



GENERAL ACUPUNCTURE

## Merger Creates New Model of Care

Two San Francisco powerhouses of holistic healing, the American College of Traditional Chinese Medicine (ACTCM) and California Institute of Integral Studies (CIIS), are merging. Together they are building a visionary approach to applied integral health. So much so, that Mayor Ed Lee proclaimed the official union on July 1, "Mind, Body, Spirit Day" to mark the historic collaboration between Chinese medicine and mental health.

The two institutions have already been test-driving new clinical models of integrative care. In April, building on a former pilot project, ACTCM and CIIS began offering auricular acupuncture services at the Center for Somatic Psychotherapy in downtown San Francisco. Clinic Director at the Center for Somatic Psychotherapy Stuart Gold sees, going forward, a "deepening of interdisciplinary collaboration, exploring the tools, methods and relationships between mental health counseling and Chinese medical approaches."

The collaboration employs psycho-education and experiential exercises, alongside acupuncture and Chinese medicine. Trainees and interns facilitate peer-supported explorations that include body-sensing awareness, grounding and centering exercises, and methods for identifying and transforming negative beliefs.

### Mind, Body, Spirit Focus

"CIIS has a strong focus on mind and spirit, and ACTCM has a strong focus on treating the body," says Steve Given, ACTCM Director of Clinical Education and Academic Assessment. "This holistic approach is one of many that unites the philosophies behind the work of ACTCM and CIIS students and faculty. It's one that will be at the forefront of the clinical and academic collaboration between the two institutions," he said. For both institutions, the merger presents myriad possibilities - opportunities in research, coursework and the intersections of their disciplines, said Bingzeng Zou, ACTCM Academic Dean.

The merger establishes the Doctor of Acupuncture and Chinese Medicine (DACM), the first professional doctorate in the field that is both nationally (ACAOM) and regionally (WASC) approved. In September, ACTCM at CIIS will welcome the first class of DACM students. According to Carla Wilson, ACTCM Director of the DAOM Program and Research, "Students at both schools will also benefit from exposure to a wider body of research and to a greater audience for publishing their work."

A key benefit for DAOM students is the Human Research Review Committee, which functions as an institutional review board that approves research with human subjects and supports publishing in peer-reviewed journals. For students undertaking their Capstone projects in the DAOM program, the merger presents new opportunities to explore transdisciplinary relationships among the 22 departments and three schools at CIIS. ACTCM at CIIS is the fourth school of the institution, complementing the schools of Consciousness and Transformation, Professional Psychology and Health,

and Undergraduate Studies. The joining of forces means that students now make up and have access to an expansive and diverse community of academics, healers, and clinicians in the San Francisco Bay Area who are engaged in social change.

### Global Partnerships

Though most mergers are born of necessity, this one was guided more by prescience and imagination. "CIIS and ACTCM made this decision because we recognized that together we are stronger," said CIIS President Joseph L. Subbiondo. "Both ACTCM and CIIS have diligently built our reputations as visionary leaders in our fields," said ACTCM President Lixin Huang. "And we will continue to be at the vanguard of integrating Eastern and Western health perspectives and practices."

Indeed, for Huang, the merger represents a new way of approaching acupuncture education, not only for students, but also for health practitioners and the San Francisco Bay Area communities ACTCM and CIIS serve. Huang and Subbiondo are actively building new relationships across the Pacific. Over the last few weeks, they have established new partnerships in counseling psychology and Chinese medicine with numerous universities and organizations in Shanghai, Beijing, Hangzhou and Zhengzhou. "It's an incredibly auspicious time," said Huang.

For additional information on the new DACM, visit [www.actcm.edu](http://www.actcm.edu).

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