Foundations of Naturopathic Medicine Project: Codifying our knowledge.  
It’s time.

Foundations Project International Editors Retreat Caputalizes the Profession

Forward: Welcome Aboard, Buckle Up

By Kate Williams, MA

They are philosophers, teachers, scholars, practitioners, scientists, and academic executive officers. They are naturopathic physicians, devoted professional affiliates, all leading-edge thinkers and真空者。They are 170 plus writers of the Foundations of Naturopathic Medicine Project’s (FNMP) textbook. At the project’s 2004 inception, the goal was to write a modern, definitive book on naturopathic medical philosophy, principles, and clinical application. Three years into its journey they have proven this project much broader in scope and far deeper in impact. Quickly, the focus shifted from simply writing a needed update of Henry Lindlahr, M.D.’s Naturopathy Principles and the Practice of Healing published in 1913, to creating a seminal work aimed at codifying the profession’s knowledge. To assure accuracy in representation and to prevent another century passing without attending to the profession’s theoretical foundations, FNMP expanded its vision. In 2006, NCNM, the profession’s longest standing college, invited the Foundations Project to establish its academic home here, understanding the urgent and essential timing of this initiative in support of professional formation. With this academic institutional framework as an operational platform, the need for FNMP to host conference events, workshops, and symposia became obvious and necessary. They are the backbone of the textbook and its ongoing updates.

The First International Editors Retreat

After much preparation, coordination, and collaborative writing among international team members spanning several continents, FNMP held its first symposia for editors, section leads, and the late Emma Bezy, MSW.3

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en. A school of diverse and unique naturopathic thought, fusing old, new, and emerging philosophies, theories, and practices is beginning to emerge.

Mary Koithan, PhD, RN, professor of Family and Community Medicine at University of Arizona later presented her paper, “The Process of Healing: Constructing and Evaluating Naturopathic Theory.” Having gone through this process within the nursing discipline, a field eager to distinguish itself from the general medical profession, Dr. Koithan raised awareness of naturopathic medicine’s position relative to its emergence as a professionally recognized discipline.

As she presented levels of theory from metaparadigm (an agreed on essential and overarching philosophy and cosmology describing a discipline, in a few simple phrases) to principles of practice, spoken and unspoken questions rose throughout the audience about clearly distinguishing naturopathic medicine from other health care disciplines. For example, does practice create theory, or is theory required to determine practice? How will naturopathic medicine mature as a discipline within traditional academic and professional standards without conforming to fragments of the emerging nature of practice? How can theories really be useful in clinical practice?

Koithan’s message was clear, if you want to grow as a discipline and become a profession influencing positively addressing a growing crisis in healthcare, you must create a “cogent voice of the discipline.” “That means,” she expressed, “examining the professions, sets of theories, disciplinary principles and key pieces of literature for your internal consistency as well as your external applicability and generalizability.”

Litman turned on. Rationalist and Empirical observers in the gallery, spectators of medicine’s past, let out a gut reaction to this。“The Gathering,” an annual event’s effectiveness. While the FNM participants expressed their awe in the multi-generational clan present at the retreat’s outcomes. Don Warren, ND, shared, “It was a peak experience . . . in an atmosphere of expectation, rationality, love of our profession and a great desire to contribute in a thoughtful, reflective manner to the evolution of naturopathic medicine.”

Holden, founding member, Mindbody Stargrove, ND, LAc, history editor, offered, “I am impressed by our ability to look at what we are doing and aspire to articulate it.” Finally, senior editor, James Sensenig, ND, having participated in other significant naturopathic gatherings over the years, proposed that the retreat “be forever thought of as the Skamania Breakthrough Convocation.”

CATAPULTING THE PROFESSION

FORWARD: MOMENTUM BUILDS

Textbook Timeline to Publication

In the end, participants had collective excitement and resonance. Applications section. Ideas were popularized by the presenters, distributed by all retreat participants, distributed around the room. They felt a sense of togetherness like never before.”

The FNM team is forging the way to making naturopathic medicine a coherent and complete system of medical theory and practice ready to meet the needs of physicians, patients, colleges and their students. Acknowledgments abound as participants expressed their awe in the retreat’s outcomes. Jon Warren, ND, shared, “It was a peak experience... in an atmosphere of expectation, rationality, love of our profession and a great desire to contribute in a thoughtful, reflective manner to the evolution of naturopathic medicine.”

The textbook production timeline is on course to encourage more input and planning into shaping the symposium’s agenda, policies and procedures, maximizing the effect’s effectiveness. While the FNM team numbers more than 170 members, its goal is to engage all interested members of the naturopathic medicine community.

NCNM HOLDS A VISION FOR THE PROFESSION’S SUSTAINABILITY

To contain and support the growing Foundations Project mission, NCNM is considering options for expanding the college’s involvement. Dr. Schleich, president of NCNM, views the FNM project as critical to anchoring the profession of naturopathic medicine in an unsailable location within society. Naturopathic medicine, he says is moving unethically toward an orthosonic position in the delivery of primary care in America.

There are red flags along this path, principally the critical need to keep traditions alive by committing to constant research, high quality, clinical education, and wide publication. Dr. Schleich, “Professional formation is complex, unforgiving, and unavoidable when the primary elements align. These include a substantial higher education platform for well-designed training and education that discourages cherry picking from other groups and medical systems; significant increase in licensed practitioners who are sustainably successful; and the consequent ongoing codification of the theoretical and clinical developments and evidence. As a discipline, the world’s oldest 501(c)(3) and academic institution, could enhance the means for safeguarding FNM’s work and products by making the project’s essential fundraising more visible. Don Warren, ND, noted, “A natural convergence point for bringing maturity to the profession,” according to Dr. Schleich, FNM’s growth and development are timely and reflect the profession’s readiness to institutionalize and serve as a guide for the future of healthcare. There is much work to do, and if the momentum generated at the Skamania Lodge Editors’ Retreat is any indicator, the work will be done well and be fruitful as it unfolds.

If you want to learn more about how you can support or be involved in the Foundations of Naturopathic Medicine Project’s growing number of projects, contact:

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You can visit their websites at www.foundationsproject.com and www.ncnm.edu.

1Originally launched as a special project by the Institute for Natural Medicine (FNM), the project moved to a long-term academic home at National College of Natural Medicine (NCNM) in 2006.

2For more information about the distinctions between the Rationalist and Empirical school of thought, see David Debate, Mari L. Cooper, PhD: Washburn, 1997, pp. 5-6.

3Emma Berg income suddenly fall and died soon after the retreat—a heart-wrenching loss for family, friends and the project. She will be deeply missed. Dedicated to the textbook project, and a scholar of religion, she contributed an outstanding chapter—including, among other writings—to be published in the textbook, an original work. To contribute to the work, email at EmmaBerg@wordturners.com

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