

## Herman Ostrow School of Dentistry of **USC**

[2/27/2026]



# COMMUNITY MESSAGE

FROM THE DESK OF DEAN YANG CHAI

Dear Trojan Dental Family,

There are just two weeks left to share your perspective with **USC's AI Strategy Committee** about all things AI at USC. Before it provides its recommendations to the USC community (including the Board of Trustees), the committee is seeking to gather as many opinions as they can from various stakeholder groups (students, faculty and staff) using a quick online survey, which only took me a few minutes to

complete. Please help ensure Ostrow's voices are represented by [sharing your input here](#) by no later than Friday, March 13. It's important that the university hear our various points of view about this new technology, which will impact so many of our lives in one way or another.

Here at Ostrow, our own **AI Task Force** has begun its objectives in earnest, exploring ways in which we can implement AI to improve efficiency in such areas as patient care, research, teaching, operations and vendor engagement. Ostrow's AI Task Force is composed of **Michele Cesca, Sillas Duarte, Ramon Enachescu, John Hobbs, Dechen Lin, Richard Lin, Mariela Padilla, Cheryl Park, Jin-Ho Phark** and **Parish Sedghizadeh**. I'd like to thank all of them for their efforts in this essential step toward AI initiatives and implementation. We will share more information about both the University's and Ostrow's efforts as updates become available.

We recently received some exciting news from the American Student Dental Association. One of our own, **Hana Hekmat**, was selected to serve a national leadership position for 2026-2027. Chosen from a highly competitive field of extremely qualified national candidates, Hana will serve as a contributing editor for the editorial board. Alongside five other contributing editors and an editor-in-chief, Hana will help determine strategy, themes and content for ASDA's national publication, [Contour](#). We are so proud of Hana! Please join me in congratulating her for this national recognition.

We began our Strategic Initiatives validation sessions last week. If you have not yet signed up for one, please [register here](#) for an upcoming session. As a reminder, we are eager to hear from you as we formulate our plans for Ostrow moving forward. Additional validation session dates will be added, so if you do not see a date that works for you, make sure to check back regularly.

Finally, we recently began our onsite interviews for prospective Associate Dean of Clinical Affairs applicants. The interviews will occur over the next couple of weeks. I will share an update on this search very soon.

With that, I wish you a nice relaxing weekend!

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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