



PHOTO BY HANNAH BENET

HERMAN OSTROW SCHOOL OF DENTISTRY OF USC

# Strategic Vision

## 2019-2024

MISSION, VISION, AND VALUES  
INSTRUCTIONAL EXCELLENCE  
LEARNER-CENTERED EDUCATION  
FACULTY EXCELLENCE  
EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH  
EXCELLENCE IN PATIENT CARE

# INTRODUCTION

## **The Herman Ostrow School of Dentistry of USC Strategic**

**Plan** prospectively identified priorities and goals that, measured retrospectively, have guided the School's progress over the past six years. The Plan was developed in 2010-2012, with input from faculty, staff, and students. In 2018, upon his second reappointment, Dean Avishai Sadan asked a committee of faculty and staff to revisit the Plan, including assessing the impact of changes in the internal and external environments since 2012, along with the structure and function of the School. The committee sought input from full-time and part-time faculty, staff, and the student body.

This revision also takes into account other initiatives in the School and University. The University's Strategic Plan, Answering The Call, seeks interdisciplinary problem-solving based on the values, people, impact, and transformational capabilities at USC. Furthermore, the School, through its Diversity Strategic Plan, has deeply committed itself to diversity, inclusion, and access for faculty, staff, students, and patients, as core to the achievement of the School's educational mission.





# MISSION

**The mission of the Herman Ostrow School of Dentistry of USC is to provide education, scholarship, and outreach that improves oral, dental, craniofacial ,and general systemic health and well-being locally, nationally, and internationally.**

# VISION

- Biomedical, behavioral, and clinical sciences are the foundational sciences of the School. The integration of state-of-the-art technologies and evidence-based practices informs and improves student education, patient care, and the creation of new knowledge.
- The twin goals of offering outstanding dental education and providing comprehensive and compassionate care for our patients are inseparably linked.
- We will continue to expand our leadership in educational innovation and patient care.
- As an intrinsic part of a research-intensive university, we are dedicated to scientific discovery and evaluating and translating these discoveries to improve health.
- We are committed to providing care and advocacy through outreach programs that directly impact the health of the local and regional community.
- Our local, national, and international collaborations further our standing as global educators and researchers.

# VALUES

- Students and patients are the focus of our commitment.
- We are committed to attracting and supporting the best students and fellows.
- We are committed to attracting and supporting the best faculty.
- Patient care is transformed by scientific discovery, and scientific discovery informs and enhances patient care.
- We celebrate diversity, demonstrate empathy and respect for others, and adhere to the highest ethical and professional standards of our profession.
- Faculty development enhances student education, research, community-based activities, and professional satisfaction.
- We are committed to lifelong learning and to training students who are lifelong learners.





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# INSTRUCTIONAL EXCELLENCE



PHOTO BY NATE JENSEN

**Our focus on students and patients** demands development of excellence in clinical instruction, thereby serving the needs of our patients across their lifespan. This service focus is anchored in scholarship to identify new knowledge, programs, biomaterials, and techniques that are shown to optimize health and prevent disease.



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## LEARNER-CENTERED EDUCATION



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Students are not simply recipients of faculty knowledge; they acquire skills in independent thinking, self-direction, and problem solving.

**Our faculty members are dedicated to learner-centered education** and training critical thinkers. In learner-centered education, faculty and students are active partners in the learning process through an interdisciplinary curriculum that integrates contemporary biomedical, behavioral, and clinical sciences. Student engagement in learner-centered education is critical. Students are not simply recipients of faculty knowledge; they acquire skills in independent thinking, self-direction, and problem solving. A range of pedagogic tools support the learning process, including small group learning and self-directed learning. Faculty act as both instructors and facilitators and provide the framework to support students throughout the learning process.

The learning process necessarily includes continuous assessment of student learning, self-assessment by faculty and students, and assessment of the learning process itself. Assessments must be measurable and flexible, and evolve as biomedical science, evidence-based clinical practice, and teaching methodologies demonstrate improved learning outcomes. Technological innovations in education, including on-line instruction, can be explored and evaluated as primary and adjunct methods to advance the effective teaching of students and residents. Advancing the health of local and regional communities is a critical component of the educational experience through service-learning experiences.

The curriculum incorporates contemporary biomedical knowledge, including diagnostics, evidence-based treatments, biomaterials and therapeutics along with health promotion and disease prevention strategies. Graduates are prepared to act as independent general dental practitioners, providing comprehensive care for patients, identifying and assessing new technologies as they apply to patient needs, and attaining leadership roles in academia, industry, and the community-at-large.

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## FACULTY EXCELLENCE



PHOTO BY NATE JENSEN

Supporting and expanding the School's teaching, clinical, research, and outreach activities requires that faculty members possess the knowledge, tools, and skills to educate dental health professionals. We will attract and retain faculty of the highest caliber who bring a range of skills, perspectives and/or prior experiences to the School.

Faculty development is critical to the success of the institution. Faculty mentoring is the shared responsibility of all faculty, particularly senior faculty, and is available to every faculty member, regardless of title or track. Faculty benefit from participating in leadership and professional growth opportunities that are consistent with the Strategic Plan. Faculty not only contribute to educational, scholarly, service, and outreach activities, but also support and promote inclusiveness for all members of the School community.

Recruitment, support, and retention of research-intensive faculty, including educational scholars as well as faculty who engage in cross-disciplinary biomedical, translational, and community-based scholarship, raise the visibility of the School. To further expand the scope of research, partnerships with all segments of the University, as well as nationally and internationally, are embraced.

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Instruction in evidence-based dentistry tools and skills enables dental students to independently evaluate new technologies and changes in clinical care paradigms.



# EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH

**The School's research environment** has a strong biomedical foundation that fosters the development of effective interventions to improve oral, dental, craniofacial, and general systemic health. Basic discoveries will be translated from scientific insights into clinically relevant therapies. Our unique environment, where clinical and biomedical scientists work together, will increase translational research. In addition, educational scholarship undertaken by faculty will identify outcomes of our learner-centered interdisciplinary curricula.

We will build strength in research internally, as well as through increased collaboration and partnerships with other USC Schools and other research-intensive institutions. Focusing on research that enhances and promotes an improved quality of life will increase support from NIH, other federal agencies, state and local agencies, and from industry and foundations.

The School's expertise in providing oral health care to local and regional communities in need is longstanding. This expertise provides high visibility and aligns with values of the Trojan Family, including USC's Answering The Call and the School's Diversity Strategic Plan. Building upon this strength, the faculty will continue to demonstrate that the School's many outreach programs have made a difference in the underlying health of local and regional patient populations through translational and clinical research, including development and evaluation of new therapies and evidence-based outcomes that enable the School to advocate for underserved populations.

Increased collaboration with international entities demonstrates the School's global leadership role in clinical and biomedical research. The School will continue to attract the finest junior faculty whose accomplishments will, in turn, facilitate recruitment of the highest caliber of graduate students and post-doctoral fellows and residents. Excellent students who support the research enterprise will then be positioned to become the next generation of leaders.

Instruction in evidence-based dentistry tools and skills enables dental students to independently evaluate new technologies and changes in clinical care paradigms. Student participation in faculty-mentored research opportunities enriches their educational experience.

Increased interdisciplinary and inter-School collaborations at USC will facilitate the success of junior investigators as they establish academic careers. Similarly, we will continue to attract faculty from other parts of the University to the areas traditionally studied by School faculty to form interdisciplinary research teams.

# EXCELLENCE IN PATIENT CARE

**Comprehensive patient care is best accomplished** through individualized student learning with faculty experts. Throughout the curriculum, students have clinical learning opportunities that integrate biomedical, behavioral and clinical knowledge and skills, from prevention to therapeutics and biomaterials. Optimal patient care includes evaluating and applying new therapies and technologies.

Faculty, staff and students demonstrate their ongoing commitment to providing comprehensive care at every stage of life, and for patients with special needs. Offering exemplary patient care requires students and faculty to identify and apply the evidence for treatment recommendations, assess patient needs, develop a comprehensive treatment plan to meet those needs, and provide treatment in a professional and compassionate manner.

A comprehensive lifespan approach to patient care requires collaboration with and referral to dental and medical specialists. Dental students and practitioners working as members of health care teams with students and practitioners from other health professions may improve the coordination and efficiency of patient care. USC offers a unique environment to foster and sustain inter-professional training through collaborations with the Keck School of Medicine, the USC Schools of Social Work, Gerontology, Pharmacy, the programs in Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, and Kinesiology, and with other regional institutions. Existing collaborations will be expanded and new collaborations will be developed to benefit patients and students from multiple disciplines.

We enjoy a unique partnership with our patients, making every effort to deliver care as efficiently and effectively as possible through the creation of evidence-based, comprehensive treatment plans that meet patient needs. Our faculty will continue to cultivate relationships with community-based health-related organizations and seek to expand opportunities to serve new communities locally and regionally. Identification of health outcomes and patterns of disease will guide the development of interventions, effect changes at the policy level, and ultimately improve the oral health of populations.



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# EVOLUTION OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN

**Strategic planning is a dynamic process** characterized by creating an active and evolving document that elucidates the School's aspirations and goals. We will periodically assess our progress in meeting these goals. For goals that have not been met, we will identify the impediments to achieving success and act to mitigate them. We will regularly revisit and modify goals as the School continues to move into new strategic areas.



**USC** University of  
Southern California