

Council of Colleges of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (CCAOM) Medical Nomenclature

By Steve Given, LAc



The Council of Colleges of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (CCAOM) represent fifty schools across the United States. These schools include practitioners and scholars

working in diverse traditions and languages including Traditional Chinese Medicine, Five Element Acupuncture, Japanese Acupuncture and French Energetic Acupuncture among others.

It is the position of the CCAOM that the continued growth and success of this profession results in part from this diversity in practice and scholarship within academic institutions of acupuncture and Oriental Medicine. The specifics of scholarship, including the study and translation of classical and modern texts are best left to the individual scholars working in the field. It is not in the interest of academic institutions or the profession as a whole to infringe on the basic academic freedom of scholars within these institutions, especially in an area of study such as translation, where there remains significant disagreement on the transliteration of specific characters and phrases, or the process of translation itself. The creation of a translation standard without broad agreement among scholars working in the field would constitute such an infringement. The ability to gain consensus at this point on such a far reaching topic is highly problematic.

Academic freedom is enshrined in the accreditation standards for schools of

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acupuncture and Oriental medicine. One of the goals of accreditation is to “to protect institutions against encroachment which might jeopardize educational effectiveness or academic freedom.” The American Association of University Professors (AAUP) endorsed a statement published in 1940 that includes the following statement.

“Academic freedom is essential to these purposes and applies to both teaching and research. Freedom in research is fundamental to the advancement of truth. Academic freedom in its teaching aspect is fundamental for the protection of the rights of the teacher in teaching and of the student to freedom in learning. Further, the AAUP states “The common good depends upon the free search for truth and its free exposition.” In an institutional environment where academic freedom is paramount, decisions regarding the work of the academy, including translation, must be left to the individual scholar.

Translation within academic institutions of acupuncture and Oriental medicine are motivated by diverse goals. Translation is done with the goal of publication, as an aid in teaching and clinical training, and to support research and scholarship in the field. The success in achieving each of these goals depends on the skill and judgment of the translator in effectively translating the

text in question with as much fidelity to the meaning of the original as is possible, and creating the most readable text in light of the original text.

Note: This is the full position paper submitted by Dr. Given on behalf of the CCAOM.

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