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Herman Ostrow School of Dentistry of USC

[1/14/2022]



DEAN'S BI-WEEKLY MESSAGE

Dear USC Dentistry Community:

I hope everyone enjoyed a nice, relaxing winter recess and returned energized and eager to jump into the Spring 2022 trimester.

As you know, the omicron surge has once again impacted life at USC, with the spring semester beginning remotely for many of our campus colleagues who are set to return to in-person instruction on Monday, Jan. 24. While we may temporarily have the campus to ourselves, we must remain vigilant — perhaps even more so given the omicron variant’s high transmissibility. The university recently updated its recommendations surrounding masks, asking that students, faculty and staff forego cloth masks for medical grade masks, which at minimum are surgical masks and may also include higher grade respirator masks (N95, KN95 or KF94) while indoors on campus. These masks are more likely to protect against the new variant. In addition to the new masking protocol, we must continue physical distancing when possible, wearing PPE appropriately, washing hands regularly and not sharing meals with others indoors at the dental school. Additionally, remember that all eligible students, faculty and staff are required to have proof of a booster shot uploaded to MySHR by Jan. 31. This latest surge won’t last forever, but, while it does, we must do all we can to prevent the spread, keeping ourselves, each other and our patients safe and healthy.

The January 2022 issue of the award-winning *[Journal of the California Dental Association](#)* was recently published, and I was really pleased to see some familiar names. In an article, titled “Impact of Hybrid Learning on Students’ Performance in Biomedical Sciences During Covid-19 Pandemic,” Ostrow student **Mr. Oussama Hefnawi** partnered with **Dr. Anna Chen** and **Dr. Mahvash Navazesh** to share their findings from a study comparing in-person to hybrid learning models for acquiring biomedical sciences knowledge. The study found that hybrid learning is just as effective for learning foundational biomedical knowledge and developing critical thinking skills. Moreover, it’s the preferred modality for dental students. In the same issue, Ostrow students **Mr. Antranig Mesrobian** and **Mr. Karam Korya** — along with **Dr. Kamal Al-Eryani** — authored an article, titled “Post-Pandemic: Teledentistry the New Norm, A Narrative Review,” in which they demonstrated the efficiency, convenience and cost-effectiveness of teledentistry, which could have lasting effects on the dental profession long after the pandemic is over. The entire issue was guest-edited by **Dr. Mariela Padilla**. Congratulations to all of these individuals, and thank you for representing Ostrow so well in this peer-reviewed journal.

Speaking of research, Ostrow's annual Research Day — one of the only days at USC devoted exclusively to scientific investigation — is set to return to an in-person format this year, taking place at the Galen Center on March 23. This event, led by Associate Dean of Research **Dr. Yang Chai** working alongside Ostrow's **Student Research Group** and their mentor **Dr. Parish Sedghizadeh**, is always one of my favorite days, giving all of us an opportunity to see research conducted by students, faculty and staff. Not only do we get a chance to review innovative dental research, we are also joined by our colleagues from the USC Chan Division of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy as well as the USC Division of Biokinesiology and Physical Therapy, who share their scientific endeavors. I always walk away having learned something new. Be on the lookout for your invitation, hitting inboxes in early February.

With that, I wish you all a nice relaxing holiday weekend.

As always, stay safe, stay healthy and Fight on!

Avishai

Avishai Sadan, DMD, MBA
Dean
G. Donald and Marian James Montgomery
Professor of Dentistry
Herman Ostrow School of Dentistry of USC



Our mailing address is:

Herman Ostrow School of Dentistry of USC
925 W. 34th Street, DEN 201, Los Angeles, CA 90089

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