
Herman Ostrow School of Dentistry of USC

[12/20/2024]



COMMUNITY MESSAGE

FROM THE DESK OF INTERIM DEAN YANG CHAI

Dear Trojan Dental Community,

As we end the year, I would like to take a moment to reflect on some of the accomplishments that we have achieved together as a community here at the Herman Ostrow School of Dentistry of USC.

As you know, I was installed as Interim Dean in July 2024, taking over for Avishai Sadan. It's been a true pleasure to work alongside our community — faculty, staff, students, alumni and friends, alike — to continue building upon the legacy of excellence established by true giants of the profession over the past 127 years. I would like to thank all of you who have helped to make my transition into this position a seamless one. Your support is so important to our success, and I can't wait to continue working with you in 2025.

Ostrow remains a formidable leader within the dental education and oral healthcare fields, leading the way with an innovative curriculum featuring state-of-the-art training in digital dentistry, community outreach programs that not only help us attract the nation's best and the brightest but also make our students empathetic, caring patient care providers, and interdisciplinary research that advances the science and prepares our students to work collaboratively in healthcare settings, which will be a hallmark of the future.

Here are just a few of our signature accomplishments this year:

EDUCATION

An Ostrow education is rooted in clinical excellence; exposure to cutting-edge research; and paradigm-shifting experiences, providing treatment to underserved communities.

- Ostrow's DDS Class of 2024 boasted a 96 percent on-time graduation rate, 99 percent passing rate for the licensure exam and 99.3 percent first-attempt passing rate for the Integrated National Board Dental Examinations — all impressive statistics given this class began their studies during the COVID-19 pandemic and its associated lockdowns.
- In 2024, we awarded 141 students more than \$2 million in student scholarships, ensuring that we continue to attract the nation's best dental students. Raising funds for scholarships will remain a priority as the price of dental education continues to climb.

- We unveiled the [2024-2030 Strategic Vision](#), laying out six aspirational goals, ranging from instructional excellence to excellence in research to outstanding impact in patient care, and more.

PATIENT CARE

Whether at our school-based clinic or in one of our community-based or mobile dental clinics, Ostrow remains a true lifeline to oral health care for a number of underserved patients every year.

- This year, Ostrow treated an estimated 55,000-plus patients across all of our patient care programs. From infants to elders and every life stage in between, these patients represent the entire human lifespan and come from as far away as the San Fernando Valley, Catalina Island and even Las Vegas to receive treatment at USC.
- Ostrow's Orofacial Pain and Oral Medicine Center opened the doors to the OralCare PreCancer and Pain Clinic, a specialized clinic at the Norris Dental Science Center, dedicated to treating and managing oral pre-cancer/pre-malignant lesions and cancer-associated oral pain.

RESEARCH

Ostrow's longstanding commitment to driving innovation and leading the oral health profession continues to draw some of the nation's top thinkers (in a number of disparate disciplines) to our research facilities on both campuses. Here at Ostrow, we are dedicated to solving some of our patients' most vexing craniofacial problems. We understand that oral health is a crucial aspect to overall health and well-being.

- Ostrow remains one of the nation's top-funded dental educational institutions by the NIH-NIDCR, having risen over the years to its current position as the third highest-funded school (and top-funded *private* school) in the United States.
- Ostrow continues to lead efforts in the exciting fields of tissue

regeneration and big data to transform craniofacial biology.

- One example is the [FaceBase](#) project, which represents the efforts of a consortium of universities led by USC to create a centralized data repository for craniofacial scientists. This year, the project's funding from NIH-NIDCR was renewed for an additional five years (20 years in total, now).
- Additionally, the [Center for Dental, Oral and Craniofacial Tissue and Organ Regeneration \(C-DOCTOR\)](#), another consortium of higher education entities led by Ostrow, continues to drive active translation of scientific discoveries into the realm of tissue regeneration using stem cells.
- At Research Day, one of the only days at USC dedicated solely to scientific investigation, we again shattered our record of research abstracts shown. This year, 150 research posters were displayed from Ostrow, the USC Chan Division of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy and the USC Division of Biokinesiology and Physical Therapy, showcasing the natural intellectual curiosity of our students to learn more about research.

COMMUNITY IMPACT

USC Dentistry has been dedicated to the communities in which it serves for decades, believing that oral health care is a right for all and not a privilege for the few. Here are a few developments from this year:

- Earlier this year, we opened dental operations at URM Angeles House, a new facility in South Los Angeles for unhoused families. This location is the second where Ostrow caters exclusively to the region's homeless population. Having dental clinics solely for these individuals facing dire circumstances in their lives is just one of the experiences that sets us apart from other dental schools across the nation.
- Attracting and retaining faculty members continues to be a priority for Ostrow. This year, we were able to award four faculty members grants from the Health Resources and Services Administration, effectively paying off their remaining student debt. These awards allow the faculty

members to continue their work in our Community Oral Health Programs, inspiring our graduates to give back to their communities in meaningful way.

ALUMNI RELATIONS AND SUPPORT

We are only as strong as our alumni network support, relying on a number of support groups — Board of Councilors, Friends of Dentistry and the Century Club Alumni Association — for their devotion, sage advice and overall support.

- The Envista Holdings Corporation made a \$2.1 million gift to Ostrow's Dental Health Equity and Access to Care Initiative. The initiative aims to provide comprehensive care, referral services, research and education to underserved and vulnerable populations in California, particularly children with special needs.
- We continued our Power of 1,000 campaign to replace our aging Instrument Management System trailer. So far, the campaign, which asks 1,000 alumni and friends to donate \$1,000 each to raise \$1 million total, has raised more than \$500,000, with a number of donations streaming in from our alumni support groups.

It's been a year of exciting developments as we continue to chart our course deeper into the 21st century. I am confident that we, the Trojan Dental Family community, can continue our legacy of excellence with the support of each and every one of you, our community members.

Thank you for all the support that you continue to offer us. I wish you all the happiest of holidays, and I look forward to seeing you all back at the school in early January.

Have a restful trimester break and, as always, Fight on!

Yang Chai, DDS, PhD
Interim Dean

Associate Dean of Research
George and MaryLou 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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