

## Herman Ostrow School of Dentistry of USC



Dear Ostrow Community:

During the early days of our shelter-in-place efforts, every week felt interminable. But I have to say as it's gone on, the weeks seem to be passing by faster and faster — hopefully getting us ever more quickly to the point where we can get back to the life we all left behind two-and-a-half months ago. I very much look forward to that day.

This week, I would like to start by thanking **Dr. Cheryl Park** and **Dr. David Datu** for their vision and leadership, serving as presidents of the Dental Faculty Assembly and the Part-Time Faculty Assembly, respectively. Both have done terrific jobs, and we're better for having had them in their positions. In July, **Dr. Thanh "Tammie" Ton** steps into her new position as DFA President, and **Dr. Sibel Dincer** assumes the PTFA presidency. Typically, this time of year, we honor all of our faculty with a Faculty Appreciation Awards and Dinner. Unfortunately, we can't do that this year, with current shelter-in-place orders, banning large group gatherings. But it doesn't diminish our appreciation for the myriad of faculty working day in and day out to educate the next generation of dental professionals. We've spoken a lot about the resilience of our students during this coronavirus crisis. I think that a lot of that has to do with the example that each of you have regularly set, staying positive and encouraging our students to stay the course and not let temporary setbacks get to them. Thank you for all that you do, and we look forward to celebrating you twice as hard next year.

I would also like to take a moment to recognize **Dr. Yang Chai and the research team** for being awarded a \$30-million, 5-year NIDCR grant to continue into Stage 3 of the Center for Dental, Oral and Craniofacial Tissue and

Organ Regeneration (or C-DOCTOR, for short). This is a really impressive collaborative project with several universities across California working together to expedite innovative and transformative technologies in tissue and organ regeneration through FDA Phase 1 clinical trials. Some of the technologies and therapeutics include using stem cells to treat craniosynostosis, developing a hydrogel patch impregnated with focal adhesion kinase inhibitors that could reduce scarring and make skin more pliant while regenerating hair follicles and sweat glands in burn victims, and creating a transdermal patch to prevent radiation-induced soft tissue fibrosis in survivors of cancer. It's really groundbreaking stuff, and it says so much about our research team that the NIDCR has put such tremendous responsibility into their hands. [Read more about that here](#). Congratulations, Dr. Chai!

We have been given permission to resume patient care in our **Advanced Specialty Program Clinics** — within the scope of activities recommended by the L.A. County Department of Public Health and with the proper safety protocols in place, obviously. This does not mean everyone should show up on Monday. For those of you in our advanced specialty program clinics, your program director will be in touch with further information and next steps to resume operation. We do not yet have the greenlight to restart our **DH/DDS pre-clinical or clinical** operations at this time, but we will let you know when we do. **Faculty and staff:** As we look forward to resuming operations, your supervisors will be in touch, regarding adjusted work schedules, safety protocol, reporting duties, etc.

For the past two months, we have been working closely with the CDA and state officials to change the way WREB testing is done during the coronavirus crisis, using manikins instead of live patients. I am pleased to announce that they have granted a one-time exception, allowing the Class of 2020 to use manikins for their licensure testing. I know this news presents a new set of questions. Please be patient as we outline next steps in a timely manner.

On that high note, I will leave you this week. I hope you have a safe, relaxing weekend.

Stay safe, healthy and Fight On!

*Avishai*

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**[Coronavirus \(Covid-19\) Updates](#)**



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