

## New AAAOM President Attempting to Rebuild

*DON LEE AIMING TO MEND FENCES, SALVAGE ASSOCIATION'S IMAGE*

Editorial Staff

Following months of turmoil, the AAAOM is attempting to re-engage with various leaders in the TCM community and introducing new board members along with a new leader - Woodland Hills, Calif. acupuncturist and educator Don Lee, L.Ac.

Lee came on board with the embattled organization in March and reached out to *Acupuncture Today* to answer numerous questions regarding leadership, poor finances and the future of the organization.

"I am coming in with a clean slate," Lee told AT in a 45-minute long videotaped interview. "I ask that people be patient, change does not happen overnight."

On April 29, Lee sat down with AT for the taped interview to shed light on the continuing discontent with leaders of the AAAOM, and to discuss the recent ultimatum given by the Council of State Associations (CSA) (the AAAOM was threatened with being replaced as the primary representative of the AOM profession by the CSA).

In the exclusive interview now posted online at <http://www.acupuncturetoday.com/lee>, Lee acknowledged change is needed to salvage the AAAOM, which now is known best for its history of dysfunction and lack of leadership most notably by its recent past president Michael Jabbour, who remains on the board as immediate past president.

In the midst of the CSA uproar, before handing over his title, Jabbour appointed four new members to the AAAOM board. He added Donnell Borash, LAc, Dr. Carlos Chapa, DOM, Lac, PhD and Dominic Sembello, Lac, Dipl. Ac, and Lee. Three of these are reportedly current members of the National Guild of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine.

Lee noted in his interview there is no plans to merge the association with the Guild and called the recent appointees affiliation pure "coincidence."

As of April 29, former student organization president and acting president Joshua Saul had ensured the board he would be stepping down to spend more time on his practice, leaving the organization for good, according to Lee. However, Saul was still noted on the AAAOM website as of early May as the student organization president.

At this time, Lee said he is working with the new board to come up with new ideas to boost membership, add new benefits that would lure in members and brainstorm ideas on how to patch up relationships with the CSA and numerous individual state associations.

"I am very confident we will regain support," Lee said. "I want to focus more on the educational and occupational aspects of the organization."

The interview also features highlights on more controversial topics including Lee's stance on whether he would be open to asking Michael Jabbour to completely resign from the board and what his plans are for the association's quarterly journal, *The American Acupuncturist* (both associate editor Lynn Eder and editor-in-chief Jennifer Stone resigned).

Lee noted that Jabbour's role will continue to "diminish" as time goes on. Lee also discusses his biggest challenges as he attempts to reinvent the AAAOM's battered image.

To view the full interview, go to [www.acupuncturetoday.com/lee](http://www.acupuncturetoday.com/lee).

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## WHO IS RUNNING AAAOM NOW?

These are the key directors involved in building up the AAAOM, according to the association's website.



Don Lee, LAc, DNBAO, AOS, CSCS  
*President*

Don Lee is an orthopedic acupuncturist who has extensive training and expertise in the evaluation, diagnosis and treatment of musculoskeletal disorders. His general practice in Woodland Hills, Calif. integrates acupuncture and Traditional Chinese Medicine with Western physical medicine

and mind-body therapies, with an emphasis on pain management, nutrition, breathwork, and exercise. A diplomate of the National Board of Acupuncture Orthopedics, he also is board certified as a Certified Strength and Conditioning Specialist (CSCS) by the National Strength and Conditioning Association and, in 2008, he founded the Academy of Orthopedic Acupuncture. Among his professional activities, Don has served on the boards of both Yo San University and Emperor's College of Traditional Oriental Medicine in Santa Monica, as well as the governing bodies of the National Board of Acupuncture Orthopedics and the California State Oriental Medical Association. As an educator, Don teaches graduate- and doctoral-level courses in orthopedics, electro-acupuncture, integrative therapies and composite diagnosis. Don maintains office practices in Santa Monica and Woodland Hills.



Dominic Sembello, LAc, Dipl Ac  
*Interim Vice President*

Dominic Sembello is Nationally Board Certified in acupuncture and has been in private practice since 2001. After graduating from West Chester University of Pennsylvania with a Bachelors Degree in Sports Medicine in 1997, he graduated from the Pacific College of Oriental Medicine

(PCOM) in San Diego, California in 2001. He is currently licensed to practice in Pennsylvania and New Jersey. Dominic specializes in the treatment of peripheral neuropathy, fibromyalgia, neurological pain, auto-immune and connective tissue disorders. Dominic is also part of the charter members of the New Jersey Police Surgeons and serves as a Deputy Police Surgeon.



Jane Yu, LAc

## *Secretary*

Jane Yu received a Master's of Oriental Medicine from the AOMA Graduate School of Integrative Medicine in Austin, Texas. In 2007. While in school, she was an active leader in the AOMA Student Association and it was through this service that AOMA sent her to the 2008 AAAOM Membership Conference in Chicago to represent its students on the national level. Realizing that individual practitioners needed to join together to grow the profession, Jane started participating in the AAAOM Student Organization. She served as secretary of the AAAOM Student Organization in 2010 and as its president in 2011.



Carlos Chapa, LAc, DiplOM, PhD  
*Treasurer*

Carlos Chapa is a US Navy Veteran. He worked as a Nurse Assistant in various Emergency Rooms and volunteered as a Paramedic for over 7 years. Carlos graduated from Dongguk University in 2006 and was part of the first student group that was chosen to go to S. Korea to complete an



externship at several Korean Hospitals. Since then, Carlos has completed several externships in South Korea and China. He received his PhD in 2012 and continues to travel from Dallas to NYC and LA for advanced training.



Michael Jabbour, CSP, MS, LAc  
*President Emeritus*

Michael Jabbour earned his master's degree in acupuncture and Oriental medicine from the Touro College Graduate Program in Oriental Medicine and has been involved with AAAOM for years in many different capacities.

JUNE 2014