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Herman Ostrow School of Dentistry of **USC**

[6/5/2024]



DEAN'S MESSAGE

Dear USC Dentistry Community,

This past weekend, we held our annual Friends of Dentistry Celebration, where we celebrate our premier alumni support group, induct new Friends of Dentistry members and upgrade existing members. The celebration took place at the Petersen Automotive Museum, which was quite a venue to hold this special evening. It took on extra meaning this year, serving as an unofficial farewell to me as I embark on my next journey as USC's Associate Senior Vice President for Health Sciences Interprofessional Education and Curricular Innovation. I was so thrilled by the send-off, and I'd like to thank everyone who attended and made me and my family feel so special. A special thanks goes out to the **Friends of Dentistry** leadership, the **Office of External Relations and Student Life** as well as all the individuals who helped make this event happen. And congratulations to all the new and upgraded Friends of Dentistry members. Thank you for your ongoing support of the Herman Ostrow School of Dentistry of USC. The school is in great hands with dedicated, loyal and generous alumni like you!

In mid-May, we celebrated our annual Faculty Appreciation Awards and Dinner, where we honor faculty anniversaries, this year, from 5 Years of Service all the way up to 60 Years of Service. It's always a great event that I enjoy attending, celebrating years, even decades, of dedication, leadership, mentorship and hard work. I said it that night, and I'll say it again: A dental school is only as good as its faculty members, and Ostrow is a rock-solid institution, thanks to our volunteer, parttime and fulltime faculty members. I'd like to congratulate all who were honored during the event, especially **Simon Gamer** and **John Groper**, both of whom celebrated six decades of service. Generation after generation of Trojan dental professionals — and their patients — owe a debt of gratitude to longtime educators like these two gentlemen. So, thank you both. I'd also like to acknowledge the **Office of External Relations and Student Life** as well as the **Office of Faculty Affairs** for their part in putting this event together.

Of course, that particular evening was also a doubleheader, with a Celebration Reception held right before at Town and Gown, commemorating my upcoming departure from the dental school after 15 years of service. I was so touched to

see so many people attend and to hear from **Yang Chai**, **Mahvash Navazesh**, Ostrow alumnus and Board of Councilors member **Mark Tarica**, fourth-year dental student **Austin Nahouray** and Senior Vice President for Health Affairs **Steven Shapiro**, all of whom delivered remarks during the program. Thanks again to all who attended and a special thanks to **Rena Robles**, **Michele Cesca** and **Christie D.C. Van Paepeghem** for their collective efforts in organizing this special event.

What a wonderful note to go out on. I want to thank you all — alumni leadership, faculty and staff — for all of your hard work, your adaptability, your professionalism, your loyalty and above all else your friendship. I can't think of a better group of colleagues to have worked with the past 15 years.

With that, I won't say goodbye. After all, I'm only going to the other campus. But I will say "Until next time," and I will take one last opportunity to remind you to always Fight On!

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