2020 STRATEGIC PLAN

ACTCM
American College Of Traditional Chinese Medicine
Soon to be celebrating 35 years as one of the earliest colleges of acupuncture and Oriental medicine (AOM) in the United States, the American College of Traditional Chinese Medicine is at an important crossroads as it plans for the future. Poised to offer the first professional doctoral degree in AOM, the College needs to take the next step in becoming an institution in the mainstream of American higher education. This step would be achieved by receiving regional accreditation, an accomplishment that would enable students to freely transfer college credits received at ACTCM and receive federal financial aid for all of ACTCM’s programs, including the first professional doctoral degree. This step would also permit ACTCM to develop degree programs in related health science fields, something it needs to do in order to lessen its vulnerability to downturns in student enrollment.

The landscape of higher education continues to change with increasing regional competition from other AOM colleges, a declining number of high school graduates, increasing concern about educational loan indebtedness, a national decline in the number of AOM students, and new critical competitors from the for-profit sector. It is becoming increasingly difficult for the single-purpose institution of higher education to survive given the costs for essential infrastructure, including student services and faculty. While some might argue that new revenue streams should be identified, realistically the major form of revenue for the small independent college is tuition. In addition, there are limited economies of scale for institutions with 300 or fewer full time students such as ACTCM. These financial realities suggest that the wisest move for ACTCM will be to affiliate or merge with CIIS as has been proposed.

It is also the case that more is expected of colleges and universities in the current era. The public sees ACTCM as an important source of information and health services. Public programs, workshops, seminars, short courses, and certificate programs are important offerings to address the needs of the College’s diverse constituents. In addition, technology must be used to provide increasing access to educational programs and services for students and faculty at a distance. Relationships with the external community, including the residents of San Francisco and surrounding area, are also increasingly important, as local residents are potential clients for clinical services.

In December 2013, ACTCM Board of Directors established a Strategic Planning Committee to lead the way in development of a six year strategic plan covering the period 2014-2020. The Committee has engaged the entire community and assessed the views of its constituents in terms of College strengths, weaknesses, threats, and opportunities, as well as their vision of the College six years ahead. These endeavors have enabled the Committee to take a good look at where the institution should be in the year 2020. The new strategic plan will serve as an important guide as we move forward to ensure many more successful years of operation for ACTCM.

Abby M. Heydman, PhD, RN
Chair, ACTCM Board of Directors
In the spring of 2013, the Board and administration of ACTCM made two important decisions, one to seek regional accreditation by WASC and the second to explore possibilities for merging with another higher education institution already itself regionally accredited. The College retained a pair of accreditation consultants to help determine readiness for accreditation and received a readiness report from them in September 2013. One of the major recommendations of the report was consonant with the College’s own decision to engage in a major strategic planning endeavor to carry the College through to the year 2020.

Under the strong leadership of the president of the College and the chair of the Board of Directors, strategic planning began in earnest in the fall of 2013, facilitated by one of the consultants who had worked with the College on accreditation readiness. A strategic planning committee was established to include the president, the Board chair, all of the members of the President’s Cabinet, as well as additional Board members and College faculty, staff, and students. The committee had a number of meetings in November, December, and January to draft revisions to the College mission and vision statement and prepare a draft set of strategic goals to be shared with the Board and the College community.

Then, in late January 2014, over 60 community members [including Board members, administrators, faculty, staff, and students] came together for an all day meeting to discuss the College’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats [SWOT] and to envision ACTCM in the year 2020. The results of that SWOT analysis helped inform the strategic planning committee in a series of meetings in January and February to turn the strategic goals into a measurable set of objectives and action plans—a true strategic plan. A preliminary draft of the strategic plan was presented to the ACTCM Board of Directors at its meeting on February 24, 2014. At that time, the Board was asked to give its “in principle” approval to the revised mission and vision statements and to the five strategic goals that had been drafted. With that approval, the strategic planning committee continued its work to articulate a set of objectives under each goal and a set of implementable action items under each objective. These were shared widely with the College community. Then, on May 19, 2014, a final version of the draft strategic plan—including all goals, objectives, and action items—was presented to the Board for its review and approval.

To be continued……
MISSION
The mission of ACTCM is to provide exemplary professional education and quality patient care in acupuncture and Chinese medicine and related healthcare fields.

VISION
ACTCM will be an international center of educational excellence that advances professional collaboration, research, and sustainability in Chinese medicine and health care.

STRATEGIC GOALS
Goal #1: ACTCM will offer the highest quality masters, doctoral, and certificate programs aligned with the College’s mission, utilizing a variety of delivery modes.

Goal #2: ACTCM will ensure financial sustainability through increased enrollment and retention, program diversification, development strategies, facilities planning, and cultivation of a relationship with a regionally accredited institution.

Goal #3: ACTCM will ensure and demonstrate student and alumni success through outstanding support services and high quality learning.

Goal #4: ACTCM will support a community of strong and engaged faculty and staff committed to the College’s mission, its programs, and the success of its students.

Goal #5: ACTCM will develop strong external relationships through clinical services, academic and clinical collaborations, public programs, and community outreach.
# Analysis of ACTCM’s Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats

## Opportunities
- Regional accreditation through merger with another accredited institution
- Diversification of academic programs
- Collaboration with other academic and healthcare institutions
- Development of new revenue streams through new clinics and public offerings
- Expansion into new domestic and international markets

## Threats
- Declining applicant/enrollment pool
- Competition from other ACM institutions
- Lack of jobs for graduates
- Cost of living and doing business in San Francisco
- Lack of biomedical evidence base for Chinese medicine
- Challenging regulatory environment

## Strengths
- High quality academic programs
- Highly qualified faculty and staff
- Appropriate resources meeting the needs of the academic programs
- Engaged multi-cultural student body
- Large, successful cadre of alumni
- Strong local and national presence

## Weaknesses
- Lack of regional accreditation
- Tuition a recruitment impediment
- Single purpose institution
- Tuition-dependent revenue stream
- Lack of faculty participation in shared governance
- Lack of full-time faculty and dept. chairs
- Lack of faculty ranking, evaluation, and professional development policies
- Low faculty & staff salaries & benefits
- College does not own its facilities
- Lack of web-assisted and on-line curriculum delivery capacity

## Leveraging strengths to benefit from opportunities
- Strong faculty, programs, and resources make ACTCM an attractive partner in a potential merger, leading to new academic program possibilities outside of Chinese medicine.
- Strong existing community outreach endeavors and relationships provide base for new clinical and public programs.

## Using strengths to minimize impact of threats
- Communicate with potential applicants about strong faculty, programs, and high state and national exam pass rates.
- Expand housing for students in SF.
- Use leadership position to advocate for acupuncture and Chinese medicine.
- Leverage faculty and program strengths to achieve merger, increase degree offerings, and create a competitive advantage with other ACM institutions.

## Ensuring weaknesses will not hinder opportunities
- Seek regional accreditation through merger, thereby enabling diversification of degree offerings
- Increase fund-raising, public programs, and opportunities in new domestic and international markets in order to reduce tuition dependence, increase enrollments, & provide needed faculty & staff support.
- Increase faculty participation in shared governance and develop new faculty policies and processes.

## Ameliorating weaknesses to minimize threats
- Enhance applicant pool through regional accreditation, program expansion, and development of webassisted & on-line curriculum delivery.
- Increase enrollment by enhancing faculty participation in recruitment, admissions, and retention endeavors
- Rapidly achieve regional accreditation in order to be one of the first institutions to offer a first professional doctorate and improve potential market share.
### Objective #1: Develop and implement a first professional doctorate in acupuncture and Chinese medicine

- **Action #1:** Submit completed FPD application to WASC
- **Action #2:** Develop a marketing and recruiting plan
- **Action #3:** Admit first cohort of FPD students
- **Action #4:** Submit eligibility report to ACAOM
- **Action #5:** Submit initial accreditation report to ACAOM

### Objective #2: Develop and implement one or more new degree programs in subject areas to be determined by market analysis and resource feasibility

- **Action #1:** Conduct marketing surveys and feasibility studies to identify highest potential areas for new degree programs in health-related fields
- **Action #2:** Enter into discussions with partner institution to develop new degree programs
- **Action #3:** Create a comprehensive six-year Academic Plan with the goal of three new degree programs by 2020 in addition to the FPD
- **Action #4:** Implement the degree program component of the six-year Academic Plan

### Objective #3: Develop and implement one or more new certificate programs in subject areas to be determined by market analysis and resource feasibility

- **Action #1:** Conduct marketing surveys and feasibility studies to identify high demand specialty areas in AOM or other health related fields
- **Action #2:** Enter into discussions with partner institution to develop new certificate programs
- **Action #3:** Create a comprehensive six-year Academic Plan with the goal of 3-5 new certificate programs by 2020
- **Action #4:** Implement the certificate program component of the six-year Academic Plan

### Objective #4: Independently, or in collaboration with a partner, implement a robust web-based platform for web-assisted and online program delivery

- **Action #1:** Establish a committee to survey and select the best online platform for web-assisted and online program delivery
- **Action #2:** Hire an employee or a consultant to develop and implement the selected online platform
- **Action #3:** Select faculty for an initial pilot of the platform
- **Action #4:** Develop and implement a training program for faculty and students to use the new platform
- **Action #5:** Offer curriculum content in an online and/or blended format
**Objective #1:** Merge with a WASC-accredited institution in order to secure financial aid for new programs, expand program offerings, and improve operating efficiencies

*Action #1:* Provide opportunities for joint institutional meetings at all levels (staff, faculty, students, alumni, and Board) and in both formal and informal settings to explore institutional fit, identify issues, and begin to develop a working relationship

*Action #2:* Ask the corresponding departments of both institutions to submit a joint strategic plan for areas where collaboration can improve operating efficiencies and foster advancement at both institutions

*Action #3:* Complete the process of merging with the selected partner institution

*Action #4:* Coordinate with the partner institution in the adoption and implementation of an integrated administrative and academic data system

**Objective #2:** Diversify revenue resources for the College by creating new development strategies

*Action #1:* Create a comprehensive Development Plan including new fundraising appeals, matching donors, partnership avenues, grant-writing projects, and events and conferences

*Action #2:* Work with partner institution to coordinate fundraising and development efforts, including joint grant-writing projects, joint Board seminar presentations, and joint data collection

*Action #3:* Develop fundraising initiatives with partner clinics affiliated with both institutions

*Action #4:* Raise $1,000,000 or more in non-tuition funding between 2014 and 2020

**Objective #3:** Engage in a comprehensive assessment of current facilities and aesthetics and plan for future facilities needs

*Action #1:* Develop a plan for improving use of and satisfaction with current facilities, including aesthetics and functionality

*Action #2:* Develop facilities standards and key requirements for future facilities

*Action #3:* Complete a long-range plan for facilities, including the possibility of relocation to new facilities at the conclusion of the current leases in 2019

**Objective #4:** Develop and implement a comprehensive Student Recruitment and Retention Plan

*Action #1:* In coordination with partner institution, create a comprehensive Recruitment and Retention Plan

*Action #2:* Undertake to reach target goal of total annual enrollment of 450-500 students by 2020

*Action #3:* Undertake to achieve and maintain an annual retention rate of 80% by 2020

*Action #4:* Coordinate the College’s Recruitment and Retention Plan with the College’s Marketing and Academic Plans to meet target enrollment goals
### Objective #1: Develop a comprehensive assessment program to evaluate and improve student learning and satisfaction, clinical competence, and alumni success

**Action #1:** Identify an individual to lead the institutional assessment endeavor  
**Action #2:** Develop an institutional Assessment Plan with input from the college community  
**Action #3:** Implement the Assessment Plan  
**Action #4:** Communicate assessment results to the college community in order to establish a cycle of program improvement

### Objective #2: Increase student retention and success through improved student support services and communication

**Action #1:** Assess and make necessary improvements to the current system of assessing student retention  
**Action #2:** Assess feasibility of a more consistent schedule for both students and faculty and the possibility of moving to a trimester or semester system  
**Action #3:** Adopt and implement the necessary technology to allow students to register for classes (including clinic shifts) and make payments online  
**Action #4:** Assess and streamline methods of communicating for the college community  
**Action #5:** Provide customer service, cultural competency, sexual harassment, and other training for staff and faculty

### Objective #3: Increase alumni engagement through services that support their professional development and encourage their contribution to the College

**Action #1:** Assess alumni needs and develop a comprehensive Alumni Services Plan  
**Action #2:** Work with the Alumni Council on new initiatives for alumni input in regard to College endeavors and resource needs

### Objective #4: Optimize instructional technology and library resources and training through collaboration with a college partner or contractor

**Action #1:** Develop an Instructional Technology and Library Resources Plan to identify instructional technology and library resources in need of improvement  
**Action #2:** Incorporate instructional technology and library training needed for staff and faculty into the above plan  
**Action #3:** Provide ongoing instructional technology and library training and support
**Objective #1: Develop and implement a new faculty staffing model for full-time and part-time faculty and a new faculty ranking, evaluation, and compensation plan**

Action #1: In consultation with partner institution, develop a comprehensive faculty staffing model—both institutionally and for each degree program—including workload definitions

Action #2: Hire at least one full-time faculty for each academic degree program

Action #3: Implement a new faculty ranking system and a compensation plan correlated with rankings

Action #4: Implement a comprehensive set of faculty evaluation policies and procedures

**Objective #2: Develop orientation policies and procedures for newly hired faculty and staff**

Action #1: Develop and implement orientation policies and procedures for newly hired faculty

Action #2: Develop and implement orientation policies and procedures for newly hired staff

**Objective #3: Develop policies and procedures to support professional development for faculty and staff**

Action #1: Establish a Professional Development Committee

Action #2: Develop policies and procedures in support of professional development

Action #3: Create an appropriate budget and implementation plan

**Objective #4: Support Faculty Council development and a structured process of shared academic governance**

Action #1: Evaluate the current shared academic governance structure

Action #2: Strengthen the shared academic governance structure in order to enhance faculty engagement

Action #3: Enhance communication through establishing an online faculty forum and providing faculty with e-mail access to the Faculty Council Executive Committee

**Objective #5: Increase faculty and staff satisfaction and retention through improved salaries and benefits and minimize the negative impacts of a merger**

Action #1: Maintain an open communication with faculty and staff during the merger process

Action #2: Support faculty and staff during the transition

Action #3: Analyze and develop a system for setting staff salaries and benefits
Objective #1: Establish at least four new off-site outpatient and two hospital-based clinical affiliations
Action #1: Survey local and regional providers to establish interest in collaboration with ACTCM
Action #2: Evaluate potential partners and select four outpatient and two inpatient clinical partners
Action #3: Develop and implement agreements with the selected partners
Action #4: Begin clinical services at selected sites
Action #5: Assess roll-out of clinical services and intern satisfaction

Objective #2: Initiate one or more collaborative clinical research projects with affiliated partners
Action #1: Review ACTCM resources in order to identify needed funding and intellectual and technical resources for future research collaborations
Action #2: Identify potential partners for research projects
Action #3: Designate four PI's and co-PI's to develop research protocols
Action #4: Initiate collaborations

Objective #3: Establish and implement a long-term plan for developing robust CEU, certificate, and public programs, including an annual continuing education conference
Action #1: Complete a scan of the CEU market to determine CEU classes and certificate programs with the greatest potential for growth
Action #2: Develop and implement continuing education classes and 3-5 new certificate programs
Action #3: Develop a Continuing Education Plan, including a budget and assessment plan
Action #4: Charge the CEU Conference Committee to develop a plan for establishing and implementing an annual conference
Action #5: Develop and implement a Public Programs Plan in concert with institutional partner

Objective #4: Increase faculty and alumni involvement in national and international outreach initiatives
Action #1: Develop an appropriate plan
Action #2: Develop funding sources to support travel related to national and international speaking and outreach opportunities
Action #3: Establish a plan to engage faculty and alumni with marketing, admissions, and outreach initiatives to attain enrollment goals
Action #4: Establish a speaker’s bureau made up of faculty and alumni to speak at conferences and with media regarding ACTCM and Chinese medicine

Goal #5: ACTCM will develop strong external relationships through clinical services, academic and clinical collaborations, public programs, and community outreach