- "You have to find ways to manage and prevent burnout."
- "Treat your nurses really well. They will save you again and again."

A Life of Adventure Beyond the Hospital Walls

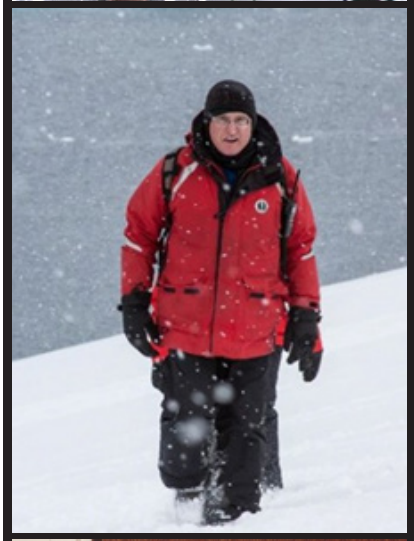
Dr. Freitas shared photos capturing the spirit of his post clinical life:

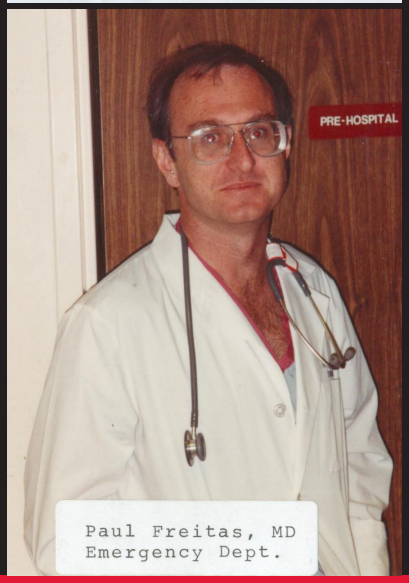
- Sailing — a long time passion
- Serving as a ship physician in Antarctica
- Exploring Alaskan lakes between cruise ship duties
- Participating in archaeological fieldwork in New Mexico

His story is a testament to lifelong curiosity and the many ways an emergency medicine career can evolve far beyond the walls of an ED. Thank you for letting us share your story.

Congratulations on your retirement, Dr. Frietas!







News, TamingtheSRU, and more

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See what's new on TamingtheSRU

Trending New Podcasts

- Trip, Slip, Scan? Rethinking Head CTs in the Elderly
- A PSA on TXA: Updated Recommendations for TXA in Trauma

New Blog Posts

- Blunt Cerebrovascular Injuries
- Diagnostics: Extrapulmonary TB
- Traumatic Shoulder Injuries
- Diagnostics: Accidental Hypothermia
- Ovarian Emergencies: Adnexal Ectopic Pregnancy

Click here to access

Are you attending SAEM 2026?

Come join us for a social gathering at SKOL Brewing & American Axes

Date: Tuesday, May 19th
Time: 5:30 PM - 7:30 PM
Address: 155 Carnegie Way NW
Atlanta GA 30303

SKOL BREWING | AMERICAN AXES

Your support helps shape the future of emergency medicine



Your generosity truly shapes the future of emergency medicine. By supporting the Emergency Medicine Residency Education Endowment Fund (EMREEF), you directly contribute to resident education, wellness initiatives, and the innovative programs that define our training environment. We invite you to make a gift today using the link or QR code below. Together, we can ensure that UC Emergency Medicine continues to thrive for years to come. Scan the QR code to make your donation today!

EMREEF Donation

Quick update

Our email is changing. Future newsletters and all alumni communication will come from and should be sent to:

UCEMALUMNI@UCMAIL.UC.EDU

MED.UC.EDU/EMERGENCY

Leadership, Education, Advocacy, and Discovery

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