

Academy Operations During COVID-19

We hope that you and all those you care about are keeping well during these challenging times.

It seems hard to believe that just one month ago, the Academy was busy with Massage and TCM students taking classes, faculty wrapping up the semester, Group U students completing their program and Admin team preparing for the arrival of new student groups in TCM, Massage and NHP divisions.

On March 17th, with the Ministry's concurrence, the Academy commenced an early Spring break with the intent to return to classes on April 6 2020, along with the public school system.

The following week, our admin team had to suddenly learn and adapt to operate in a virtual office environment. The Admin team, Program Directors and faculty then worked collectively to evolve theory based in-class presentations to an on-line delivery method.

By the end of March, the full program re-design was put in place and approval received from the Ministry and the CTCMPAO (TCM Regulator) to begin the delivery of classes online, April 6th.

Faculty, staff, and management demonstrated the strongest commitment to learn new technology **in order to** present in a virtual environment, as well as how to prepare lectures to be interesting, vibrant and, engaging for students who are now faces on the screen, instead of students in a traditional classroom. As you may have read, there are many articles which speak to adapting to teaching and learning on-line but their content only becomes 'relevant' when one is suddenly faced with---"my class starts tomorrow at 10:35".

April 6th 2020, the first on-line classes commenced and we have now concluded the 2nd full week. This was not an easy task when one considers the scope of the classes being offered across 5 groups of students at various stages of their training programs...with existing and new faculty learning to adapt....however, the strong support of the Admin team and the Program Directors, the transition did happen, quite well.

Everyone is continuing to learn and improve with the day to day experience. On-line learning is not here to stay though. As soon as the Academy receives notice from the Ministry to return to in-class presentations, all on-line learning will immediately return to the classroom environment. We do believe that the experience will have made us better, improved our communication skills and new ideas gained for online presentation, can transcend into the classroom environment.

Our graduating Group U is at the stage of waiting to complete their written and practical finals. In the interim an invitation was provided to them to join 3 on-line classes of their choice for review purposes and to help them in the engagement of their studies (without fees). The CMTO is rescheduling all examinations to begin in July which is helpful but unfortunately will delay the entry of our graduates into their profession by a few more months.

The graduating TCM group remain on schedule for this June and importantly, the CTCMPAO has granted additional time to complete their direct patient clinical hours, so they will be able to undertake the Pan-Canadian examinations scheduled for October. There are many moving parts to our learning environment and our goal is to keep people informed, learning and moving forward.

In closing, we understand everyone is learning to live in a changed environment and one wherein we have become very conscious of the need to control this virus, so we can one day soon return when things are safer, to a new normal.

We close with a big shout out to our students, a big thank you, to all, for your understanding, patience, and flexibility – and especially to Group Y – you deserve a big pat on the back-- your immediate adaptation to being on-line without previously having met your instructors--is amazing...and what a way to start a program!

We wish all of our students, faculty, staff, and friends of the Academy continued well being and good health within their families.

Ian R. Marshall, Dean

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