
Herman Ostrow School of Dentistry of USC

[5/23/2025]



COMMUNITY MESSAGE

FROM THE DESK OF INTERIM DEAN YANG CHAI

Dear Trojan Dental Family,

Earlier this week, we held our annual Faculty Appreciation Dinner and Awards, where we celebrated our volunteer, part-time and full-time faculty members, particularly those reaching major anniversary milestones. I can't say it enough: We're truly indebted to our faculty, who bring with them years of hard-earned wisdom, real-world experience and compassionate instruction to the task of

preparing tomorrow's oral healthcare workforce. I am consistently astonished by the hard work, tirelessness, enthusiasm, innovation, resilience, creativity and loyalty of our faculty members. This year's big milestone earner was **Tina Jaskoll**, who is celebrating 45 years at Ostrow. Please join me in congratulating Tina and all the faculty members celebrating a milestone this year. I'd also like to acknowledge the **Office of External Relations** and the **Office of Faculty Affairs** for their work in organizing this annual event. Thank you, all!

We celebrated the **Class of 2025** last week, with a number of events, culminating in Friday evening's Commencement Ceremony. Beforehand, on Thursday evening, we held our Senior Awards Ceremony, where more than 50 students were honored for their outstanding academic achievement. Congratulations to all who earned such distinction. The next day's satellite Commencement Ceremony, keynoted by University Professor **Dana Goldman**, was a huge success. I'd like to recognize several folks for their part in the festivities. First, I'd like to thank the **Office of External Relations** (especially **Kim Eeles**) for their help in planning and executing the student-focused events, along with the **Office of Admissions**, the **Office of Faculty Affairs** and the **Ostrow Student Ambassadors** (some of whom I grabbed a photo with after the ceremony below). I would also like to thank the **faculty members** who participated — especially **Mahvash Navazesh**, who helped MC the event and **Anita Tourah**, who most expertly read all of our graduates' names, one by one. And finally, I'd like to once again congratulate our **Class of 2025** for all you've achieved. I can't wait to see what you accomplish in the coming years.





Ambassador Huddle

L-R: Alisha Patel, Eddie Kim, Karen Chon, Michelle Berenson, Umer Shahzad, Yuna Han, Noor Faghani, Kate Fujii, Candice Nourian and Emily Barcenas Perez flank Interim Dean Yang Chai.

Speaking of accomplishments, the **Omicron Kappa Upsilon (OKU) Zeta Chapter**, the national dental honor society, recently held its annual convocation, during which scholarships are awarded and new students and faculty members are inducted. It was my pleasure to join this accomplished group as keynote speaker. This year, scholarships were awarded to **Dianne Kim Bui, Raghu Deep Darisi, Yunqian Huang, Ashish Shrestha, Andrea Woywitka, Cloris Yidan Zhang and Arman Zograbyan**. Faculty inductions included those for **Mina Habibian and Jin-Ho Phark. Janet Moradian-Oldak** was inducted as an honorary member. Additionally, the group celebrated the many accomplishments of the **DDS/ASPID Class of 2025**, including the induction of 21 students with the top 12 percent GPA. Congratulations to all who earned scholarships and were inducted into OKU!

Finally, beginning this summer, the American Board of Orofacial Pain will have Ostrow faculty members in two key leadership positions, the first time in the organization's 30-plus year history. On July 1, **Glenn Clark** begins his two-year term as president of the organization that provides the rigorous process for obtaining certification for oral healthcare professionals specializing in orofacial pain.

certification for oral healthcare professionals specializing in orofacial pain management. **Anette Vistoso Monreal** will assume the role of secretary/treasurer and take the president-elect position in 2027. Having faculty members actively shaping the orofacial pain specialty is obviously a coup for Ostrow, raising our national profile among institutions in this growing field. Clark and Vistoso's roles will influence certification standards, continuing education, specialty recognition and curriculum development. They will also work to provide students with direct access to industry leaders. Please join me in congratulating Glenn and Anette on their prestigious accomplishment!

With that, I wish you all a terrific and relaxing Memorial Day Weekend!

Stay safe, and fight on!

Yang Chai, DDS, PhD
Interim Dean

Associate Dean of Research
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