

Dear Ostrow Community:

I know that for so many of us the “Safer at Home” social distance measures have been incredibly tough. One day runs into the next; we miss the friends and loved ones with whom we do not live; we feel listless and want to get back to the life we left behind. While it can be difficult to shake off these feelings, I’ve read a few articles recently whose authors have a slightly different perspective — acknowledging this unprecedented time to actually slow down, take a walk, enjoy a book, and live in the moment. When we have our regular routines, it can be easy to run on autopilot and move from one task to another. This time sheltering in place affords us an unprecedented opportunity to look inward and reassess what’s important to us, what really matters in our lives. We don’t often get an opportunity for something like this, and I’m trying to take some time to do just that. I hope you will join me in that effort.

Next week, we welcome our **ASPID Class of 2022**. Just as we’ve been doing, the cohort will begin their learning virtually, moving into in-person courses at the Norris Dental Science Center just as soon as we are given the greenlight. I look forward to getting to know this diverse group of talented individuals one-on-one. Please join me in welcoming the class to the Trojan Dental Family. And thank you to our **Admissions Team** for all of your help in getting this class through orientation and into our ASPID/DDS program!

Speaking of moving back into in-person coursework, I have recently established a task force to begin looking at how we will do just that once all social distancing restrictions have been lifted or eased. It’s no secret that life after COVID-19 will not look like it did before we went into shelter-in-place mode. We will need to ensure that all of our faculty, staff, students, residents and patients can move about their lives safely and healthfully. To that end, I have enlisted this task force to help reimagine life at USC Dentistry to make sure we abide by all precautions necessary to stay COVID-free. It will not be easy, but I am confident that this task force, composed of Drs. **Winston Chee, Yang Chai, Nam Cho, Sillas Duarte, Joyce Galligan, Roseann Mulligan** and Mrs. **Jill Yoshimi** (COO), will do it successfully.

I also want to acknowledge our **IMS Purchasing Team, Community Oral Health Programs**, as well as the **Office of Alumni Relations**. These groups have been networking, throughout the globe, to secure necessary PPE and clinical items for our dental emergency clinic, as well as medical clinics throughout Los Angeles. Thank you all for your efforts! In fact, this week Dr. **Samir Batniji**, a member of our Board of Councilors and a volunteer faculty member in Grad Endo, graciously stepped up and secured more than 100 N95 masks for our emergency clinical operations. Thank you, Samir! It is because of our hard-working teams and alumni and friends that we’ll get through this recent challenge and come out better and more prepared for any future crisis.

Stay safe, stay healthy and Fight On!

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