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## Herman Ostrow School of Dentistry of USC

[3/13/2026]



# COMMUNITY MESSAGE

FROM THE DESK OF DEAN YANG CHAI

Dear Trojan Dental Community,

The validation sessions that we have been holding regarding our new Strategic Initiatives have continued since my last update, with 60 individuals having joined so far. As a reminder, these are mostly Zoom-based meetings held by Ostrow's **Strategic Initiatives Task Force** that give our community members a chance to reflect on where we are going as an organization. Simultaneously, we are

developing key performance indicators to be able to properly gauge our success. To date, we have identified nearly 70 key performance indicators. These indicators will be distributed for additional input once this phase of the Strategic Initiatives review is complete. If you still want to join a validation session, there are more coming:

- Tuesday, March 24, 8 a.m.-9 a.m.
- Wednesday, March 25, 12 p.m.-1 p.m.
- Tuesday, March 31, 5-6 p.m.

If you would like to sign up for any of the upcoming sessions, [follow this link](#). Alternatively, we are offering community members a chance to weigh in with written responses. All you have to do is visit the School's Intranet and find the tab labeled "Strategic Plans." The more feedback we are able to gather, the more our Strategic Initiatives will reflect our communal vision for our school moving forward. Thanks again to those who have already shared their opinions, and a special thanks to **Mariela Padilla** for spearheading these efforts and to the Task Force (**Yaara Berdan, Mina Habibian, Jin-Ho Phark, Jian Xu and Jill Yoshimi**) for their efforts facilitating these discussions.

*(continued below)*





L-R: Elizabeth Brummel, Lesly Joy, Hana Hekmat, Arman Zograbyan and Gabriel Bryant

## GIVE KIDS A SMILE DAY 2026

We recently partnered with the Los Angeles Dental Society (LADS) to celebrate Give Kids A Smile Day, a national awareness day underscoring the importance of pediatric oral healthcare. As part of the festivities, we traveled to Para Los Niños Elementary School, where we distributed 300 oral healthcare kits and provided instruction on how to maintain excellent oral health. Under faculty supervision provided by **Elizabeth Brummel** and **Maya Fulcher**, Ostrow students **Gabriel Bryant**, **Hana Hekmat** and **Arman Zograbyan** — along with pre-dental student **Lesly Joy** — provided the instruction, spreading the good word about the importance of oral healthcare to our youngest patients. Thank you, LADS and Para El Niño Elementary School, for your help with this successful event. And, fight on to all who pitched in to make sure these kids know the importance of caring for their smiles.

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*(continued from above)*

And, finally, we received some exciting news from the American Dental Educational Association (ADEA) regarding the appointment of **Corey Berry** to the ADEA

Associated American Dental Schools Application Service (AADSAS) Advisory Group. Appointed by the ADEA Board of Directors, this group is responsible for reviewing, maintaining and improving the centralized dental school application

reviewing, maintaining and improving the centralized dental school application service that all dental school applicants use to apply to their dream schools. We're incredibly proud of Corey for this appointment, which not only gives Ostrow a voice in the national admissions process but also provides us even more expertise to facilitate the matriculation of excellent learners to our educational programs. Corey's term, beginning March 2026, will end in three years. Way to go, Corey!

With that, I wish you a nice relaxing weekend!

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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