
Herman Ostrow School of Dentistry of USC

[12/5/2025]



DEAN'S MESSAGE

FROM THE DESK OF DEAN YANG CHAI

Dear Trojan Dental Community,

We recently reconvened the **Senior Associate Dean of Clinical Affairs Advisory Search Committee**, consisting of Committee Co-Chairs **Casey Chen** and **Mahvash Navazesh** and members **Yaara Berdan**, **Dan Cheock**, **George Cho**, **Lisa**

Popkoff, **Piedad Suarez Durall**, **Marlene Talley** and **Jill Yoshimi**, to tackle this

task. This committee will work alongside the executive search firm Isaacson, Miller to identify and recruit exceptional candidates to fill this incredibly important role. I would like to sincerely thank these faculty and staff members for taking the time out of their already-busy schedules for this endeavor. If any of our community members think you know someone who could be the perfect candidate, I encourage you to nominate them at, and/or direct them to the [job posting on the Isaacson, Miller website](#).

We also recently organized a new **Artificial Intelligence and Success in Dental Education, Patient Care and Research Task Force**. This group, co-chaired by **Ramon Enachescu** and **Parish Sedghizadeh** will play a crucial role in shaping our strategic directions and ensuring that we harness the power of artificial intelligence in ways that are innovative, responsible and aligned with our core academic mission. Their first charge is to examine opportunities for the integration of artificial intelligence and machine learning into the clinical, didactic and research areas of our educational program. I look forward to reporting more as the Task Force begins its work early next year. I would like to thank the members — **Michele Cesca, Sillas Duarte, John Hobbs, Dechen Lin, Richard Lin, Mariela Padilla, Cheryl Park** and **Jin-Ho Phark** as well as **Stephanie Jones**, providing administrative support — who have so graciously joined to further explore the way these tools may continue our efforts toward academic excellence.

We recently held Thanksgiving Potlucks at both CCMB as well as here at the Norris Dental Science Center. I would like to thank everyone who shared one of your Thanksgiving favorites with our community. It was so nice to be able to spend time with everyone outside our office/clinic environments to enjoy the fellowship offered by the Thanksgiving holiday. Thank you to the **Office of Human Resources** for their help in organizing the UPC event and **Kimi Nakaki, Thach-Vu Ho** and **Jian-Bao Xie** for their help with the CCMB event!

Finally, we recently finished our Good Neighbors Campaign fundraising drive for the year — though donations can still be made through December 31 [here](#). I would first like to thank **Kim Austin** and **Corey Berry** for spearheading our efforts this year, which included tabling events in the East Lobby and raffles. I would also like to thank

those who made a contribution — whether through a one-time donation or ongoing payroll deductions. This year has been a tough one, economically, for many, so the fact that we still showed up to offer financial assistance to vital community programs — including Ostrow's own **Neighborhood Mobile Dental Van Prevention Program** — is especially meaningful. If donating money wasn't in the question this year, but you'd still like to volunteer, you can [find opportunities here](#).

With that, I wish you a nice, relaxing weekend before we begin final exams next week. Students and residents, I wish you the best of luck on your finals!

Stay safe, and fight on!

Yang Chai, DDS, PhD

Dean

G. Donald and Marian James Montgomery Professor of Dentistry

University Professor of Dentistry, Stem Cell Biology and Regenerative Medicine, and Otolaryngology-Head & Neck Surgery



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