

**Subject:** [ptdent-l] Community Message from Dean Avishai Sadan

**Date:** Friday, April 16, 2021 at 10:17:39 AM Pacific Daylight Time

**From:** ptdent-l-request@mymaillists.usc.edu on behalf of Avishai Sadan, DMD, MBA

**To:** Avishai Sadan, DMD, MBA

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## Herman Ostrow School of Dentistry of USC

[4/16/2021]



## DEAN'S BI-WEEKLY MESSAGE

Dear USC Dentistry Community:

Earlier this week, we made the announcement that, effective immediately, we have been granted permission from the University to ramp up operations in our advanced specialty clinics, including our pediatric dentistry and oral surgery clinics. This is very exciting news as we continue to resume the life we left behind last March. We will obviously continue taking all COVID-19 mitigation

protocols to ensure a safe and healthy learning environment. We still have a few operations left to ramp up — be on the lookout for further messaging in the future — but I am incredibly heartened by the support of both the University as well as Los Angeles County health officials as we continue to brighten the light on the proverbial “dimmer switch,” slowly returning to operation as usual.

With every passing day, the total number of fully vaccinated people in the United States continues to tick up as we work our way toward what is known as “herd immunity,” where enough individuals have been vaccinated to create a resistance to the spread of COVID-19. Just as we must reach a certain percentage of vaccinated people in the U.S., we aim to do the same within the walls of Ostrow. We still have more to do, but, for those who have yet to get vaccinated, we are hosting a virtual discussion to answer your questions and address any concerns. The discussion, titled "Is the COVID-19 Vaccine Really Safe?," will take place at 6 p.m. on Thursday, April 29, with **Dr. Kimberly Tilley** (of USC Student Health), **Dr. Yang Chai**, **Dr. Mahvash Navazesh** and **Dr. Joyce Galligan** sharing their expertise with our community. While I hope the hour-long session will ease any fears or concerns you may have, ultimately the decision is yours. But do remember, the University is requesting that, if you choose not to be vaccinated, you must upload a signed COVID-19 Vaccine Declination form into your personal [MySHR account](#). Even if you sign a declination statement, you can always change your mind. The University just wants everyone to select one option or the other. Thank you to the Office of Student Life, particularly **Ms. Kim Eeles** for her help in putting this together, and of course thank you to the presenting faculty members. Be on the lookout for more information, including a Zoom link, soon.

Yesterday, we began a mobile clinic event for unhoused and at-risk veterans, as part of a collaboration with Village for Vets and the Los Angeles Veterans Collaborative, which is run by the USC Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work. During the week-long event, Ostrow students and faculty will provide much-needed comprehensive dental treatment to up to 100 veterans, who do not qualify for dental coverage provided by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. I would like to thank **Dr. Roseann Mulligan** and **Dr. Sunny Fereshteh** as well as staffers **Ms. Epifania Juarez**, **Mr. Edwin Salgado**, **Mr. German Hernandez**, and **Mr. Anthony Santiago** for all of their efforts in coordinating and setting up this clinic. And, of course, thank you to our students and their faculty supervisors for providing care to our nation’s bravest.

Last week, I had the pleasure of attending the Faculty Senate Retreat, co-hosted by the Provost, where faculty from across the University met virtually to discuss the future of education at USC as we move deeper into the 21st century. The discussions centered around four themes — the purpose of liberal education and general education courses; the changing needs of our students, including providing digital badges and micro-credentials outside of a formal degree program; the evolving PhD degree amid a changing labor market; and offering professional development and life-long learning opportunities for our alumni. It was a really engaging discussion. I had the opportunity to meet and make new friends, and I look forward to continue building upon the proud legacy of educational excellence here at Ostrow while helping to shape the future in alignment with the University's goals.

We recently received word that **Ms. Taylor Purks DDS '22** has been named Ostrow's winner of the National Dental Association President's Gala and Scholarship Equity Statement Competition. The competition awards a \$10,000 scholarship to one student — who must be a member of their school's chapter of the Student National Dental Association (SNDA) — at each of California's dental schools. This year's theme was equity, and Taylor's essay, which chronicles her journey to the dentistry profession, is really moving and inspiring. I urge you to [check it out here](#). Please join me in congratulating Taylor on this prestigious and meaningful recognition. I would like to thank **Dr. Kim Austin** for her efforts in helping to organize the competition and recruiting SNDA members to submit essays.

Our **Office of Admissions** has completed the interview cycle for the incoming DDS Class of 2025. As you know, we had to completely re-imagine the way we recruited and evaluated prospective students this year, with the entire process moving online. We recruited a number of faculty members to review hours and hours of pre-recorded multiple mini interviews and moved the PBL interview to Zoom. I would like to acknowledge the entire Office of Admissions team — **Dr. Anita Tourah, Dr. Arek Horozyan, Mr. Corey Berry, Mr. Chris Campbell, Mr. Sergio Estavillo, Ms. Vianca Marquez, Ms. Christine Wade** and **Ms. Jennese Wang** — plus all of the faculty members who helped out. This Herculean effort gives the incoming DDS Class of 2025 the distinction of being the only USC Dentistry class to be entirely recruited, interviewed and assessed 100 percent online.

And finally, this week, our first- and second-year DDS students as well as our second-year DH students are finishing their final exams before taking a well-deserved two-week trimester break. I'd like to congratulate you all on completing another trimester during what has proven to be such a challenging time in our lives. Please enjoy your time off, but remember to be wise and continue following all COVID-19 safety and health protocols. We've come such a long way, but mistakes at this point could set us back. I look forward to seeing you back at Norris on May 3, when the Summer Trimester officially kicks off.

With that, I wish you all a great weekend. As always, stay safe, stay healthy and Fight On!

*Avishai*

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