

# ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT



**Mitali Paul, M.H.A., M.B.A., FACHE**

Administrator  
Department of Surgery  
Houston Methodist Hospital  
Houston, TX

## Be a sponge

---

For Mitali Paul, MD Anderson will always feel like home. After earning her Master of Business Administration and Healthcare Administration from the University of Houston Clear Lake (UHCL) in 2005, Paul had planned to complete an administrative fellowship program in the United States and then return to her native country of India to start her career. But her education and training experience at MD Anderson changed her trajectory.

“My fellowship launched my career,” Paul says. “The senior operations team embraced me as a trainee and supported me in my professional and personal development, through my first management job. I would not be where I am today if not for my work experience at MD Anderson.”

Paul’s path to health care administration wasn’t always clear. Growing up, she longed to pursue a field in medicine, admiring the relationship her mother - a practicing physician - established with her patients. But along the way, life happened, and she ended up earning a Bachelor of Business Administration degree from the Indian Institute of Management and Commerce instead. Then, a chance encounter with a student earning a master’s degree in health care administration redirected her focus back to the medical field.

Paul completed a master’s program at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, where she learned about the United States’ managed care system and health care industry. Intrigued by the subject, she decided to pursue it further through a second master’s program at UHCL.

“During my master’s program at UHCL, I met leaders from MD Anderson at various professional meetings, and having lost several family members to cancer, MD Anderson was one of the top organizations I wanted to do a fellowship at,” says Paul.

When she applied to the MD Anderson administrative fellowship, she was well aware of the program’s hands-on structure. Still, the experience she gained exceeded all her expectations.

“I did so much during my fellowship, it was so cool, and I was fresh out of graduate school,” Paul says. “MD Anderson’s administrative fellowship program was designed as a collaborative preceptorship model. The senior leaders truly took ownership of the fellows and were involved in our development, which was unique when compared to other programs in the Texas Medical Center.”

One of her most memorable moments as a fellow was creating a hypothetical business plan for the daVinci surgical robot and cardiac catheterization laboratory, allowing her to put theory into practice. Three years after completing the year-long fellowship, she was given the opportunity to set that plan into action as a clinical business manager in the Cardiopulmonary and Endocrine Centers.

“It was serendipitous. What are the chances I get to execute my own business plan a few years later!?” Paul says.

Paul also credits her growth to MD Anderson’s on-the-job training opportunities, including the Leadership Institute’s courses and mentoring programs.

“The lessons I learned from my preceptors and mentors, the business knowledge and involvement in strategic decision-making were instrumental to the rest of my career and every leadership position I have held so far,” Paul says.

Today, Paul serves as an administrator in the Department of Surgery at Houston Methodist, where she is currently developing leadership programs to assist with onboarding, retention and the advancement of faculty and staff by drawing inspiration from her own experiences at MD Anderson.

“MD Anderson is one of the most mission-driven organizations I have had the privilege of working at. Right from my very first day, it was evident how every employee was truly committed to the organization’s mission,” Paul says. “It was not just a fancy statement to adorn plaques but was truly a living and breathing philosophy for the organization and the executive leadership team.”

Paul also serves as an adjunct faculty at both Texas Woman's University, where she teaches courses in marketing and health care administration, and UHCL, where she teaches strategic planning in a physician leadership certificate program.

As Paul continues to lead and encourage others in the field, she shares this advice: "Take advantage of the opportunity to learn, be a sponge, pick projects outside your comfort zone to grow, and seek mentors to help you become the best version of you," Paul says.

In her free time, Paul enjoys volunteering for various non-profit organizations, spending time with her children, traveling, cooking, the outdoors and the arts.