

Herman Ostrow School of Dentistry of USC



Dear USC Dental Community:

Welcome back to my (now bi-weekly) Dean's Message. I had intended to rethink the way that I kept everyone informed — moving away from a weekly message — after most of us returned to the Norris Dental Science Center but was surprised to hear how many of you really appreciated the timely information being provided to you, particularly during the uncertainty that has come to define 2020. It is for that reason that we decided to launch a semi-regular communication piece, adjusting its publication schedule to every other week.

As many of you know, I returned recently to the clinic floor to resume supervising our DDS students as they continue their education. These hours spent with our bright and talented students has always been one of the more enjoyable aspects of my job, and I didn't realize how much I missed it until I was back at it. Just seeing the excitement in the faces of our students once again really lifted my spirits.

As many of you know, we are now back to 50 percent capacity in our clinics and sim labs. I knew that there was a great deal of preparation, organization and hard work that went into adjusting our learning spaces for a COVID world, but witnessing it firsthand has been awe-inspiring.

The technological tools that **Mr. Ramon Enachescu** and the Enterprise Application team has provided all of us are truly incredible. They've created screening applications to make the check-in process outside quick and simple, an application to track which individuals in our school have been fitted for N95 masks, notification systems that allow students to "virtually raise their hand" to

avoid student movement outside the clinical area during treatment and even systems to allow for telehealth for certain patient populations.

And it's not only the technology that is involved, it's also the thoughtful processes that have been put in place. It's the screeners working at the entrances to ensure we're all healthy, the runners who allow our students to stay in their clinical areas, the group practice directors who are ensuring their students follow proper clinical protocols, the students who are adhering to all social distancing and wearing the necessary PPE. Our community has come together like I've never seen before to create a safe, healthy learning environment, and it really makes me proud.

As you may have heard, our Community Oral Health Programs has slowly restarted our mobile dental clinic efforts in Sylmar, Calif., with a clinic at Hope Gardens Family Center, a transitional housing campus for homeless single women and their children as well as senior women. This organization falls under the auspices of Union Rescue Mission, giving us the opportunity to continue providing oral health education, resource assistance and screening as well as much-needed dental treatment to some of society's most vulnerable — even amid a global pandemic. The teams involved include those from Union Rescue Mission, Mobile Clinic, Neighborhood Mobile Dental Van, our geriatric dental van and the field teams from our LDPP outreach project. It took an enormous amount of effort to get this mobile clinic up and running, while respecting established COVID-19 infection control protocols. I'd like to acknowledge **Drs. Sunny Fereshteh and Mehdi Mohammadi** as well as **Mr. Edwin Salgado** and all of the faculty and staff involved in bringing this program to life.

Outside our clinics, we are also boldly moving forward to ensure our students are getting the best education possible. Last Thursday, we held this year's Loupes Fair for our new ASPID students, followed on Friday by a Loupes Fair for our first-year DDS and second-year DH students. The fairs look entirely and necessarily different, with staggered appointments so that loupes can be properly sanitized between fittings, a limit to which cohorts of students could participate and plenty of social distancing. These fairs will continue every Friday throughout September. As you know there's a no-event mandate from the university, so getting the proper approvals to hold this limited event was no easy feat. I commend **Drs. Joyce Galligan and Jin-Ho Phark** as well as **Ms.**

Jill Yoshimi and **Ms. Mariam Agazaryan**, all of whom were instrumental in ensuring that this event could take place in person, while adhering to the strictest health and hygiene standards. It was important that our students were able to talk to our vendors and try on their loupes to make an informed decision about their purchases.

Our **Office of Student Life and Well-Being** held their first-ever virtual Student Palooza, an event where we showcase for our new students all of the student clubs and groups we have here at Ostrow. If ever there were a time that our students need to feel community, it's now, so this event took on even greater importance, given all the social distancing we've been doing since March.

Finally, I want to wish our Jewish community *Shana Tova umetuka*. May the new year bring health, happiness, and prosperity to you and your loved ones.

With that, I will finish this message. As always, I urge you to stay safe, healthy and fight on!

Avishai

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



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