

Survey of the Acupuncture & Oriental Medicine Profession on First Professional Doctorates in Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine

*American Association of Acupuncture & Oriental Medicine
Education & Credentialing Committee*

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Summary:

In order to assess the level of support by the AOM practitioner community towards the First Professional Doctorate (FPD), the AAAOM Education & Credentialing Committee conducted a survey of the AOM profession. A total of 904 responses, including 662 AOM practitioners, 208 students, and 34 AOM college administrators, were received.

The following is a brief summary of their responses:

For the FPD in acupuncture, of those who expressed an opinion 65% were supportive and 35% were not supportive. Of these, AOM practitioners were 57% supportive and 43% not supportive; AOM students were 83% supportive and 17% not supportive, and AOM college administrators were 86% supportive and 14% non-supportive.

For the FPD in Oriental medicine, of those who expressed an opinion 70% were supportive and 30% were not supportive. Of these, AOM practitioners were 64% supportive and 36% not supportive; AOM students were 86% supportive and 14% not supportive, and AOM college administrators were 94% supportive and 6% not supportive.

Survey Instrument:

The survey instrument from the aaaomonline.org website is included on Appendix B, along with the letter that went out with the survey and linked materials for background reading. These links included:

- AAAOM Online Professional Survey.
- AOM First Professional Doctorate Q & A: Commonly asked questions regarding the potential transition to a FPD Degree. (PDF)
- AOM Comes of Age: ACAOM Draft Doctoral Standards Compared to Current Entry Level Master's Standards - This article outlines a brief history of the development of the FPD and clearly expresses the key differences between the current AOM Master's and proposed FPD Degrees. (PDF)
- Physical Therapist Transition to a Professional Entry-Level Doctorate – Detailed FAQs on issues similar in scope to what AOM practitioners might face that physical therapists addressed as they transitioned from a First Degree Master's to Professional Doctorate Degrees. (PDF)
- Draft Standards for First-Professional Doctoral Programs in AOM – ACAOM's draft proposal on the FPD Degree. (PDF)
- AAAOM Discussion Board on FPD issues < <http://forums.aaaomonline.org/viewforum.php?f=25>>

Distribution:

Commencing on November 21, 2008, the survey was closed on May 13, 2009.

The survey was initially distributed by email to AAAOM active practitioner members and AOM schools (1,894); this was done three times.

The survey was also broadcast to the same group of addresses through the AAAOM's online news publication, *The Qi-Unity Report*, and *The President's Corner*.

The survey was also posted on the AAAOM's website, www.aaaomonline.org.

The CCAOM was also informed about the survey and requested that their member colleges send the survey to their alumni and students.

Links to the survey were also placed on several online discussion boards, including the Traditional Chinese Medicine, Chinese Herb Academy, and ACTCM Alumni Yahoo Groups. The Community Acupuncture Network had an energetic discussion about the FPD survey on their site.

Interested parties also forwarded the survey email to their colleagues.

Collection

Survey results were collected online by AAAOM staff in Sacramento. While survey participants were asked to identify themselves, this information was used only to identify duplicate respondents and otherwise was kept confidential.

Results:

Acupuncture FPD:

“Please indicate the degree to which you would support the offering of a first professional doctorate in acupuncture:”

Of the total 904 responses (AOM professionals, AOM students, and AOM college administrators):
65% of those who expressed an opinion were supportive, 35% were not supportive of the above statement.

Of these:

55% Strongly Agree or Agree

15% Neither or No Opinion

30% Disagree or Strongly Disagree

For AOM practitioners (n=662):

57% of those who expressed an opinion were supportive, 43% were not supportive of the above statement.

Of these:

48% Strongly Agree or Agree

16% Neither or No Opinion

36% Disagree or Strongly Disagree

For AOM students (n=208):

83% of those who expressed an opinion were supportive, 17% were not supportive of the above statement.

Of these:

74% Strongly Agree or Agree

11% Neither or No Opinion

15% Disagree or Strongly Disagree

For AOM college administrators (n=34):

86% of those who expressed an opinion were supportive, 14% were not supportive of the above statement.

Of these:

74% Strongly Agree or Agree

15% Neither or No Opinion

12% Disagree or Strongly Disagree

Oriental Medicine FPD:

“Please indicate the degree to which you would support the offering of a first professional doctorate in Oriental medicine:”

Of the total 904 responses (AOM professionals, AOM students, and AOM college administrators):
70% of those who expressed an opinion were supportive, 30% were not supportive of the above statement.

Of these:

61% Strongly Agree or Agree
13% Neither or No Opinion
26% Disagree or Strongly Disagree

For AOM practitioners (n=661):

64% of those who expressed an opinion were supportive, 36% were not supportive of the above statement.

Of these:

54% Strongly Agree or Agree
15% Neither or No Opinion
31% Disagree or Strongly Disagree

For AOM students (n=208):

86% of those who expressed an opinion were supportive, 14% were not supportive of the above statement.

Of these:

78% Strongly Agree or Agree
9% Neither or No Opinion
13% Disagree or Strongly Disagree

For AOM college administrators (n=35):

94% of those who expressed an opinion were supportive, 6% were not supportive of the above statement.

Of these:

83% Strongly Agree or Agree
11% Neither or No Opinion
6% Disagree or Strongly Disagree

Analysis

This survey suggests majority support for FPDs by the AOM profession in the United States. In contrast to an earlier survey by ACAOM where the results were just about evenly split, these results signify a shift in the AOM profession towards support of a FPD. The results are similar to those of a survey that Tri-State College of Acupuncture conducted of its alumni, where 62.8% of licensed acupuncturists supported development of a FPD and 19.6% opposed.

Also of note was the substantial show of support for both the acupuncture and Oriental medicine FPDs from another key stakeholder—current AOM students, where AAAOM student members were supportive 86% vs. 14% and non-AAAOM members were supportive 83% vs. 17%.

Also measurable with the survey was the difference between those AOM practitioners that were AAAOM members and those who were not. For the Acupuncture FPD, AAAOM practitioner members were more supportive by 3% (59 vs. 56%), and for the Oriental medicine FPD, AAAOM practitioner members were more supportive by 6% (67 vs. 61%). The size of this difference would indicate that there is a 3-6% difference of opinion in favor of adoption of the FPD between AAAOM practitioner members vs. non-members. Given the historical divide within the profession over the issue of the FPD, these results indicate that the merger between the AAOM and the Alliance has been largely successful.

On each survey question AAAOM practitioners represented roughly 47% of the respondents, but nationally AAAOM members make up a much smaller percentage of the AOM population. If the results were weighted to better reflect the dominance of non-AAAOM professional practitioners, 56% vs. 44% support for the acupuncture FPD and 61% vs. 39% support for the OM FPD would be seen as more accurate indicators of AOM practitioners at large.

Survey participants were also allowed to express their views on the FPD, and this generated a wide range of commentary (Appendix D). This diversity of opinion acknowledges that, while the profession as a whole has shifted in towards support for the FPD, there are strong voices of dissent that reflect real needs of the profession. This debate was also reflected in the online discussion board moderated by the AAAOM Education & Credentialing Committee, as well as the Community Acupuncture Network website.

Appendix A: Results

Overall Response (AOM practitioners, students, college administrators)

Support FPD in acupuncture:			Support/Oppose	
Total:	904	100%	% of Total	Opinion only %
5 – Strongly Agree	352	39%	55%	65%
4 – Agree	144	16%		
3 – Neither	125	14%	15%	
2 – Disagree	80	9%		
1 – Strongly Disagree	192	21%	30%	35%
0 – No Opinion	11	1%		

Support FPD in Oriental medicine:			Support/Oppose	
Total:	904	100%	% of Total	Opinion only %
5 – Strongly Agree	418	46%	61%	70%
4 – Agree	133	15%		
3 – Neither	109	12%	13%	
2 – Disagree	74	8%		
1 – Strongly Disagree	157	17%	26%	30%
0 – No Opinion	13	1%		

AOM Practitioners

50%+ of time spent: aom practitioner					
AAAOM Member?: Yes					
Support FPD in acupuncture:			Support/Oppose		Total AOM Pract.
Total	311	100%	% of Total	Opinion only %	% of Total
5 –	99	32%	47%	59%	48%
4 –	48	15%			57%
3 –	59	19%	20%		16%
2 –	39	13%			
1 –	63	20%	33%	41%	36%
0 –	3	1%			43%

50%+ of time spent: aom practitioner					
AAAOM Member?: No					
Support FPD in acupuncture:			Support/Oppose		Total AOM Pract.
Total	351	100%	% of Total	Opinion only %	% of Total
5 –	114	32%	48%	56%	
4 –	56	16%			
3 –	39	11%	13%		
2 –	32	9%			
1 –	103	29%	38%	44%	
0 –	7	2%			

50%+ of time spent: aom practitioner					
AAAOM Member?: Yes					
Support FPD in Oriental medicine			Support/Oppose		Total AOM Pract.
Total	312	100%	% of Total	Opinion only %	% of Total
5 –	128	41%	56%	67%	54%
4 –	48	15%			64%
3 –	47	15%	16%		15%
2 –	35	11%			
1 –	50	16%	27%	33%	31%
0 –	4	1%			36%

50%+ of time spent: aom practitioner					
AAAOM Member?: No					
Support FPD in Oriental medicine			Support/Oppose		Total AOM Pract.
Total	349	100%	% of Total	Opinion only %	% of Total
5 –	133	38%	53%	61%	
4 –	51	15%			
3 –	43	12%	14%		
2 –	32	9%			
1 –	85	24%	34%	39%	
0 –	5	1%			

AOM Students

50%+ of time spent: aom student						
AAAOM Member?: Yes						
Support FPD in acupuncture:		Support/Oppose		Total AOM Student		
Total		% of Total	Opinion only %	% of Total	Opinion only %	
5 -	74	100%	74%	87%	74%	83%
4 -	39	53%				
3 -	16	22%				
2 -	11	15%	15%		11%	
1 -	2	3%				
0 -	6	8%	11%	13%	15%	17%
0 -	0	0%				

50%+ of time spent: aom student						
AAAOM Member?: No						
Support FPD in acupuncture:		Support/Oppose		Total AOM Student		
Total		% of Total	Opinion only %	% of Total	Opinion only %	
5 -	134	100%	74%	81%		
4 -	81	60%				
3 -	18	13%				
2 -	11	8%	9%			
1 -	7	5%				
0 -	16	12%	17%	19%		
0 -	1	1%				

50%+ of time spent: aom student						
AAAOM Member?: Yes						
Support FPD in Oriental medicine:		Support/Oppose		Total AOM Student		
Total		% of Total	Opinion only %	% of Total	Opinion only %	
5 -	74	100%	78%	91%	78%	86%
4 -	46	62%				
3 -	12	16%				
2 -	9	12%	14%		9%	
1 -	2	3%				
0 -	4	5%	8%	9%	13%	14%
0 -	1	1%				

50%+ of time spent: aom student						
AAAOM Member?: No						
Support FPD in Oriental medicine:		Support/Oppose		Total AOM Student		
Total		% of Total	Opinion only %	% of Total	Opinion only %	
5 -	134	100%	78%	83%		
4 -	90	67%				
3 -	14	10%				
2 -	7	5%	7%			
1 -	5	4%				
0 -	16	12%	16%	17%		
0 -	2	1%				

AOM Administrators

50%+ of time spent: aom administrator						
AAAOM Member?: Yes						
Support FPD in acupuncture:		Support/Oppose		Total AOM Admin.		
Total		% of Total	Opinion only %	% of Total	Opinion only %	
5 -	12	100%	75%	90%	74%	86%
4 -	9	75%				
3 -	0	0%				
2 -	2	17%	17%		15%	
1 -	0	0%				
0 -	1	8%	8%	10%	12%	14%
0 -	0	0%				

50%+ of time spent: aom administrator						
AAAOM Member?: No						
Support FPD in acupuncture:		Support/Oppose		Total AOM Admin.		
Total		% of Total	Opinion only %	% of Total	Opinion only %	
5 -	22	100%	73%	84%		
4 -	10	45%				
3 -	6	27%				
2 -	3	14%	14%			
1 -	0	0%				
0 -	3	14%	14%	16%		
0 -	0	0%				

50%+ of time spent: aom administrator						
AAAOM Member?: Yes						
Support FPD in Oriental medicine:		Support/Oppose		Total AOM Admin.		
Total		% of Total	Opinion only %	% of Total	Opinion only %	
5 -	12	100%	83%	100%	83%	94%
4 -	9	75%				
3 -	1	8%				
2 -	1	8%	17%		11%	
1 -	0	0%				
0 -	0	0%	0%	0%	6%	6%
0 -	1	8%				

50%+ of time spent: aom administrator						
AAAOM Member?: No						
Support FPD in Oriental medicine:		Support/Oppose		Total AOM Admin.		
Total		% of Total	Opinion only %	% of Total	Opinion only %	
5 -	23	100%	83%	90%		
4 -	12	52%				
3 -	7	30%				
2 -	2	9%	9%			
1 -	0	0%				
0 -	2	9%	9%	10%		
0 -	0	0%				