

## New Campus With a New Focus

To accommodate a rapidly growing student population, officials at one of the leading graduate schools of acupuncture and Chinese medicine opened the doors of a larger state-of-the-art campus this month.

The Academy of Oriental Medicine at Austin (AOMA) is now operating at its new 20,000-square-foot campus located in the southern part of the city. The school has also adopted a new descriptor: AOMA Graduate School of Integrative Medicine along with a new brand and logo.

The school's makeover was the result of school officials planning ahead for a projected growth in size in the next five years. Since it opened its doors in 1993, the school has seen an increase in both students and faculty from around the world, school officials said.

The previous space for the campus was 17,500-square-foot accommodating 213 students. Officials said the new facility, with an additional 5,000 feet of future development space, would be able to accommodate up to 400 students.

Some of the new additional upgrades to the new campus include: five smart media classrooms, a student intern clinic, a mind/body center, faculty and administrative offices, an expanded library, student and faculty gathering spaces, group study areas, an herbal medicine center and a bookstore/retail space.



Rendering of new 20,000-square-foot Austin campus to accommodate 400 students.

Students who had input on the redesign of the new campus are pleased.

"The new campus has a more cohesive feel. We will have a larger library, improved technology, more space for clinical practice, and better places to gather and to study," said AOMA student Cynthia Clark.

AOMA will continue to offer acupuncture students a master's degree program in acupuncture and Oriental medicine.

Campus president William Morris noted that in conjunction with its expansion, AOMA's faculty would also be undertaking a comprehensive review of the curriculum to ensure the most efficient delivery of courses to control tuition costs.

Morris said he is not surprised at the growth of the school in the last few years because it mirrors the growth of both acupuncture and Chinese medicine professions nationwide.



AOMA is one of the few programs in the nation that includes traditional Asian mindbody practices such as *tai chi* and *qi gong* as an integral part of the curriculum.

"Acupuncture and Chinese medicine are increasingly recognized as important components in American healthcare," Morris said. "With our new campus designed to provide excellence in teaching, learning, and student life and support, AOMA is positioned for national leadership. As the use of acupuncture grows, career opportunities in the field have increased, including within existing practices such as chiropractic and Western medical offices."

The National Health Interview Survey (NHIS) statistics on acupuncture use in the United States show that the number of visits rose from 27.2 to 79.2 per 1,000 adults between 1997 and 2007, and that there is still room to improve access to Chinese medicine in America.

In addition, approximately 3.1 million adults in the United States used acupuncture within the year prior to 2007, a 47 percent increase from the 2002 NHIS estimate. The increases are related to

growing evidence for acupuncture in the treatment of medical ailments including chemotherapy-induced nausea, chronic back pain, hypertension and allergic rhinitis.

Acupuncture has also been identified by Bureau of Labor Statistics as an occupation with a "bright outlook," and defined as one of the occupations that are expected to grow rapidly in the next several years. It will also have a large number of job openings, or are new and emerging occupations. The Bureau's statistics include the following:

- Median wages (2009)  
\$31.36 hourly, \$65,220 annual
- Employment (2008)  
49,000 employees
- Projected growth (2008-2018)  
Average (7% to 13%)
- Projected job openings (2008-2018)  
15,300

<http://online.onetcenter.org/help/bright/29-1199.01>

AOMA Officials said they hope the new campus will continue to meet the demands of the growing profession by preparing its students for the demands of the real workforce before they graduate.

The focus will continue to be upon graduate success through a series of courses on practice management that provides critical information and skills required to successfully establish and manage an integrative medicine practice. Community experts will contribute their expertise in marketing, tax planning, billing and insurance, and medical professionals with experience in a variety of clinical settings.

"Students take away very practical skills from the series, including how to select a practice location based on demographic research and licensure scope of practice; how to develop a business plan including capital and operating expense budgets; how to conduct marketing and strategic analysis; and how to create marketing tools including websites, presentation materials, and a curriculum vitae," said Morris.

The college is the first stand-alone, single-degree granting school of acupuncture and Chinese medicine in the nation to be regionally accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) in December 2009.

For more information about AOMA, go to [www.aoma.edu](http://www.aoma.edu). The new campus is located at 4701 West Gate Blvd. in Austin, Texas.

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