
Herman Ostrow School of Dentistry of USC

[6/27/2025]



COMMUNITY MESSAGE

FROM THE DESK OF INTERIM DEAN YANG CHAI

Dear Trojan Dental Community,

Last week, we welcomed the latest cohort of advanced dental education residents to the Trojan Dental Family. In total, we were joined by 45 new residents — 13 of which were Ostrow graduates, showcasing the high-caliber education that our DDS students receive to qualify for our advanced dental education programs. I would like

to acknowledge the **Office of Admissions** — in particular **Corey Berry** — for their

efforts in getting this group oriented to life at Ostrow. You can see each of the nine cohorts pictured on a [recent school post from Instagram](#). Please join me in welcoming the newest additions to our community!



As you know, we are currently undergoing a transition in the position of Associate Dean of Clinical Affairs, with **Doug Solow** retiring effective June 30 and **James “Jimmy” Tom** stepping in as our Interim Associate Dean of Clinical Affairs until we appoint a permanent replacement. Earlier this week, I was honored to help celebrate Doug’s indelible achievements over the past 11 and a half years, with a fête in the Blair Rooms. We were joined by some extra special guests for the celebration, including Doug’s wife **Cheryl Solow**, his sister **Lindy Bouwer**, family friend **Elizabeth Aguilar**, former faculty members **Rick Gaskill** and **Ronald Surdi** and former staffer **Nkem Ukeje**. It was really terrific that these folks could join us for the special occasion. I’d like to thank all who made it out to celebrate Doug as he closes one life chapter and begins the next. Fight on, Doug, now and forever!



Speaking of festivities, we also celebrated the 40th anniversary of the Dr. Roseann Mulligan Special Patients Clinic. This clinic was first conceived by Associate Dean of Dental Public Health and Community Outreach **Roseann Mulligan** when she saw how difficult it was for patients with special needs (including those with physical, psychological and medical disabilities as well as the frail elderly) to access quality oral healthcare. The clinic was initially treating nearly 100 patients annually; over the last decade, it's closer to 800! As a clinician-scientist myself focused on congenital conditions like cleft lip/cleft palate and craniosynostosis, you can imagine that this clinic holds a special place in my heart for the oral healthcare it provides to underserved communities who often have nowhere else to go. In fact, I can still remember how impactful my time was in Special Patients Clinic when I was a student myself and I hear the same all the time from our students today. We're

student myself, and I hear the same all the time from our students today. We're incredibly proud of the work that our Special Patients Clinic students, faculty and staff do every single day. I'd especially like to thank both Nan and **Piedad Suarez** for their leadership over this clinic. Just in case you forgot, our [Special Patients Clinic received a \\$3.4-million Special Dental Clinic Grant](#) by the California Health Facilities Financing Authority to renovate and expand the clinic to serve even more patients with special needs, so we begin the march to the clinic's 50th anniversary stronger than ever before!

Finally, the deadline for our graduates to complete their requirements has come and gone. This year's class did an incredible job on their INDBE and ADEX exams as well as their on-time graduation rates. We couldn't be prouder of these accomplishments, so thank you to the faculty and staff who helped bring this class across the finish line. And, of course, congratulations once again to our **Class of 2025!**

With that, I wish you a relaxing weekend.

Stay safe, and fight on!

Yang Chai, DDS, PhD
Interim Dean

Associate Dean of Research
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