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

**[9/20/2024]**



# COMMUNITY MESSAGE

FROM THE DESK OF INTERIM DEAN YANG CHAI

Dear Trojan Dental Community:

This past weekend, we held our annual White Coat Ceremony, officially welcoming the **ASPID Class of 2026** and the **DDS Class of 2028** to USC and the dental profession. It was such a great afternoon with contagious positive energy. I enjoyed seeing so many really excited family members there to watch their loved ones put on their white coats for the first time and take the oath of

an oral healthcare professional. This year, we did things a little differently and actually said every student's name as they walked across the stage. We had faculty members on-hand to help them put on their white coats. Between the speakers, the students and their proud family members, there was just so much great energy within the auditorium that afternoon. I would like to thank our speakers **Patrick Yu, Natalie Black** and **Parish Sedghizadeh** for taking the time to impart some wisdom into our new classes, the six faculty members who participated in the actual white coating portion of the event — **Christine Edwards, Mahvash Navazesh, Jin-Ho Phark, Lisa Popkoff, Parish Sedghizadeh** and **Anita Tourah** — as well as all the staff members who helped bring this joyful event to fruition. And, of course, congratulations to our incoming classes (pictured below with me in front of Bovard Auditorium) for all the effort and hard work you put into being here at one of the finest dental institutions in the nation.

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You might have seen in an email from earlier this week that this year the Good Neighbors Campaign is celebrating its 30th anniversary, supporting the local community with generosity from USC students, faculty and staff. As many of you know, this program has supported some of our very own community-based programs, including the USC Dental Screening Initiative for Foster Children and the USC Neighborhood Mobile Dental Van Prevention Program. This year, the University has challenged us to reach 30 percent participation for the 30-year milestone (for reference, last year we hit 20 percent participation rate). This is a great opportunity to give back to programs that ignite children's curiosity in STEM fields, provide health and wellness to families and teach kids leadership and self-confidence through the arts. A full 100 percent of your donation goes to supporting the Good Neighbors Campaign and its programs. I'd like to thank **Kim Austin** and **Corey Berry** for agreeing to represent Ostrow this year as campaign leaders for the Good Neighbors Campaign. You will be hearing

more from them as the campaign kicks off. In the meantime, if you'd like to donate, please text GNC to 41444 or visit [goodneighbors.usc.edu](http://goodneighbors.usc.edu).

Finally, I'd like to thank all who recently attended our Welcome Back lunch that took place on September 12 on the West Lawn. It was great seeing and spending time with everyone as we embark on the fall trimester. With that, I wish you all a nice, relaxing weekend.

Fight on!

Yang Chai, DDS, PhD  
Interim Dean

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