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Herman Ostrow School of Dentistry of USC



Dear Trojan Dental Family,

Season's Greetings!

The end of the year is upon us. As most of us eagerly look ahead toward the upcoming holidays — and the relaxation, joy and magic that often accompany them — I wanted to take a moment to reflect on the year and, even more importantly, to celebrate you all, the Trojan Dental Family, for all that we've managed to accomplish together.

I probably don't have to tell you all it's been a challenging year on so many fronts. From the national level (rising costs, worries about federal research funding and international student recruitment issues) to the local level (January's devastating Eaton and Pacific Palisades fires) down to the school level (the sacrifices we all had to make as part of USC's Financial Resilience plan), we've been under enormous pressure all year long.

Yet, you, our community members didn't freeze in the face of this stress and uncertainty. You all came together, united in spirit and action, to deal with each one of these challenges in creative, innovative and forward-thinking ways. Together, we have made important progress in advancing our education programs, providing outstanding care for our patients, conducting impactful research to improve oral and systemic health, expanding our community outreach program to provide care for those who need the most and enhancing our Trojan dental network of support. And, for that, I thank you from the bottom of my heart.

I can't tell you how proud I am to be a member of this community that, time and again, looks in the face of these unprecedented crises, rolls up their sleeves and gets to work, finding ways to continue our vital mission of educating tomorrow's oral healthcare workforce today.

But, of course, even during the toughest of moments this year, we've made time to laugh together, share personal challenges with each other and, I hope, made each other feel truly cared about here at Ostrow, because that's what Trojan Family Members do for each other.

We celebrated the accomplishments of the Class of 2025, the 40th anniversary of the Dr. Roseann Mulligan Special Patients Clinic and the 50th anniversary of the Friends of Dentistry, our premier philanthropic support group. We also celebrated the largest Research Day yet, a number of high-impact gifts from alumni and friends that will help us maintain our excellence and, of course, the excitement surrounding the installation of new leadership at USC — Interim President Beong-Soo Kim — as well as here at Ostrow when I was installed as Dean. I can't tell you how much it meant to me to see how many of you showed up for my official installation in October.

As I reflect on this year — and the many ways in which you all have made my days brighter — I just want to thank you for being such a dedicated, loyal and capable

family.

I wish you all the best as you wrap up your trimester and head home for the holidays. I look forward to seeing you all again in January 2026 as we begin the spring trimester and the march to Commencement for our Class of 2026.

Happy holidays, stay safe and always fight on!

Yang Chai, DDS, PhD

Dean

G. Donald and Marian James Montgomery Professor of Dentistry

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