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Herman Ostrow School of Dentistry of **USC**

[10/22/2021]



DEAN'S BI-WEEKLY MESSAGE

Dear USC Dentistry Community:

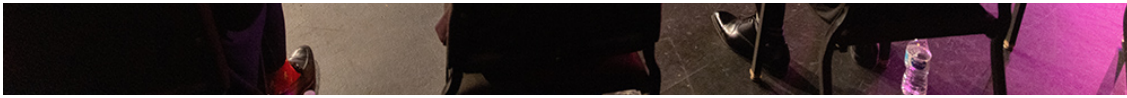
This week, our **DDS Class of 2023**, **DDS Class of 2024** and **DDS Class of 2025** completed their midterm exams, signaling that we're already halfway through the trimester (!). I hope

everyone did well on their exams and that you're ready to face the second half of the trimester.

We recently received word that our next Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA) site visit has been scheduled for March 28-30, 2023. As you know, CODA is the accrediting agency responsible for evaluating dental educational programs across the country. They were supposed to have visited Ostrow in 2022, but all visits were pushed back a year due to the pandemic. The Commission will be evaluating our DDS, ASPID and advanced specialty programs in endodontics, orofacial pain, orthodontics, pediatric dentistry, periodontics and prosthodontics. You might be surprised to know how much work goes into making these site visits successful. I'd like to thank **Dr. Mahvash Navazesh, Dr. Malcolm Snead, Ms. Robin Fox** and the **Accreditation Steering Committee** in advance for all the hard work they'll be putting in during the lead-up to the site visit, including at some point, a mock site visit. While that 2023 date might seem far off in the distance, in reality, it'll be here in no time, so please make sure to mark your calendars.

(continued below)





WHITE COAT CEREMONY 2020

Last week, we had the honor of officially (and finally!) welcoming our **DDS Class of 2024** and **ASPID Class of 2022** into the dental profession with the White Coat Ceremony. As you know, pandemic restrictions prevented us from holding this seminal event last year. Even if it took place a year late, we were so thrilled to be able to celebrate these talented and brilliant students. I'd like to thank Associated Student Body President **Mr. Scott Barlow**, **Dr. Cheryl Park** and **Dr. Andrew Wong** for taking the time to deliver remarks during the event.

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Yesterday, we held our annual Great Shakeout, where we sharpen our emergency preparedness skills for a potential earthquake. If all of the events of the past year and a half have taught us anything, it's that the unimaginable can and will happen, so drills like this seem to have taken on a more critical role, post-pandemic. I would like to acknowledge **Ms. Jill Yoshimi**, who serves as the emergency operations center leader; **Mr. Michael Navarrete**, who is the Building Emergency Response Team (BERT) leader, and all the **BERT members**, who are tasked with clearing each floor of the building during an emergency.

Last week, we commemorated the final days of Latinx Heritage Month with a virtual alumni discussion panel, where a few of our Latinx alumni offered words of advice to current Latinx students on navigating life as a minority student and alumnus. The panel discussed everything from the Latinx student experience to life after dental school to debt and wealth management. I would like to thank all who participated, but especially our alumni who took time out of their busy lives to offer sage advice to our students. The participating alumni were **Dr. Jennifer Castellanos**, **Dr. Santos Cortez**, **Dr. Valerie Hernandez-Blouin**, **Dr. Karen Sierra** and **Mr. Carlos Sanchez**. I would also like to acknowledge our Office of Student Life and Well-Being — **Ms. Kim Eeles** and **Ms. Mariam Agazaryan** — as well as our Office of Alumni Relations — **Ms. Danielle Barr** and **Ms. Christie D.C. Van Paepeghem** — for their efforts in

putting this panel discussion together. These opportunities are so important for our underrepresented students, and I hope to see more in the future.

Finally, as you know, next weekend is Homecoming Weekend, where the USC Trojans take on the Arizona Wildcats. You can learn more about our accompanying festivities by visiting [Ostrow Connect](#) and clicking the "Events" tab on the left-hand menu.

With that, I wish you all a great weekend.

Stay safe, stay healthy and, as always, fight on!

Avishai

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Dean

G. Donald and Marian James Montgomery

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