



BREAKING NEWS

OCOM Closing, Offers Teach-Out Options

NUHM, FIVE BRANCHES STEP UP TO HELP STUDENTS

Editorial Staff | DIGITAL EXCLUSIVE

The Oregon College of Oriental Medicine (OCOM) has announced it is closing after 41 years. The Portland-based institution cites “financial challenges created by three main drivers: the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, major shifts in higher education, and contraction in Chinese medicine education” as reasons underlying the decision to close its doors. OCOM boasts more than 1,500 alumni who practice in all 50 U.S. states.

Pending accreditor approval, OCOM will cease offering classes after September (fourth-year OCOM students graduate Aug. 26), and all current / incoming OCOM students have the option of continuing their education at the National University of Natural Medicine (NUHM) or Five Branches University, or transferring to another school altogether.

OCOM is taking care of its students, both current and incoming. Trustees voted to enter into an agreement whereby nearby NUHM will ensure that all current OCOM students can matriculate: third-year students for their final year of classes, first-and second-year students the option of a comprehensive credit transfer; and incoming OCOM students automatically. NUHM, the oldest accredited naturopathic medical school in North America, also offers a Chinese medicine and acupuncture program, as well as graduate programs in nutrition, integrative medicine research, and integrative health sciences.

Trustees also voted to enter into an agreement with San Francisco Bay Area-based Five Branches to accept OCOM’s DAOM students into the Five Branches doctor of acupuncture and herbal medicine program.

“As we mourn the tremendous loss of OCOM’s closure to our profession, I stand with unwavering commitment to welcoming their students and faculty and pledging to do everything in my power to sustain their mission and legacy,” said NUNM President and CEO Melanie Henriksen, ND, CNM, in a joint press release announcing the closure. “Continuing OCOM’s tradition of excellence is the right thing to do for the profession of acupuncture and Chinese medicine. We will open our doors

not only to OCOM students, but to the college's faculty, staff, and patient community."

In the same release, Five Branches President and CEO Ron Zaidman, MACHM, MBA, said: "We are thrilled to support OCOM students and ease their transition to our program and our Five Branches community. All our schools share in the rich, healing tradition of Chinese medicine and understand its role as a powerful force in healthcare."

Editor's Note: Readers of our June issue (online, but not yet available in print) will recall that another school, AOMA, closed its doors in April. [Click here](#) for complete details.