

## Keck School town hall meeting focuses on School's future

By Katie Neith

In a town hall meeting on April 8, Dean Carmen A. Puliafito presented three major themes for the future of the Keck School—integration, recruitment and incentives—to a standing-room-only crowd.

Assembled in the Aresty Conference Center, members of the Keck School gathered to hear Dean Puliafito outline his plans for the School and take questions from the audience. The meeting was the first in what the dean plans as a series of periodic meetings to inform faculty and staff of important Keck School updates.

Puliafito kicked off the meeting by recognizing that the Keck School faces many challenges. However, he was quick to point out that the School also holds “unprecedented opportunities” for improvement, which includes building an academic medical center by creating an “enterprise-wide view” integrating hospital, clinical and research endeavors.

“I want the Keck School to lead the Los Angeles community in a new era of healthcare services,” said Puliafito.

The dean said that by spending smart, making shrewd investments and building a strong management team, the School will be able to rebuild clinical



Keck School Dean Carmen A. Puliafito answers questions from the audience at the April 8 town hall meeting.

On the clinical side, departments will be rewarded for productivity, which will be significantly boosted by recruitment and physician practice integration. Puliafito said over 80 clinicians and clinician-scientists will be recruited over the next five years, both to fill high-level department head positions and to increase clinical services at a junior faculty or fellowship level.

Puliafito stressed that recruitment is a very high priority for the School and for the USC/Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center. He also pointed out that he aims to recruit more women, African Americans and Latinos to the faculty of Keck in an effort to better reflect the community

the School serves.

The dean also outlined goals of improvement for medical students, which included keeping tuition down and increasing financial aid, building a temporary gym, reconfiguring student health services and reviewing third- and fourth-year curricula.

In addition, Puliafito said he wants to promote scholarly activity by every medical student and will be awarding five research grants to students taking a year off to perform research.

cal programs, recruit a new generation of clinical and research leaders, and develop robust business, information technology and medical finance systems to improve integration across campus.

He pointed out that he has begun to build an effective and creative management team with the hiring of a Chief Operations Officer and a Senior Associate Dean for Research Advancement. In addition, Puliafito plans to hire a Dean for Government Relations to foster the relationship with

Los Angeles County, a Chief Human Resources Officer and a Chief Information Officer to build a better information technology infrastructure.

Together, the management team will work to build first-class business systems and develop incentives to increase research and clinical productivity.

“A big goal over the next five to 10 years is to significantly grow the School’s NIH portfolio,” said Puliafito. “Every department will have incentives to increase their research grants.”

## ADA's Accreditation Committee wraps up visit to USC School of Dentistry

By David Peregrino

The USC School of Dentistry took the next step in the accreditation process when it welcomed the American Dental Association's Committee on Dental Accreditation review team April 8-10.

During the site visit, the team interviewed administrators, faculty, staff and students, and verified information in the school's 2008 Predoctoral and Specialty Programs Self-Study reports.

Mahvash Navazesh, associate dean for Academic Affairs and Student Life, said the site visit was an opportunity for students, staff and faculty to show the visitors the excellent work being done at the school.

“It was our opportunity to make a lasting impression and highlight the true spirit of the Trojan Family,” said

Navazesh, professor and chair of the Division of Diagnostic Sciences.

The April site visit was part of the accreditation process for a majority of the school's academic programs.

A site visit for the endodontic and oral surgery programs will come at a later date.

The self-study report, which involved input from students, faculty and staff, is a key part of the accreditation process, because it identifies the school's strengths and weaknesses and lays out a plan for improvement. Navazesh expressed appreciation for school-wide help and cooperation in the review.

Navazesh said the self-study, which took about two years to complete, identified many strengths including a consistently strong pool of applicants,

outstanding faculty, and excellent academic performance by students. The self-study also noted strengths in faculty and student research and quality of care for patients.

The self-study identified several opportunities for improvements. The school assigned a high or medium priority level to each area that needs improvement and created short and long-term plans to address them.

High priority goals are to:

- Boost on-time graduation rates
  - Create benchmarks to measure learning outcomes
  - Add computers, networks and other information technology resources
  - Increase office, teaching and research space on the dental campus
- Medium priority goals are to:
- Improve quality assurance

- Improve public relations and internal communications programs
- Increase the number of clinical education venues
- Improve students' understanding of the trimester grading process
- Improve management of the Problem-Based Learning curriculum
- Increase recruitment and development of young faculty
- Increase efforts to reduce class sizes
- Establish a contingency fund.

Copies of the report are available for review in the Wilson Dental Library, which is located on the lower level of the Norris Dental Science Center.

“The self-study process gave us the opportunity to evaluate where we were in the past, where we are today and where we want to be in the future,” said Navazesh.