



# Academy for Five Element Acupuncture

To: Members of the Academy Community  
Subject: Changes on the Community Board at the Academy  
From: Tim Chapman-Wilson  
Date: July 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2024

Greetings Esteemed Academy Folk!

I am writing to let you know about some changes on the Community Board at the Academy. As you may know, earlier this year we approved significant modifications to the board's bylaws, with the goal of creating a more stakeholder-friendly governance structure. And recently, we have been actively recruiting new members to reflect these changes. I am happy to report that at our recent July 10th meeting, we welcomed seven new board members into stakeholder-designated seats.

Our seven new board members are:

- Desiree Lupo - student seat
- Chris Kiser - student seat
- Joy Esler - alumni seat
- Tiffany Gilliam - alumni seat
- Greta Degen Pursley - faculty seat
- Dan Sachs - faculty seat
- Chuck Graham - staff seat

As you can see, our new board members come from a wide range of different stakeholder groups, which reflect the college's various communities of interest. All of the new members will serve in a purely voluntary capacity while doing this governance work for the college. So please join us in welcoming our new members as they begin their new terms.

In another significant change, our July meeting was the last for Barbara Ellrich, our beloved outgoing chairperson.

Barbara joined the Academy's board three years ago in mid-2021, and was elected into the

Chair role in January 2023. As the former CEO of Maryland University of Integrative Health (formerly Tai Sophia Institute/TAI) Barbara brought to her board work uniquely deep and broad connections to the Five Element community. Her time with us coincided with numerous external challenges and uncertainty in the broader environment. Like other AOM colleges, the Academy experienced financial stresses in the Covid and post-Covid era, including shrinking enrollments and reduced revenues, increasing student loan interest rates, and high inflation. During her tenure Barbara led us skillfully through this difficult period, and she did so with grace and good humor. She intends to remain strongly connected to the college and its community after stepping down from an active board role. We extend to her our heartfelt gratitude for helping to make this organization a better place for everyone.

Barbara filled a “public interest” seat on the Community Board. So with her departure from the board we will be looking to fill this vacancy. If you know of anyone who might be a good candidate for a public member role, please pass the word along. At this time we would especially welcome candidates with backgrounds in higher education, medicine, law, or finance.

Considering the state of the college more broadly, I am happy to report that we are seeing definite signs of increasing enrollments, and an improving financial picture. Our staff and faculty continue to do exceptional work, and we have the ongoing support of many hundreds of Academy alumni around the country. New students continue to be filled with passion and enthusiasm as they embark on this journey of learning. And our patients – whether in the college’s internship clinic or in the treatment rooms of our many graduates – continue to find their lives transformed by this remarkable system of medicine.

Which brings me to one final thought. Please donate to the college if you can! Any amount, no matter how small, is always beneficial. As you all know, the Academy is one of the very few non-profit organizations in the world whose entire organizational purpose and mission is focused on providing accredited entry-level training for those seeking to learn traditional styles of Five Element practice. We feel passionate about preserving this tradition, and we seek to build a strong community of practitioners and supporters. And we do all this work from a non-profit perspective, which means that no single person or group benefits financially from the Academy’s activities. Instead, the community as a whole benefits.

If you are interested in making a contribution, the easiest way to show your support is via the following link:

[Donate! \(https://secure.acceptiva.com/?cst=c7028e\)](https://secure.acceptiva.com/?cst=c7028e)

If you have any questions about the Academy in general, you can also check out our main <https://acupuncturist.edu> website. It is filled with a rich variety of current information about the college's programs and information for prospective students. Or, if you have more specific questions about the Community Board or its governance role, the separate Community Board website (<https://afeaboard.org>) is another good source of information.

Feel free to contact me directly via email too. As the new board Chair, I am happy to connect with any college stakeholders at any time. I am 100% committed to ensuring that we do whatever we can to strengthen our college, improve our acupuncture and herbal medicine programs, nurture and strengthen the broader Five Element alumni community, and ensure the preservation of this remarkable and unique system of medicine.

Thanks as always for your continuing support.

With very best wishes,

Tim Chapman-Wilson  
Community Board Chair