



Featured PDA Provider
Questions for the NCCAOM PDA Newsletter

Integrative Medicine Council
NCCAOM PDA Provider # 166669
PDA Newsletter – May 2022 Issue



The PDA Department would like to congratulate NCCAOM Board-Certified Acupuncturist™ and PDA Provider, Gregory Sperber, as the featured Provider for the Spring 2022 issue of the PDA Newsletter. Gregory's background in molecular biology ultimately fueled his passion for Acupuncture and Chinese herbs. Although Gregory was heavily involved in schools and educating students, his curiosity always led him back to the field of herbs. Ultimately, Gregory made the decision to become an NCCAOM PDA Provider in September 2016 and now

he offers courses on Chinese herbs via the Integrative Medicine Council.

Q1: You became an NCCAOM PDA Provider in August of 2016. What inspired you to apply to become a PDA Provider?

A1: First, thank you for inviting me to be a featured PDA provider. It is a fantastic way to connect with everyone.

I have been teaching in the profession since 1998, so when I left my last position as Vice Provost at Bastyr University in 2016, it seemed like a natural extension to continue to educate. However, I do have a little secret about teaching...the more you teach, the more you learn. So, I am very grateful to be teaching and learning and becoming a better clinician to my patients all at the same time. And that was my inspiration, to continue to help students and practitioners to help more patients, and to help my own patients directly. This medicine is so wonderful, I want our profession to keep getting stronger and helping more patients. And if I can play a small role in that, I am very grateful.

Q2: You began your education focusing on Molecular Biology. What sparked your interest in Traditional Chinese Medicine?



A2: It was my martial arts instructor, Shi Fu Mike Patterson. I had wanted to be a medical doctor since I was 11 years old. But when I had frequent calf spasms and was put on a muscle relaxant (which was later discovered to have some major long-term side effects), I mentioned it to my instructor. He took my pulse, gave me an herbal formula suggestion and some lifestyle advice. I have been spasm free ever since, so long as I follow his advice. So, my plans changed at age 19: I wanted to be a healer not a doctor. And to me that meant combining western medicine and Chinese medicine...

Q3: You were the Dean at the College of Eastern Medicine at Southern California University of the Health Sciences and were then named Vice Provost at Bastyr University. What was your favorite part of those positions?

A3: I loved being part of the educational process of so many students and being part of teams with the same goal. What a gift and a privilege to be able to help them be the best practitioners they could become.

Q4: How did you become interested in offering continuing education courses?

A4: I had been interested in offering continuing education for many years and did seminars at conventions and online for many years before doing it on my own. First, it was to promote my book, but I really enjoyed it. While working for various schools in our profession, I was always too busy to start things. But when my last position ended, I saw my opportunity.

Q5: What made you specialize in Chinese herbs?

A5: In general, I think specializations happen somewhat organically. Writing my book, *Integrative Pharmacology, Combining Modern Pharmacology with Integrative Medicine*, with its emphasis on drug-herb interactions, really helped me to dive into herbs. Coupled with my current podcast, *Sperb's Herbs*, I just keep going deeper down the rabbit hole...but there is still so much more to learn...

Q6: Your PDA approved courses are centered around Chinese herbology. What is your favorite herb/formula and why?

A6: What a tough question! Honestly, I love delving into those small formulas that are so elegant, beautiful, historical, and balanced at so many levels. Formulas such as *Si Wu Tang* (Four Substances Decoction) or *Si Jun Zi Tang* (Four Gentlemen Decoction) are amazing and form great building blocks for so many other formulas.



Q7: You are the founder of the Integrative Medicine Council. Tell us more about this organization.

A7: This is my company for creating and distributing continuing education. It reflects my philosophy that we are working with and should be integrated into the entire medical system in our country(ies). And the council part comes from the idea that we all should be helping each other to grow ourselves, our profession, and our patients.

Q8: You are one of the first podcasters within our profession. What makes you passionate about hosting Sperb's Herbs Podcasts?

A8: I have never completed an episode of Sperb's Herbs without learning a ton more about that herb or formula. It is never ending; no matter how much you know or learn, there is always so much more to learn. And the audience gets to go along with me on the journey. Who wouldn't be passionate about that?

Q9: What might someone be surprised to know about you?

A9: People are often surprised to learn that I opened a paintball supply store when I was 18 and played A LOT of paintball. I was part of a team that was starting to gear up for professional play just as that was starting. Never played professionally, but it was a great experience!

Q10: What do you do when you are not working?

A10: Besides reading and spending time with my wife, three dogs, and two cats? I am currently learning to be a web developer and regularly get together with my friends to play advanced board games. And I try to do something a little fun every day, whether that is watching a fun show or playing a video game.