

**California Acupuncture Board**  
**Phoenix Institute of Herbal Medicine and Acupuncture**  
**School Approval Site Visit Exit Report**  
**April 30 - May 2, 2013**

**Background**

The Phoenix Institute of Herbal Medicine and Acupuncture ( PIHMA) School and clinic received Accreditation Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (ACAOM) candidacy for accreditation in 2001, accreditation in May of 2004 and seven year re-accreditation in 2012. PIHMA started 16 years ago, growing from a school with few faculty and one to two classrooms to their current facility that houses the school, administration, five classrooms, herbal dispensary, library, clinic and research office.

**The School offers Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine Degrees:**

1. Master of Science in Oriental Medicine (MSOM)

This degree program includes Herbology and is the program applying for Training Program approval with the California Acupuncture Board with a total of 3533 hours of education.

2. Master of Science in Acupuncture (MSAc)

**I. Institutional Mission, Vision and Purpose**

The school has innovative shared values that provide a nurturing learning environment for students and inspiring workplace environment. Both students and school personnel are passionate about the school and acupuncture. The School has an active strategic planning process that is updated regularly with both short-term and long-term planning goals.

The Core Values are:

- Live the Medicine
- Serve Compassionately
- Be Innovative
- Grow Thoughtfully, Practice Gratitude , Commit to Excellence

PIHMA's mission statement is to prepare students to meet the national and professional certification standards prescribed for the practice of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine by educating and training students to be healing facilitators in the art, science and philosophy of acupuncture, herbal and Oriental Medicine.

Their vision in achieving these goals is to:

- Promote higher standards in the practice of acupuncture and herbology.
- Facilitate research and advance public awareness as to the benefits and usefulness of acupuncture and herbology
- Provide Community service through health clinics and other community projects
- Promote the rights of acupuncturists to practice the Oriental arts and sciences as an independent practitioner.

PIHMA has several clinic externships, affording their students to work in an integrated care setting within mainstream medicine in the United States.

## **II. Governance, Administration and Personnel**

The School's governance appears to be sound and in compliance with organizational governance standards and laws. Although PIHMA is a small school, they are professionally structured to address the educational and business needs of an academic institution. They have the required board members consisting of two Public Members, an Alumni Member as well as the School President. The Board meets regularly, records the meeting minutes and conduct business with a great degree of transparency.

The school's administration also appears sound. Moreover, since PIHMA does not offer any other programs outside of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine, the school can focus solely on the needs of those programs.

PIHMA conducts annual SWOT reviews as well to maintain vigilance on how it can better meet the needs of its students as well as its business needs. They are currently working on helping alumni by creating a Center for Professional Education.

## **III. Ethical Principals, Practices, and Advertising**

The school's shared values are reflected in their materials and outreach activities in the community. They offer honest career counseling that helps students succeed and helps failing students embrace that reality. The policies are fair and protect the interests of students.

The school has a team that conducts many outreach events in the community as well as having a strong internet presence through their website. Their marketing program has a licensed acupuncturist as their recruiter, a communications staff person that creates materials and manages the website.

## **IV. Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine Curriculum and Instruction**

PIHMA's Curriculum Committee meets every two months to work on curriculum needs. They operate in an Evolutionary fashion as opposed to revolutionary so that they can be constantly be moving towards the changes they see needed.

An overall sign of academic quality, interns appeared confident and had good grasp of TCM theory and its application in determining a differential diagnosis. Review of clinical medical

charts indicated intern logs were clear and verifiable with appropriate signatures and legal disclosures

PIHMA meets the curriculum and clinical requirements for Acupuncture Training programs as set forth in the California Code of Regulations Title 16, Chapter 3.5.

## **V. Admission Standards**

The School's admission requirements exceed California's requirements. California requires 60 hours of school at a college or university recognized by the US Department of Education. PIHMA's requirements include 60 hours with specific course work requirements in: Chemistry, Biology, Psychology and Physics.

PIHMA's Admission staff provide student counseling for navigating the course requirements. The school follows the same credit transfer policy as California. Credit Transfers are evaluated by both licensed acupuncture staff and administrative staff to assure quality and accuracy of equivalency assessments of course work from other schools.

## **VI. Graduation Requirements**

Currently, PIHMA offers two degrees; a Master of Acupuncture (MSAc) and a Master of Oriental Medicine (MSOM). Only the MSOM Degree meets California curriculum requirements.

## **VII. Faculty Qualifications**

PIHMA has a talented faculty of 24 Instructors who are passionate about teaching and promoting acupuncture. All faculty meet California Requirements.

## **VIII. Student Services and Records**

PIHMA offers a wide variety of student services. The Academic/Student affairs coordinator has a flexible, nurturing attitude towards serving students. She conducts the orientation and student centered activities. A tutoring service is also offered to help meet student needs.

PIHMA's Registrar has a meticulous record keeping system to track grades and course credits. The Registrar produces quarterly reports for students which tracks their progress toward completion of course work for their particular degree of choice. Records are kept secure in locked files. They are also kept on an encrypted computer that only the Registrar has access to in her locked office. Records are also backed up electronically at an offsite secured location through a secure vendor.

## **IX. Tuition, Fees, and Refund Policies**

PIHMA's tuition and refund policies are transparent, well advertised and students receive counseling explaining them. While refund policies are fair, the school does keep a reserve fund to cover refunds. School fiscal staff indicates that it has not been a problem and so they have not seen the need to set up a special reserve fund.

As of 2013, tuition for the Degree in Oriental Medicine costs \$18.00 per clock hour, with books and material fees estimated at \$1200.00 per year

## **X. Facilities and Library**

Facilities are located within a beautiful campus with a waterfall and Koi pond in the courtyard. Although the campus does have other businesses sharing space in the building all school facilities are separate from them and they do not interfere with school operations. The library is relatively small, but provides opportunity for study, research, using either books or online research in a separate room with three computers available. The Library is well stocked with reference books from around the world along with copies of the text books used in the courses the school offers. The glass walls are aesthetically pleasing and there was soft, gentle music playing conducive to studying. While the school is expanding its space, its current space is adequate to meet classroom, course work, administration, and student needs.

PIHMA's library also functions as the Alternative Medicine Library, which includes not only the Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine books but also books from several other alternative health colleges in the nearby area including massage, naturopathy and homeopathy. This is a joint venture to reduce costs for all the institutions involved and offer more resources to students, staff, alumni, alternative health professionals, and the community.

PIHMA's clinic is well laid out with proper access to hygiene stations and privacy for treatments. Students have a room wherein they can review charts and discuss patients with the supervisor that is out of the way of the treatment rooms. Both their dry-storage and cold storage herbs are handled and stored properly.

PIHMA recently started an Acupuncture Research Program that holds great promise both as a resource for training faculty and students to conduct research to perform cutting edge research. The research director is impressive both in her credentials and goals. She is teaching research methods to both faculty and students. Her background with the National Institute of Health (NIH) positions her to lead the school in performing cutting edge research in both health and in Acupuncture.

## **XI. Financial Resources**

The financial resources and fiscal health are in order. The school has maintained a stable budget with annual surpluses despite enrollment fluctuations. While the CFO is a governing board member and unpaid CFO, the arrangement appears to provide adequate fiscal checks and balances for the school. School financial records are audited by an outside auditing firm.