25 Years
Transforming Lives and Communities

AOMA
ANNUAL REPORT
2018

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF INTEGRATIVE MEDICINE
2018 marked 25 years AOMA has been fulfilling its mission of transforming lives and communities. During the last 25 years AOMA has become a respected school of Integrative Medicine. It is also one of the most respected providers of acupuncture and Traditional Chinese Medicine in Austin. In 2018 we served over 235 students and over 18,000 patients in our Clinics. The strength of the AOMA experience for students and patients comes from our dedicated Board of Governors, our gifted and dedicated operations and academic team, our outstanding faculty, and the amazing individuals who are our students.

A milestone like 25 years encourages us to not only reflect on our past achievements but also to cultivate the vision for the future of AOMA.

Here are highlights of achievements from the past 25 years:

- Expanded to two campuses to better serve both students and patients
- Gained Regional Accreditation, the first stand-alone Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) school to do so, and first in the Southern Region
- Provided Study trips to China to give students an even richer opportunity for learning
- Collaborated work with organizations like Ascension Seton, People’s Community Clinic, Veterans Administration, Austin Recovery Center, to name a few
- Responded with emergency support to several natural disasters in Central Texas
- Grew through academic advancement with two doctoral degrees in addition to the original master’s
- Provided clinical continuing education with countless offerings including the Southwest Symposiums
- Grew the number and strength of the outstanding AOMA faculty
- Made many medical contributions through the research of students and faculty
- Provided community service at a variety of outreach events such as the Kerrville Folk Festival (Cureville)
- Received many awards and special designations such as “Best Schools” and “Military Friendly”
- Transformed more than half a million lives (patients, staff, and students)

Highlights of what we achieved and experienced in 2018:

- Celebrated the 25-year milestone at our 2018 SW Symposium, which was held on the AOMA main campus in South Austin—The Gala event brought in the school’s founder, Stuart Watts and all past presidents of the Institution
- Strengthened or developed partnerships for collaboration on the creation of integrative care models, for research, and to increase AOMA’s financial stability. In 2018 these collaborative partner organizations included but were not limited to: Dell Medical School, Concordia University, The University of Texas at Austin, Baylor Scott & White, Texas Neuro Rehab, Yoga-Yoga, Veterans Administration
Many of our students enjoyed a meaningful and rich experience in Chengdu, China—Two students even experienced a surprise graduation ceremony when the trip conflicted with our 2018 commencement.

We began exploration for a new location for our North Clinic.

We celebrated Chinese New Year with a grand event that included students, staff, family and community friends.

We selected an EMR (Electronic Medical Record) vendor to implement in 2019.

AOMA was invited to present, offer acupuncture demonstrations, and provide education about TCM at the 2018 Healthier Texas Summit.

Our own Dr. John Finnell was awarded an NIH grant for Pain Research in collaboration with the University of Texas at San Antonio.

We said farewell to our beloved Dr. Betty Edmond as President of AOMA but welcomed her back to AOMA’s Governing Board and as President Emeritus.

What do we want to achieve in 2019 and beyond:

- An affiliation with a Not-For-Profit that makes sense for AOMA
- The continued cultivation of a strong culture of excellence in operations, patient care, academics, and research
- Strong achievement of our 5-year strategic goals
- Strong achievement of operational growth and sustainability goals for AOMA
- Solid institutional effectiveness

Continued successful accreditation
- A best-in-class working, teaching, and patient care environment

Over our 25-year history, we have enthusiastically witnessed the growing understanding of the value of acupuncture and TCM in an integrative approach to providing more effective patient care. There is no question acupuncture will play a significant role in the Opioid Crisis, and the VA has embraced it fully. The 2019 January edition of National Geographic was devoted to integrative medicine. The cover statement, “The future of medicine — how new technologies and ancient remedies are transforming health care,” was telling. Acupuncture was spotlighted in the edition. Clearly acupuncture and other integrative therapies and treatments are being embraced nationally. As in 2018, AOMA will continue to be a leader in 2019 by creating strong partnerships to develop integrative care models. An exciting time for TCM and for our School.

“Each tiny effort builds on the next, so that brick by brick, magnificent things can be created”

—Robin Sharma

MARY FARIA, PHD, FACHE
CEO & ACTING PRESIDENT
AOMA GRADUATE SCHOOL OF INTEGRATIVE MEDICINE
“Life is a journey, not a destination” is a quote often attributed to Ralph Waldo Emerson. We may never know definitively the source but it is a quote I have thought about as my own life’s journey has progressed. We have many other metaphors for life as journey including: “I took a wrong turn;” “she has a rough road ahead;” “they have come a long way.” I have reflected on the idea that a destination is temporary while the journey takes a lifetime.

It has been easy to see my life as a journey. I was raised in an Army family; we lived in two countries and five states; we often traveled to Texas and Colorado to visit family and friends. Part of my professional life has been spent overseas working for the Department of Defense school system while living in Turkey, Japan and the Netherlands. During this time, my experiences ranged from teaching for the University of Maryland to teaching grades 1, 2 and 3 in the same classroom. I was fortunate to have traveled to many other countries during these years—school vacation times are great for traveling. I even met President Jimmy Carter while visiting Tibet in 1987. I have been involved in academics for over 30 years as a teacher, a coach and a librarian, many of those years spent in Austin. I received a B.S. in Education from South West Texas State in 1976 and a Master of Library and Information Science from the University of Texas in 1996. I also had my own art and antiques business for several years. At one time or another all of these situations seemed to be a final destination but the journey has continued.

One of my journeys has been to AOMA. I discovered the opportunity from Jimmie Coombs who was part of AOMA leadership at the time and while it is sometimes “not what you know but who you know,” it has been my own steps and stumbles along the road that have kept me here—along with much support from Lesley Hamilton. A new road was revealed, I found new maps and pathways to travel between students and faculty, from learners to resources. Learning about and utilizing acupuncture and Chinese medicine has been a transformational experience for me—both professionally and personally. We librarians look for longevity; it takes time, an open mind, a discerning eye and the awareness and support of administration to develop and maintain a collection. I consider it a blessing to have been here more than 15 years!

An American poet, Nancy Willard, once wrote “I haven’t a clue how my story will end but that’s alright. When you set out on a journey and night covers the road, that’s when you discover stars.”
**Academic Programs Update**

**MAcOM AND DAcOM PROFESSIONAL DEGREES**

The master of acupuncture and Oriental medicine (MAcOM) continues to be the first professional degree that leads to licensure in Texas and all other states with a practice act. When AOMA began in 1993, it was the first degree offered. In 2018, 43 students graduated from the MAcOM, with a total of 752 master’s graduates since the first alumni class of 1996.

In 2016, AOMA launched the professional doctor of acupuncture and Oriental medicine (DAcOM) program. This new program, that includes all of the master’s first professional competencies and additional doctoral level work, is the newest in the profession – with its competencies first published by ACAOM in 2013. In 2018, 32 new students started their masters studies at AOMA, several of whom declared their desire to do the master-to-professional-doctorate degree (MAcOM-DAcOM). By declaring ab initio, they will be able to overlap master’s and doctoral studies in the last one or two terms of the master’s portion. It is anticipated that in the next several years, states will begin adopting this doctorate as the requirement for licensure.

When the DAcOM was introduced at AOMA it also included a bridge track for those already graduated from a master’s program. This is now defined by the Accreditation Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (ACAOM) as a completion track. The bridge track is the doctoral portion that contains the competencies and requirements which elevates the MAcOM to the DAcOM. Eleven students graduated from the DAcOM Bridge Track in 2018.

**MAcOM-DAcOM CLINICAL OPPORTUNITIES**

Over the years, AOMA has provided a variety of clinical opportunities at its own clinics as well as those within the community. In 2018, these included several different populations such as underserved patients at St. David’s People’s Community Clinic, Seton’s McCarthy Community Clinic, and the Kerrville Folk Festival, as well as patients dealing with addictions and recovery at Austin Recovery’s clinic at the Hicks Family Ranch in Buda, and veterans with acute and chronic pain at the Veterans Health Administration Austin Outpatient Clinic which is part of the Central Texas Veterans Health Care System (CTVHCS). These external clinical experiences also provide students the opportunity for interprofessional interactions and collaborations.

**DAOM POST-GRADUATE CLINICAL SPECIALTY DOCTORAL DEGREE**

AOMA’s vision of Chinese medical scholarship includes developing advanced clinical specialists, integrative team practitioners, educators, researchers, and leaders. The clinical specialty post-graduate doctorate (DAOM) program at AOMA provides masters graduates an opportunity for continued study and career development.
DAOM ACCREDITATION

AOMA compiled and submitted the DAOM Self-Study report in September 2018 to ACAOM. The Self-Study process was conducted between 2016-2018 and is required as part of the process of reaffirmation of ACAOM’s programmatic pre-accreditation (Candidacy) for the DAOM and is the next step towards full accreditation of the DAOM program. A site visit is planned for late May 2019.

FACULTY ACHIEVEMENT

On June 21st, Dr. John S. Finnell was awarded an Administrative Supplement grant to the Functional Orthopedic Rehab Treatment-Amended (FORT-A) Study, under the mentorship of Donald McGeary, PhD, and Carlos Jaramillo, MD, PhD, of the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio and the South Texas Veterans Health Administration, respectively. The purpose of the administrative supplement grant is to provide research mentorship and training of Dr. Finnell in the assessment and non-pharmacologic management of polymorbid pain conditions within VA populations. The FORT-A parent grant (R01AT008422) is funded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health (NCCIH). Then, on October 26th, Dr. Finnell was offered a position as the Program Director for the Whole Health Initiative at the South Texas Veteran Health Care System. The South Texas VA is one of 18 flagship sites offering the Whole Health Program: https://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=4059

As a result of Dr. Finnell’s achievements, in fall of 2018, he stepped down as director of the DAOM program. In early 2019, Dr. Robyn Sodders joined AOMA as the director of doctoral programs. She brings her experience in this medicine and in higher education administration to support AOMA’s culture of continuous improvement of programs and processes.

FACULTY ACTIVITIES

DAOM faculty continued to be active in the presentation and publication of their research and scholarly work.

The following research projects were reviewed and approved, or in review, by the scientific review committee and institutional review board:

The following research manuscripts are in process:


**Presentations:**


**Publications:**


**STUDENT RESEARCH**

The fourth DAOM cohort gave their final research presentations in May and continue to work on them towards completion. Student research projects include clinical trials, qualitative studies, as well as educational, ethnographic and historical research. 2018 completed projects include:

- Michelle Bienz (2013 cohort) – “Cross-Sectional Study of Behaviors During a Cold and Influenza Season at an Acupuncture School”

- James Phillips (2013 cohort) – “Signaling Systems - The Organization of Form and Spirit”

- Patricia Lew (2014 cohort) – “NAET Treatment of Autism”


AOMA’s Five-Year Strategic Plan Accomplishments

2018 was a year of significant accomplishments towards AOMA’s Governing Board’s 2016-2020 Strategic Plan. Highlights included:

1. **AOMA remains committed to its community and will grow in a way that improves student achievement, alumni success, staff satisfaction, faculty retention and development, and patient outcomes.**
   - Continued development of Student Services with a new Student Services Coordinator, Dr. Diane Stanley. Building on the strong foundation developed by her predecessor, Julia Aziz, many new initiatives were put in place to support student needs including collaborative opportunities with AOMA Student Association (ASA) for wellness and well-being like a Harvest Festival and SHEN week (focus on sleep, hydration, exercise and nutrition).
   - The addition of Brian Becker as our Admissions Director brought 15 years of strong admissions experience to AOMA. Some solid Admissions management controls and monitoring processes have been put in place. There was also a continued strong focus on national and international recruitment in 2018.
   - A plan was developed to officially reinstate and strengthen of the role of the Professional Clinic Medical Director to allow for a solid focus on clinical excellence and better support for our clinical faculty to ensure the best patient/clinical outcomes. Job description was developed, and the official role will be announced in first quarter of 2019.
   - A Wellness Committee was created to develop initiatives aimed at supporting the health and well being of staff, faculty and students.
   - An electronic medical record (EMR) vendor was selected and will be implemented in 2019. This will be an important advancement to support both providers and patients.

2. **AOMA will develop a research infrastructure that is capable of performing research studies.**
   - Most significant achievement was the research award granted to Dr. John Finnell for a Pain Management study he began in collaboration with The University of Texas at San Antonio.
   - DAOM students successfully achieved completion of doctoral projects and publications
   - Continued pursuit of external partnerships to enhance research capabilities and growth especially with Dell Medical School, Texas Neuro Rehabilitation, Concordia University, Veterans Administration, and St. Augustine’s University.

3. **AOMA will be strategic and inclusive in its facilities and space planning while utilizing appropriate technological innovations.**
   - Work began in 2018 to explore a new location for our North Clinic that will allow more effective delivery of clinical teaching and patient care.
   - The 2018 decision for implementation of an EMR, tied to this goal and goal #1, will be an important technological advancement for AOMA.
   - Plans were begun for the needed refurbishment of our Administrative Building C. The plan is to complete work in 2019.

4. **AOMA will increase the number and quality of its educational programs.**
   - 2018 launched the offering of doctoral programs (DAOM and DAcOM) in Winter and Summer terms.
   - Search began for a new Director of Doctoral Programs for AOMA with anticipated hiring in January of 2019.
   - 2018 China Study trip allowed an enriched learning opportunity for our students

5. **AOMA will seek community and national partnerships that provide increased opportunities for students, alumni and faculty.**
   - This goal is tied to goal #2 in which AOMA continues its exploration of opportunities for collaborative partnerships in research with those organizations aforementioned and others like Baylor, Scott & White and the Chinese Cultural Association of Austin.
   - Participated in the 2018 Healthier Texas Summit which further increased the community’s awareness of AOMA’s presence and offerings available to transform the health of Texans. It also provided networking with groups like the Texas Nurse Practitioners Association and the University of Texas at Austin School of Pharmacy, and others, for speaking and partnership opportunities.

The Board of Governors is deeply appreciative of the committed leadership, faculty, staff, and students who have teamed together to create another successful year at AOMA.
2018 was an exciting year for Student Services. Julia Aziz moved on to pursue private practice and teaching, and while she is sorely missed, we love still having her as a member of our faculty. Julia passed the reins to AOMA Alumni, Dr. Diane Stanley. She holds a Bachelors from the University of Texas, her Master’s from AOMA, and just recently completed the Honors Collaborative Professional Doctorate (DAcOM) looking at research methodology in herbal medicine. She comes from years of community service and leadership, serving in AmeriCorps, supporting Cancer research, and other parents like herself of children who are stroke survivors.

Since taking the helm, she’s continued the Acutools Series, providing free educational and development opportunities to students and alumni, including free lectures, the first AOMA Authors Panel, and the first AOMA Career Fair. She’s also taken on the role of Institutional Effectiveness and teaches Evidence Based Medicine. Utilizing her research background and training in sustainability, she’s been improving processes and researching the needs of the student body. The result was the designing of a brand-new website devoted exclusively to students and alumni, serving as AOMA’s first electronic student union. This exciting new student hub will be rolled out in April 2019.

On the horizon is the biennial China Study Tour in 2020, which we are so excited to announce will be led by Dr. Qianzhi Wu. The trip in 2018 was a phenomenal experience for our students, and we can’t wait for the next!

*So many exciting opportunities and adventures on the horizon!*
NELSON SONG LUO, PHD, MD (CHINA), LAc

Nelson Song Luo, PhD, MD (China), LAc is a neurologist with a focus on the treatment of stroke and other chronic degenerative disorders. He was recognized by China as “Excellent Doctor,” an honor bestowed on only 10 of the 2,000 doctors in Provincial People’s Hospital in Chengdu, China. His international teaching circuit includes more than fifteen countries.

Please tell us about your history before joining AOMA.

I graduated from one of the most ancient Chinese medicine universities in China, Chengdu University of Traditional Chinese Medicine. After graduation, I served Sichuan State Hospital & Sichuan Provincial Academy of Medical Science for more than 12 years. In the hospital, I enjoyed greatly the weekly Friday afternoon case discussions in the national neurological center. I called it “Friday Afternoon Brainstorm” since there were many rare and complicated neurological cases from remote rural areas or other cities. Many experienced senior neurologists were invited to lead the case discussions. I was invited to serve patients in the neurological ICU.

While at the Sichuan hospital, I was called “stair-climber doctor” since I went upstairs and downstairs every day to serve patients throughout the hospital. No wonder I could not find enough time for lunch since there were 4000 beds in this hospital. During those 12 years, I served thousands of patients in various departments including neurological, cardiac, digestive, respiratory, endocrine, orthopedic, neurosurgical departments, ER, ICU, etc. I was awarded the title “Excellent Doctor,” an honor bestowed on only 10 of the 2000 doctors in this hospital.

I know you've been working on your Master's degree in Public Health from John Hopkins, please share a bit about that experience.

Since I have a full-time job at AOMA, I have to say that earning the MPH (Master’s in Public Health) at Johns Hopkins University at the same time is very challenging. I really appreciate AOMA’s support during my study. AOMA faculty members took very good care of my classes and clinics when I needed their help last June. The program has been very intense, but the good news is that I have done well! My efforts, many sleepless nights studying, have been rewarded. I feel I’ve gained much deeper learning on clinical diseases, research methods, clinical trial design, and qualified paper requirement, etc. Moreover, as a clinic doctor, I have learned how to better interact between clinical work and research. It has been an honor to work and learn with talented clinicians and researchers from all over the world. As an instructor, I shared many related important contents from Johns Hopkins to AOMA master and doctoral students. I also tried to modify my teaching based on what I have learned so far.

I know you have a specialty in Neurology, what led you to that specialty?

When I was studying in Chengdu, I selected a neurology course out of curiosity. I was scared to do that since the lead professor was Yongyi Li, a very respected expert in neurology with a reputation of treating students rigorously. To my surprise, I was graded 98 out of 100 in the final exam which was the highest grade ever in that class. It was professor Li’s encouragement that inspired my interest in neurology. After graduation, I served at Sichuan State Hospital & Sichuan Provincial Academy of Medical Science for more than 12 years. There is a national neurological center in this hospital where I learned a lot and treated a large number of patients with neurological diseases. I knew this work would make a difference in many lives. A few years later my father had an encounter with one of my stroke patients. The man’s story and gratitude for my work brought tears to my father’s eyes as he shared the story. This was so touching and reassured me about choosing Neurology.

Please share anything else you’d like us to know about you; why you enjoy what you do, your family, your hobbies, etc.

My family: My great grandfather, aunt, and uncle are all physicians in China. When I was little, an anxious middle-aged male knocked at the door in the middle of night. He was hesitant to ask my great grandfather to help his seriously ill wife at home. In this extremely cold winter, my 90-year old great grandfather grabbed his medical equipment and followed the man without any hesitation. The image of my great grandfather, which disappeared slowly in the dark, will always linger in my mind. In my heart, I was born to save patients’ lives, and pass the love from my great grandfather to the future.

Hobbies and Leisure:

I love the outdoors. I’m very passionate about playing soccer and jogging outdoors in a natural park, along a pavilion, and near a lake. I enjoy breathing the fresh air and hearing the melody of birds.

I enjoy holding parties, making dumplings and sharing stories with my neighbors, students, and friends. I still remember the time my students and I made more than 400 dumplings at one of my dumpling parties!
Clinical Outcomes

TOTAL NEW PATIENTS 2018
North Professional Clinic 680
North Student Clinic 222
South Professional Clinic 301
South Student Clinic 280
1,483

TOTAL NUMBER OF PROFESSIONAL PRACTITIONERS SEEING PATIENTS IN 2018: 12

TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENT INTERNS TREATMENT ROTATIONS IN 2018 BY TERM:

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<tr>
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<th>North</th>
<th>South</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall</td>
<td>382</td>
<td>763</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>584</td>
<td>834</td>
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<tr>
<td>Summer</td>
<td>718</td>
<td>627</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winter</td>
<td>927</td>
<td>675</td>
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2,611 2,899

TOTAL NUMBER OF CLINIC OFFERINGS IN 2018: 8
North Austin Austin Recovery Clinic
South Austin AOMA at The Sherwood
Seton McCarthy Forest Folk Festival
People’s Community Clinic Veterans Affairs Austin
Cureville at the Kerrville Outpatient Clinic

TOTAL CLINIC VISITS IN 2018:
North Student Clinic 3,157
North Professional Clinic 5,598
South Student Clinic 3,145
South Professional Clinic 2,323
14,233

TOTAL NUMBER OF PATIENTS SEEN BY STUDENT INTERNS IN 2018 BY TERM:

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<td>921</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>892</td>
<td>886</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer</td>
<td>521</td>
<td>670</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winter</td>
<td>1,124</td>
<td>686</td>
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3,062 3,163

TOP 5 CHIEF COMPLAINTS IN 2018 BY VISIT

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<tr>
<th>Category</th>
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</tr>
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<td>Back pain</td>
<td>18.0%</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Neurological issues</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Neck pain</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stress, Anxiety, Depression, &amp; Shoulder pain (tie)</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>GI/Digestive issues</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>North Student</td>
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<td>17.0%</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Stress, Anxiety, Depression</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Neck pain</td>
<td>8.4%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shoulder pain</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
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<td></td>
<td>GI/Digestive issues</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>South Professional</td>
<td>Back pain</td>
<td>12.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Neurological issues &amp; Hormonal issues (tie)</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stress, Anxiety, Depression</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Neck pain</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sleep issues (tie)</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
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<td>Back pain</td>
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<td>Stress, Anxiety, Depression</td>
<td>13.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hormonal issues</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Neck pain</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>GI/Digestive issues</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
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2018 PATIENT-TO-INTERN RATIO BY TERM

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<th>Term</th>
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<th>South</th>
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<tr>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>152.7%</td>
<td>106.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer</td>
<td>137.8%</td>
<td>106.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winter</td>
<td>121.3%</td>
<td>101.6%</td>
</tr>
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Life isn’t a matter of milestones, but of moments.
—Rose Kennedy

79% of AOMA alumni are working in the field of acupuncture and Chinese medicine***

90% of AOMA graduates are licensed to practice within 1 year***
Alumni Statistics

EMPLOYMENT AND LICENSURE*
90% of graduates obtain licensure within one year of receipt of diploma

MOST COMMONLY CHARGED FEE**
$80

ON AVERAGE**
25 Patients Per Week

MOST COMMONLY CHARGED FEE**
$80

PATIENTS PER WEEK**
43% see less than 10 patients
22% see 11 to 20 patients
14% see 11 to 35 patients
18% see 36 to 50 patients
1% see 51 to 100 patients

AVERAGE TREATMENT FEE**
$70, $9 increase since 2015

DATA SOURCES
* 2017 biennial survey 15% response rate
** RGEES survey 53% response rate
*** Alumni success based on 2017 biennial survey

71% OF GRADUATES PRACTICE IN TEXAS***

29% OF GRADUATES PRACTICE OUTSIDE OF TEXAS***
Please provide a little information on your education and experience prior to AOMA.
Before I ever dreamed that I would receive acupuncture (I had a serious needle phobia), let alone become an acupuncturist, I received a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in modern dance and education. A little-known fact is that I danced professionally in NYC for seven years before moving to Austin to attend AOMA graduate school of Integrative Medicine.

Tell us about your journey to AOMA—what led you to Acupuncture and Traditional Chinese Medicine?

While in New York I worked as a certified Alexander Technique teacher (an ergonomic physiology method often used by artists and athletes). At this time, some concern arose that teachers of this postural alignment method would have to obtain a massage license to continue practicing. So I proactively enrolled at the Swedish Institute, a renowned massage school. As it turned out, half of the program was devoted to learning Shiatsu (acupressure) which uses the same meridian system as acupuncture. I had already been studying Eastern philosophy and fell completely in love with this profound approach to health. It was also at this time that I injured my back during a performance and on the advice of a friend, found myself in Chinatown getting acupuncture. Needless to say, my back pain resolved, and I had discovered what would become a lifelong passion.

Your work in women’s health and fertility is outstanding. What led you to specializing in this area of medicine?

When I graduated from AOMA, I worked as a generalist in an HIV clinic, and several integrative medical practices, before focusing on Women’s health and fertility exclusively. My mother, who was an OB/GYN NP, had a big influence on my interest in specializing, as did my desire to be a parent. I’m the oldest of six children in my family and always knew that I wanted to be a mother. I learned everything there was to know about Eastern reproductive medicine and Western fertility treatments (which have changed dramatically over the past 15+ years). After going through our own struggles, my spouse and I did end up having our son and I was inspired to create a space where people could find information, care, and support during their fertility journey. It gives me immense joy to celebrate the innumerable successes with our patients, as well as solace knowing that at Sage we provide a haven for those going through this unique challenge.

What would you like everyone to know about you—your interests, passions, hobbies, etc.?

My passions are simply my family, my work, and my community. I am incredibly appreciative of the support I’ve received in my life, and it is my hope that I can pay it forward by planting the seeds of health and happiness in others as they build their families.

Provide a little information on your education and experience prior to AOMA

I joined the 4 year MAOM program at AOMA in 2005. Pursuing acupuncture and Chinese herbs is the first career path in my life. I completed my graduation requirements for high school on the memorable date of September 11th, 2001. After high school I attended Austin Community College to receive the perquisites needed to join AOMA.
Tell us about your journey to AOMA, what led you to Acupuncture and Traditional Chinese Medicine?

I was born and raised in Austin, TX. My entire life I wanted to be an archaeologist, but one day I had some friends talk about acupuncture treatments at a local acupuncture college (AOMA) and it dawned on me that was the career path I was meant to pursue. Of course, once I started internship during the program it was super rewarding to use ancient medicine to help people feel better. Even though I never became an archaeologist, becoming an acupuncturist allowed me plenty of opportunities to enjoy archaeology!

Your work in emergency response is outstanding, how did you get involved in this work?

I have always dreamed of world travel and offering acupuncture to communities who could not afford or have the opportunity to experience acupuncture. I feel my love of emergency management started during my time working on cruise ships as an acupuncturist. I learned extensively about the US Coast Guard laws and regulations. They are thorough and very strict with the procedures intended to save lives. No matter your position, as a ship crew member you are required to train and drill weekly so all hands-on deck would be available during an emergency. As an acupuncturist, I learned how to fight fires with a fire hose, close water tight doors, stabilize frantic passengers, lower life boats and jump down a chute into a life boat, to ensure survival. It was incredible to me that regardless of your background anyone can be trained to make a difference and save lives. In addition, I learned the valuable skill of speaking/communicating in a way that even non-English speakers can understand.

What would you like everyone to know about you, your interests, passions, hobbies, etc?

Since I was 3 years old, I have practiced origami and it became a valuable skill during deployment to support both Hurricane Irma and Maria in Puerto Rico in 2017. Knowing qigong and tai chi also became valuable. These tools have saved my body and mind during all of my emergency deployments both domestic and international. They stabilize me as an emergency responder and allow me the chance to re-boot and remain 100% so I can be my best for the communities I support. They also are skills easily taught to others, providing them the ability to cope with extremely stressful situations.

Please share anything else you would like about yourself and your work

I moved to Colorado in 2014 during the first year of creation of the Colorado Acupuncture Medical Reserve Corps. Today if you want to be integrated into a disaster response in a professional way, a responder must be trained in Incident Command System (ICS) and National Incident Management System (NIMS) to speak a common language and offer a structure for response that is evidence based. Captain Rob Tossato created the Medical Response Corps (MRC) program to vet and train volunteers before a disaster occurs. This includes; verifying credentials, background checks, and ensuring a smooth system to organize volunteers and ensure safety for everyone, no one taking advantage of others during a disaster. This reduces the chaos that comes with disaster situations. With the Medical Reserve Corps, program volunteers have the opportunity to train and drill with a team, are included in networking opportunities and exercises with many agencies involved in emergency response, practice skills ahead of time, establish critical relationships, allow for official request for deployment, and participate in healthcare coalitions. I became the volunteer leader of the Colorado Acupuncture MRC in 2016 and have worked hard with my team to create buy-in from the leaders of all MRC teams throughout the nation. We have led by example, our work recognized and published on a national level. We authored the Acupuncture Mission Ready Package, and created the first pilot research study exploring the feasibility and acceptability of acupuncture in emergency management (funded by a grant I authored with the National Association of City and County Health Officials). For the last three years the work we have done has created buy-in with many leaders throughout the nation and for the first time the door has been opened for acupuncturists to join these teams on a nation-wide scale (see the following link for the 2017 MRC Network Profile, the first time acupuncture is listed as an innovative resource: https://www.naccho.org/uploads/downloadable-resources/NACCHO_MRC-2017-Report.pdf). My goal is a day when an acupuncturist is a paid deployable position with FEMA. I plan to infiltrate the system and continue extensive training to continue in my second career as an emergency manager with FEMA.
Continuing Education Update

AOMA held a broad offering of continuing education seminars in 2018. Included were the following:

• 4 Weekend Classical Japanese Hari Style Acupuncture series by Sensei, Takayuki Koei Kuwahara
• Shiraku: Bloodletting and Cupping Therapies by Sensei, Takayuki Koei Kuwahara
• Healing the Gut with Ancient Turtle Abdominal Acupuncture presented by AOMA faculty member, Dr. Shengyan ‘Grace’ Tan
• Neoclassical Pulse Diagnosis: Acupuncture & Herbs presented by former AOMA President and current faculty Dr. William Morris
• Two seminars of Acupuncture and Chinese Medicine for Anti-aging & Facecare presented by AOMA Vice President of Faculty and faculty member, Dr. Qianzhi ‘Jamie’ Wu.

• Most notably our Southwest Symposium was held at AOMA south campus for the first time to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the school. Speakers included Jason Roberson LAc, Michael Corradino DAOM LAc, AOMA alumnus Amy Moll DAOM LAc, Brad Lichtenstein ND., and many other brilliant presenters.

AOMA will be offering the next Southwest Symposium in 2020 and is promising to be a very special event.
2018 Commencement

In 2018 AOMA held 3 graduation ceremonies. The traditional ceremony honoring all graduating Master and Doctoral students was held on June 17 at the Omni Southpark Hotel in Austin, Texas. Twenty-two Master’s students and four doctoral students participated in the ceremony, which was overseen by Dr. Lesley Hamilton, the MAcOM/DAcOM Program Director, and the Master of Ceremonies. Dr. Violet Song, PhD, LAc, led the processional and opening remarks were made by AOMA’s President, Dr. Betty Edmond, and CEO, Dr. Mary Faria. To accommodate our students receiving a Doctorate of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine who live out of state and not able to attend the June 17 ceremony, a special graduation was held on the AOMA campus on June 4th. Also, two of our Master of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine students participated in our China Study Tour on June 17, so a special ceremony was held for them on Qing Cheng Mountain in Chengdu, China.

AOMA was pleased and honored to have Dr. David Ring, MD, PhD, Associate Dean for Comprehensive Care and professor of surgery and psychiatry at Dell Medical School at the University of Texas at Austin, as our commencement speaker. Trained as a hand and orthopedic surgeon, Dr. Ring’s extensive research, patient care, and quality and patient safety leadership contributed to an understanding of and a passion for the ways that mindset and circumstances affect human illness. Getting people interested in innovative ways to get and stay healthy depends on effective communication strategies that establish trust and make healthy habits appealing.

Prior to moving to Austin, Dr. Ring was Professor of Orthopedic Surgery at Harvard Medical School, Chief of Hand Surgery at Massachusetts General Hospital and Chair of the MGH Orthopedic Quality and Patient Safety Committee. He was awarded a PhD for clinical research in psychosocial aspects of arm pain from the University of Amsterdam in 2005.

Dr. Ring’s current work focuses on ways to use existing knowledge, diverse expertise, and innovative applications of technology to help people choose healthy options consistent with their values.

This year’s Calvin Key Wilson Community Leadership award was presented to Margaret Spresser by previous recipient, Reagan Taylor. The award is presented to a graduating student in memory of Calvin Key Wilson, an AOMA student who is remembered for his spirit and leadership abilities. Ms. Spresser was chosen by her peers as this year’s recipient in recognition of her outstanding work in AOMA’s student community.

Faculty speakers included Dr. Jamie Wu, Dr. Xiaotian Shen, Dr. Yuxin He, Dr. Jing Fan, Dr. Lesley Hamilton and Dr. John Finnell. Dean of Students, Robert Laguna led the Healer’s Oath. A reception followed the event. AOMA’s 2019 commencement will be held July 13, 2019 at the Omni South Park Hotel in Austin, Texas.
AOMA MISSION STATEMENT

The Mission of AOMA is to transform lives and communities through education, patient care, leadership and research in Chinese and other integrative medicines.

VISION

AOMA’s vision is to be a leader in Chinese medicine education by engaging our communities and by preparing compassionate and skilled practitioners who embody the art and spirit of healing.

OUR CORE VALUES

We recognize that the outcomes we produce result from the collective activities that are consistent with the following core values:

• Sustainability: Our programs and community engagements are sustainable and effective.
• Integrity: We do what we say we will do. In our communication, we are honest and complete.
• Inspiration: We are called into action by a spirit of purposeful aliveness.
• Flexibility and openness: We conscientiously choose our actions in consideration of all the parties involved.
• Professionalism: In all that we do, we are impeccable, clear and complete.
• Compassion and Service: In word and action, we look for opportunities to benefit others.

Income & Expenses

REVENUE SOURCES

TUITION PROVIDES 63% OF AOMA’S INCOME. CLINIC FEES, AOMA Herbal Medicine, and continuing education programs also support the institution’s mission.

EXPENSES

Payroll & Related ..................... 63%
Rent ........................................ 12%
Utilities, Depreciation & Supplies . . . 9%
Educational/Student Services ....... 8%
Administrative Support .............. 3%
Financial Expenses .................. 3%
Accreditation Costs .................. 1%
Marketing ............................... 1%
Total Expense ......................... 100%
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All statistics reported herein are accurate as of April 2018.