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

**[11/8/2024]**



# **COMMUNITY MESSAGE**

FROM THE DESK OF INTERIM DEAN YANG CHAI

Dear Trojan Dental Community:

At the end of October, we hosted nearly 200 prospective students for the ASPID Entrance Exam, necessary for admission to Ostrow. The exam included a day devoted to problem-based learning and a second day for dental laboratory exams. As you can imagine, preparing for and holding this entrance

exam is truly a team effort, with dispensary staff, teaching assistants and student workers helping our faculty members oversee the examination. Thank you to you all who participated. I would like to acknowledge **Anita Tourah** for her leadership, overseeing this two-day exam. I'd also like to thank the **Office of Admissions**, especially **Corey Berry**, **Christine Wade** and **Arek Horozyan**, as well as faculty members **Abier Abdulwalhab**, **Mainul Ahsan**, **Nissim Benbassat**, **Michael Madden**, **Ali Makhmalbaf**, **Mehdi Mohammadi**, **Lisa Popkoff**, **Daniela Schmid**, **Jenny Son** and **Xin Wen** for sacrificing their weekend to help with the eventual selection of our incoming ASPID class.

Earlier this month, we released a document outlining the key initiatives that we set forth for 2024 in alignment with our Strategic Vision 2024-2030. That document, titled "Strategic Vision Outcomes Assessment 2024," is now up on the School's Intranet under the tab "Strategic Plans" for review and comment. Your input is incredibly valuable as together we chart Ostrow's course forward in a dynamic, ever-evolving educational landscape. I'd like to thank **Mariela Padilla**, who in her role as Associate Dean of Strategic Planning and Outcomes Assessment, has been instrumental in this work. I'd also like to thank all of you who take the time to review and offer feedback. We couldn't reach all of our goals without the contributions of you all!

*(continued below pictures)*

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## Scaring Up a Good Time

Last week, Ostrow's **Office of Human Resources** hosted a Halloween costume and office decoration competition, with many people taking part in the festivities. The HR Team offered three prizes: one for individual costume, one for group costume and one for best office decoration. We are happy to announce the winners here. **Norma Vasquez** earned best individual costume

for her Slinky Dog (from *Toy Story*) costume. Honorable mentions went to **Christie Van Paepeghem** (*Wicked's* Elphaba) and **Fernanda Cervantes** (Disney's Maleficent). The **Predoctoral Clinic Staff** earned best group costume for their Pixar-themed group costume, with honorable mentions going to the **Office of Development** (*Wizard of Oz* characters) and **Community Oral Health Programs** (cops and robbers). Finally, the office decorating prize went to the **Pediatric Dental Clinic staff**, with honorable mentions going to the **Second-Floor Patient Services Counter staff** and the **Office of Development staff**. The three winners are pictured below. To see the honorable mentions and more, visit the Human Resources website on the Intranet. And winners should reach out to the HR team for your prizes.



## CATEGORY: INDIVIDUAL COSTUME

Winner: Norma Vasquez



Honorable Mentions: Christie Van Paepeghem and Fernanda Cervantes

See more pics on Intranet > Human Resources



**CATEGORY: GROUP COSTUME**

Winner: Predoctoral Clinic Staff

Honorable Mentions: Office of Development, Community Oral Health Programs

See more pics on Intranet > Human Resources



## CATEGORY: OFFICE DECORATIONS

Winner: Pediatric Dental Clinic Staff

Honorable Mentions: Second-Floor Patient Services Staff, Office of Development Staff

See more pics on Intranet > Human Resources

*(continued from above)*

The **USC Mobile Dental Clinic** recently finished up a patient care stop in Pasadena, where dental students, faculty and staff worked in concert to treat more than 100 underserved children and their families with comprehensive oral

healthcare. The week-long event, a partnership with Pasadena nonprofit Young and Healthy, gave many underserved individuals their first opportunity to be seen by a dental professional. In total, we provided nearly 1,800 treatments to this underserved population. I would like to thank all the individuals who took part in the event, providing a lifeline to these communities in need. I'd especially like to thank endodontics faculty members **Emad Bassali, Yaara Berdan** and **Jennifer Castellanos** for their efforts either volunteering their time to treat patients with root canals or helping us to find resident and student volunteers to participate — either at this USC Mobile Dental Clinic stop or at the ones before. Your efforts are so valuable and help alleviate patients' pain. The next USC Mobile Dental Clinic begins next week in Montebello.

Earlier this week, our Chief Operations Officer **Jill Yoshimi** sent out a reminder email about the holiday break closure for the Norris Dental Science Center. As many of you know, each holiday break, we've been working little by little to further upgrade the building, repairing some plumbing issues, upgrading A-V equipment and installing and updating our paging system. Those repairs are scheduled to resume next month. As such, the building will be closed beginning December 14 and reopening after the holiday break. Employees, who are able to, have been asked to work remotely from December 16 to December 23, so that the upgrades can be made without interruption. During that time, there will be no running water in the building, so no one can enter the building at this time. Thank you for your understanding. If you have any questions about that remote work, please inquire with your supervisors.

Finally, the **Student National Dental Association** is holding its annual Thanksgiving Food Drive for the Midnight Mission homeless shelter. There is a food collection bin located in the East Lobby for your donations of canned and boxed goods to make Thanksgiving memorable for our unhoused neighbors. SNDA will be collecting these donations through November 22, so make sure to drop off donations by then.

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

Fight on!

Yang Chai, DDS, PhD

Interim Dean

Associate Dean of Research

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