
Herman Ostrow School of Dentistry of USC

[10/25/2024]



COMMUNITY MESSAGE

FROM THE DESK OF INTERIM DEAN YANG CHAI

Dear Trojan Dental Community:

We were recently notified that faculty member **Amy Merrill** has been awarded an incredibly competitive R35 grant from the NIDCR-NIH, titled the Sustaining Outstanding Achievement in Research (SOAR) Award. The SOAR Award has only been bestowed 13 times since 2016. The award's goal is to provide

longer-term support to NIDCR funded, mid-career investigators who have an outstanding record of research, mentorship and professional service. Merrill plans to use the eight-year grant to further explore the development of the craniofacial skeleton's soft tissues, such as tendons and ligaments. The ultimate goal is to get a better understanding of how to develop molecular-based strategies to prevent or restore joint damage. If you would like to learn more about this grant, visit the [news story on our website](#). Please join me in congratulating Amy for this outstanding accomplishment!

Many of you might have heard about the Power of 1,000 Campaign, a fundraising initiative for the USC Mobile Dental Clinic that would activate 1,000 of our alumni and friends to donate \$1,000 each to create a \$1 million fund for our mobile dental clinics. The money raised would make it possible for the USC Mobile Dental Clinic to reach even more underserved populations across the region. The initiative's initial priority is to fund a new instrument management service (IMS) trailer, which is the heart of any mobile clinic operation. Our IMS trailer has served us well but is reaching the end of its useful life. Recently, longtime faculty members **Roseann Mulligan** and **Glenn Clark** made a significant contribution to this endeavor, which has already raised nearly \$270,000. This isn't the first time the couple has extended such generosity to Ostrow. In 2015, on the 30th anniversary of the Special Patients Clinic, Mulligan and Clark made a naming gift to the clinic, establishing the Dr. Roseann Mulligan Special Patients Clinic and endowing the clinic so that it could continue providing treatment long into the future to the often forgotten — those with developmental and cognitive delays, the frail elderly, and patients living with HIV/AIDS. I'd like to thank Roseann and Glenn for their continued loyalty and generosity to the programs that make Ostrow such a unique place to study dentistry. It means a lot that the couple believes enough in our work not only to dedicate their careers to Ostrow but also to provide financial backing to ensure these operations remain the best of the best. Thank you both! You can read more about their gift in the [news story on our website](#). And, if you'd like to learn more about the Power of 1,000 Campaign, you can visit the [fundraising webpage](#).

(continued below picture)



Great ShakeOut

Our **Building Emergency Response Team (BERT)** recently sprang to action for the Great ShakeOut, the annual earthquake drill, where we prepare for what would occur should the Earth begin to shake violently. While our students, faculty and staff prepared by dropping, covering and holding, our BERT team put into action our Business Continuity Plan, which calls for making sure our community is safe after the shaking ends and then ensuring we can continue operations in a safe and effective manner. Fight on, and thank you for all your hard work in preparing for the eventuality of a large quake, BERT!

(continued from above)

Our General Practice Residency program recently underwent its mock site visit in preparation for their Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA) site visit in Summer 2025. The mock site visit was incredibly thorough and truly benefited our General Practice Residency program as it prepares for the real deal. I'd like to thank GPR Program Director **Rebecca Dayanim** and Director of Strategic Planning and Operations **Mei Tse** for their tireless efforts to prepare the program for the mock site visit and eventually the CODA site visit.

Last week, our USC Neighborhood Mobile Dental Van Prevention Program held an event called "2024 Happy Teeth: A NOBLE Target Kids Dental Hygiene Event," where they provided 200 children with dental kits. The kits included toothbrushes, flossers, toothpaste and a resource packet. The event was a collaboration between Ostrow, the Angel City Dental Society, Southern California Chapter of the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives, Drew Child Development Corporation and the retailer Target. I would like to thank all who participated, spreading the knowledge to underserved children about the importance of good oral healthcare practices!

Finally, as October begins to wind down (can you believe it?), so too does our Good Neighbors Campaign (GNC). If you haven't made a donation yet, there's still time. Visit the [GNC fundraising webpage](#) to make a one-time donation or to set up installment payment plans. You can also reach out directly to our GNC ambassadors, **Kim Austin** or **Corey Berry**, for more information. As a reminder, the Good Neighbors Campaign has supported a number of Ostrow's community-based programs over the years, including the Neighborhood Mobile Dental Van Prevention Program and the USC Dental Screening Initiative for Foster Children. So, whether you're looking for a way to give back to the dental school's community programs or want to give back in other ways, your donation

makes a huge difference. Thank you, Kim and Corey, for your continued work on this initiative!

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

Fight on!

Yang Chai, DDS, PhD
Interim Dean

Associate Dean of Research
George and Mary Lou Boone Chair in Craniofacial Molecular Biology
Director, Center for Craniofacial Molecular Biology
University Professor of Dentistry, Stem Cell Biology and Regenerative
Medicine, and Otolaryngology-Head & Neck Surgery



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Our mailing address is:

925 W. 34th Street DEN 202
Los Angeles, CA 90089

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