

FAQs from the Desk of AOMA's President

May 2017

After the April announcement of the intention for AOMA Graduate School of Integrative Medicine to become an affiliate of Bastyr University, many questions have arisen both inside and outside of the organization. These questions have been collated into this "Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)" for the purpose of sharing updated information throughout AOMA and the community we serve.

The most commonly asked questions remain:

"What does this mean for AOMA"

"What happens now?"

To these questions, I would like to share that Bastyr and AOMA have finalized their negotiations for the affiliation agreement, whereby AOMA will become part of Bastyr University and a new college, the AOMA College of Acupuncture and Chinese Medicine at Bastyr University, will be created. With this affiliation, the College will have two campuses, one in Austin, Texas and one in Seattle, Washington. Next steps involve approval of the affiliation by Bastyr's regional accreditation organization, the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU), as well as approval by the Accreditation Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (ACAOM) and the U.S. Department of Education. Once these approvals are complete, the affiliation agreement between Bastyr and AOMA will be finalized and AOMA will become an affiliate of Bastyr. Given the steps involved to achieve the regulatory approvals, AOMA's formal affiliation with Bastyr is anticipated to occur late fall 2017 to early 2018. In the meantime, AOMA will be working closely with Bastyr to assure a smooth transition in organizations.

Frequently Asked Question (FAQs):

- 1. When will a formal communication to existing students and accepted applicants be released?**
Students were informed by various means of communications, to include town halls, at the time of the public press release in April. Communication will continue as we transition with Bastyr, with scheduled student meetings, now planned at the time of intern meetings each term, and further communication through faculty and administrative leadership. Communication with prospective students will occur through the admissions process by members of the Admissions Department and Program Directors. Communication will also be available on AOMA's website via updates in "Frequently Asked Questions".
- 2. Who will be the Dean of the new College?**
Bastyr is currently undertaking the search for a Dean for the new college. Prior to the Dean taking the position, faculty members at Bastyr and AOMA will work together collaboratively to pave the way for their future success. Upon completion of the affiliation, a single college will serve our more than 350 students.
- 3. Will the core AOMA faculty remain in Austin, or is deployment of faculty to Seattle or San Diego to build up TCM programs at those campuses being considered?**

There is no deployment planned of faculty from either institution. If individual faculty are interested in teaching at another campus, that opportunity would certainly be considered. As a point of information, at this time the San Diego campus of Bastyr does not have a school of acupuncture and Chinese medicine - only the Seattle campus has programs in this field.

4. **Will the AOMA campus remain intact at its current location or are there plans to expand or relocate the campus in Austin?**

The AOMA campus plans to remain intact. The only possible expansion that may be considered within the next 1-2 years would be expansion into adjacent offices to accommodate school/clinic growth, if needed.

5. **Will the Austin campus and faculty be used to teach other degree programs outside of TCM, e.g. undergraduate programs, nutrition, etc.?**

The College will be focused on acupuncture and Chinese medicine; however, the campuses may expand into additional programs over time.

6. **After becoming a part of Bastyr University, will there be a change in AOMA's tuition cost?**

Tuition is based on the program curriculum, the geographic location of a school and associated expenses, and main competitors locally, regionally and nationally. In consideration of all of these factors, there is no intent to change tuition because of the relationship with Bastyr.

7. **Will AOMA retain the right to set tuition rates, or will rates be determined by Bastyr's Board of Trustees?**

The leadership of Bastyr recognizes that geographic and competitive considerations are most important in determining tuition rates. With this consideration, there is no plan to change tuition rates at AOMA because of the affiliation with Bastyr. It is of note that AOMA's catalog states: "AOMA reserves the right to make tuition adjustments of 4–8% per year that reflect changes in the cost of living and cost of education, subject to governing board approval." For AOMA, this approval has been done by its Board of Governors and, with the affiliation, this approval will move to Bastyr's Board of Trustees, which is committed to having a representative of AOMA as a member. The tuition proposals that the Board considers are developed by the leadership of the institution based upon, among other things, projections of enrollments and expenses for the coming year. The leadership of the new AOMA College will have input into those proposals. As an additional point of information, Linda Fontaine will be the first AOMA representative to serve on the Bastyr Board of Trustees.

8. **Will AOMA's MAcOM curriculum remain intact for the next 3 years? Particularly, will the mind-body/Asian body work curriculum remain or be expanded?**

First and foremost, existing students at AOMA will remain under their current catalogue until their time of graduation. AOMA's curriculum is one of the many strengths that Bastyr has recognized. Because of this strength, AOMA has been asked to lead the review of both schools' curriculums, and only create changes that further enhance AOMA's current programs and the new AOMA College of Acupuncture and Chinese Medicine at Bastyr.

9. When will the institution's name on diplomas change?

The timing is still to be discussed, but certainly not before AOMA becomes a formal affiliate of Bastyr University, which is anticipated in late fall 2017 or early 2018.

10. Will AOMA remain on a quarter schedule or move to trimesters/semesters?

At this point, AOMA is on a blend of the quarter schedule and trimester schedule, since it has three 12-week terms (Winter, Spring and Fall) and one 8-week term (Summer). Bastyr is on the quarter system. How best to go forward will need to be further discussed between the two schools, but there are no immediate plans to move away from AOMA's current schedule or Bastyr's quarter system.

11. Will the curriculum continue to meet California educational requirements to be eligible for licensure there?

Yes.

12. Will AOMA's recognition by the Ministry of Education in China change?

We will still hold recognition by the Ministry of Education in China because Bastyr also holds this recognition as well.

13. Are Naturopathic programs to be offered at AOMA now?

AOMA will be working with Bastyr to develop the AOMA College of Acupuncture and Chinese Medicine at Bastyr University. This College will first have two campuses – in Austin, Texas and in Seattle, Washington. Any campus may add programs over time, to include a naturopathic educational program at the Austin campus if an opportunity arises for licensure within Texas; however, the AOMA College will have one primary focus, that of Acupuncture and Chinese Medicine education.

14. Will there be a full onsite administration staff supporting Austin Programs?

Over time, the administrative staff organization will need to take into consideration the resources that are available within Bastyr and the model used to fulfill needs of faculty, students, and staff on the AOMA Austin campus. This cannot be fully anticipated at this time. Since we will need to get to know each other and fully understand and align needs and resources, I anticipate little change at the beginning of the relationship.

15. In regards to AOMA's clinics, will they remain "AOMA" clinics or be re-branded?

Will the Electronic Medical Record (EMR) be implemented earlier than otherwise anticipated?

We have not had an opportunity yet to discuss the name of the clinics with Bastyr. It is certainly important to preserve name recognition and Bastyr leadership has been very cognizant of this value. Regarding an EMR, this has been an important part of AOMA's Strategic Plan, and that Plan remains in effect. However, it is likely that we will be planning and implementing an EMR sooner rather than later with this affiliation. Discussions are just beginning in this arena.

16. When will we get a new logo? Will we keep AOMA's website?

These discussions have not yet occurred. Logo and website changes are likely to be associated with finalization of AOMA becoming an affiliate of Bastyr and formation of the AOMA College of Acupuncture and Chinese Medicine at Bastyr University.

17. What new types of financial aid in the form of grants and scholarships will be available to students after the affiliation is finalized?

Once the formal relationship between AOMA and Bastyr is finalized and AOMA is an affiliate of Bastyr University, we will explore such possibilities. At this time, it is too early to specifically answer this question. The current scholarship opportunities offered by AOMA will remain intact for the foreseeable future.

18. Will research be expanded on AOMA's campus and will there be cross-campus collaborative research amongst the three Bastyr campuses?

One of the main reasons AOMA was searching for an affiliation with a regionally accredited university was to expand research resources and opportunities. We are certainly looking forward to growing our research capabilities and opportunities in association with Bastyr's diverse programmatic university. Both cross-campus and cross-discipline research are opportunities as we form the AOMA College of Acupuncture and Chinese Medicine at Bastyr.

19. What type of Federal grants are offered through Bastyr?

Limited Federal grants are available for graduate programs. See <https://bastyr.edu/admissions/financial-aid/fund-your-graduate-degree> for Bastyr's specific financial aid programs.

20. Why does the new college name say "Chinese Medicine" vs. "Oriental Medicine"?

There have been many discussions nationally within the field about the use of the term "Oriental," since it has been considered potentially offensive and is no longer being used in U.S. Federal documents. In considering the name of the new College, it was felt that since the root of other acupuncture practices, such as Japanese Acupuncture and Korean Acupuncture, is Chinese, that the new College should use this term as well – thus the name the AOMA College of Acupuncture and Chinese Medicine at Bastyr University.

21. Why was integrative dropped from the new name?

Bastyr's leadership has clearly stated that not only are their natural health degree programs integrated within their respective fields, through caring for each person's mind, body and spirit, but it is the goal of the University to further integrative medicine between the natural health fields and with collaborative endeavors in other fields of healthcare. With the focus of Bastyr University being one of integration, AOMA's focus will be to provide leadership in the development of acupuncture and Chinese medicine within the AOMA College of Acupuncture and Chinese Medicine at Bastyr, and participate in opportunities for integrative care as they arise within and outside of the University.

22. How will alumni be affected?

Alumni remain the alumni of AOMA, no matter what organizational changes we undergo. All connections with this group will be as important to our new college at Bastyr as they have been with AOMA as we currently exist.

23. Given Bastyr's nonprofit status, does this affiliation remove AOMA from falling under gainful employment legislation?

Yes, for its degree-granting programs; however, certificate programs remain subject to gainful employment regulations.

24. What are the biggest drawbacks or challenges I might experience from this affiliation as a master's student over the next 3 years?

This affiliation results in a new college being formed within Bastyr, the AOMA College of Acupuncture and Chinese Medicine at Bastyr University. With AOMA's prominence and reputation for excellence within the field, AOMA will be leading the development of one College from two existing schools. The College will have two campuses, one in Austin and one in Seattle. The biggest challenges arise from managing change itself, which intensifies when you have two complex organizations. More specific challenges are yet to be determined. It is critical to note that it is AOMA's goal to minimize any drawbacks and challenges to students, faculty, and staff throughout the transition process.