

Herman Ostrow School of Dentistry of USC

11/13/2020



BI-WEEKLY DEAN'S MESSAGE

Dear USC Dentistry Community:

It's been almost four months since we reopened our Sim Labs (mid-July) and almost three months since we reopened our clinic spaces (mid-August) for skill development and patient care. As we near Thanksgiving, a time where we typically reflect on all that we are thankful for, I feel incredibly grateful to be part of this community and to see how we all came together this year to take on some truly enormous challenges.

In the near future, as we come close to the end of the year, we will be focused heavily on increasing the number of patient care opportunities available to our students and further accommodating our patients' needs. It is important that we

continue to scale up our operations while working within the health and safety parameters set forth by Los Angeles County. Thank you for your continued patience as we work to move forward.

In this message, I want to focus on some of our school's unsung heroes. These are the staff members who, if they're doing their jobs well, can be easily overlooked. But these individuals are far from simply doing their jobs well. They are going above and beyond in every way possible, taking on many extra duties to ensure our operation runs smoothly — and doing it all with smiles on their faces.

First, I want to acknowledge our facilities team, **Ms. Marshell Miller-Barber** and **Mr. Silvestre Cruz-Guzman**, who, despite having personnel shortages currently, continue to work tirelessly to keep our building, equipment and dental chairs in good condition.

I am also grateful to our dispensary team, led by **Ms. Tami Oshiro** and **Mr. Tom Sirikulbut**, who have really stepped it up to dispense PPE and N95 masks for all programs, including our remote sites and the USC Dental Faculty Practice.

I am thankful for our IMS team, led by **Mr. Chris Camacho**, whose duties have expanded significantly during the pandemic. On top of all they already did, they now clean our extraoral suction units, turn our HEPA scrubbers on and off every day, assist as runners, fog and disinfect our Sim Labs during afterhours and pre-package supplies for the dispensary.

I am grateful to all of our treatment coordinators, under the leadership of **Ms. Juana Arreola**, who have taken on the additional duties of asking our patients the COVID pre-screening questions and then escorting them to their designated sections, all while taking care of our dental students.

And finally, I am grateful to **Ms. Gina Jackson**, who has shown true leadership in the face of the pandemic. She was responsible for bringing on a number of new staff members to ensure smooth operations in our clinic. And, when we launched night clinics, she would put in overtime, working the patient screening tent and staying late into the night.

Like I said, there has been a Herculean collective effort across the school to re-imagine our operations in the face of a global pandemic, but these staff members have truly gone above and beyond. Please join me in thanking all of them.

In other news, as a result of the pandemic, we necessarily had to re-think the way in which we recruit and interview prospective students for entrance into our incoming 2021 classes. Because we cannot do in-person multiple mini interviews (or MMIs), our **Office of Admissions** partnered with a technology company that helps to schedule and record virtual MMI interviews with our would-be students. The recordings can then be evaluated afterward by our faculty. We also had to move the problem-based learning (or PBL) portion of the interviews to Zoom. I would like to thank the Admissions team, under the leadership of **Dr. Anita Tourah**, for their flexibility, resilience and ingenuity in making sure that we continue matriculating the nation's best dental students. And a special thank you to the faculty who, on top of all their other duties, are taking the time to evaluate the MMI interviews. Your feedback and input are absolutely essential in identifying the students who will maintain the long-standing excellence for which USC dentistry is known.

Finally, I'd like to take a quick opportunity to congratulate our **Office of External Relations** (particularly the Alumni Relations team) and the **Century Club Alumni Association** for putting together and hosting respectively a great line-up of virtual events for Homecoming Week. While I think we all would have rather seen each other in person, the virtual events they held were the next best thing. I enjoyed looking at the daily photo contests on Ostrow Connect. Speaking of, if you haven't yet signed up for Ostrow Connect, our new exclusive social media platform, visit ostrowconnect.usc.edu or find the app on [Google Play](#) or Apple's [App Store](#). It's a great way to stay in touch with your Trojan Dental Family members.

As always, stay safe, healthy and Fight On!

Avishai

Avishai Sadan, DMD, MBA

Dean

G. Donald and Marian James Montgomery

Professor of Dentistry

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



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Our mailing address is:

925 W. 34th Street DEN 202

Los Angeles, CA 90089

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