

A TEN-YEAR REVIEW OF EFFECTIVENESS OF THE
DOCTORATE OF ACUPUNCTURE AND ORIENTAL MEDICINE:
THE GRADUATES' PERSPECTIVE

A Capstone Project
Presented to the
Doctoral Faculty of
Pacific College of Oriental Medicine

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine

by
Catherine Ann Austin, M.S., L.Ac.

San Diego, 2014

ABSTRACT

Background: It has been 10 years since the Doctorate of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (DAOM) was first offered as a degree program in the United States. The current entry level degree required by the profession is the master's degree, which qualifies an individual to take a state or national exam for licensure. The DAOM is designed as a clinical postdoctorate, with additional training in research and teaching.

Objectives: The purpose of the capstone was to conduct a review of the effectiveness of the DAOM from the graduates' point of view. Four questions were asked of the graduates. The first asked the graduates to rate how influential their DAOM program was in improving clinical skills. The second asked for a rating of six different career areas. The third asked for a rating of what challenged them the most in the program: academically, professionally, and personally. The fourth sought the graduates' opinion as to the value of the DAOM to the profession.

Methods: An online survey was conducted in July and August of 2013. This survey was sent to 378 alumni of seven of the nine AOM schools which currently have DAOM graduates.

Findings: There were 123 responses to the survey, yielding a 32.5% response rate. The study found that the primary programmatic objective was met; the majority of respondents (76.4%) ranked their clinical skills as significantly improved. An additional 56.9% gave favorable ratings to the knowledge gained with regard to

preparation for their roles as teachers. The capstone component of the program was the most significant contribution the DAOM programs has made, with a 63.4% favorable ranking.

Five key areas were identified as needing improvement: capstone mentoring, time management, consistency of quality of coursework between institutions, lack of adequately trained staff, and lack of courses designed for enhancing leadership skills.

Key Words: DAOM, 10-year survey, curriculum effectiveness, challenges.