Alberta College of Occupational Therapists

Council Meeting Minutes

October 24, 2020

**Microsoft Teams**

Attending:

Andrea Petryk – President, Regulated Member

Jennifer Lee – Vice President, Regulated Member

Arwen Caines – Regulated Member

Heidi Knupp – Regulated Member

Peter Portlock – Public Member

Carrie Hait – Regulated Member

Whitney McKenzie – Regulated Member

Elizabeth Taylor – Past President, Regulated Member

Marianne Baird – Registrar, Regulated Member

Mallory Foreman – Recording Secretary

Regrets:

Tiffany Poltz – Public Member

1. **Call to Order and Preliminaries**

Andrea called the meeting to order at 9:07 a.m. and outlined the agenda for the day.

1. **Adoption of the Agenda**

**MOTION:** To adopt the agenda – Peter (MOVED) Carrie (SECONDED). CARRIED.

1. **University of Alberta Report**

Gayla Grinde, Assistant Teaching Professor with the University of Alberta Faculty of Rehabilitation Medicine Occupational Therapy department joined the meeting at 9:17 a.m.

Gayla discussed the changes that have occurred in the department and the ones that are underway:

* Classes for the first-year students will be taught virtually with a one-week in-person class for the OT Clinical Competency Camp. All classes for the second-year students will be taught online.
* Resignations from three OT Department staff.
* The launch for the 2020-2025 Strategic Plan for the Occupational Therapy Department has started. The focus is mainly on refreshing and updating the curriculum.
* Credit load for the MScOT Program has been increased to 90 credits.
* The combination of the Master of Business Administration degree and the Master of Science in Occupational Therapy degree has been approved with first admissions being accepted in Fall of 2021.
* Seats for first year students have been increased.
* The Department is evaluating how to handle a possible shortage of fieldwork placements.

Gayla then answered questions from Council:

Q: What is the plan for engaging community and ACOT?

A: A framework and structure for this is being developed with a first draft being created   
 soon. The students are a large stakeholder group to engage. Once the framework   
 has been established, the Department will be reaching out for feedback.

Q: Is there any plan to reinstate the campus with Augustana?

A: There is no current plan to reinstate with Augustana due to restructuring.

Q: Since there are some evaluations of the students that are necessary in-person, has   
 the University discussed how this affects the students?

A: Maintaining the level of assessments and competencies virtually has proven to be   
 no less proficient, just a different method. The University wants to be sure that the   
 students are coming out of the program with what they need to be competent OTs.   
 They are reporting feeling safer, more flexible, and they are more willing to take   
 risks in online classes.

Council thanked Gayla for joining the meeting.

1. **Strategic Planning**

Marianne presented the 2020-2023 Strategic Plan Action Items list. With a few exceptions of delays due to the pandemic, most items on the list are on track for completion as scheduled. Regarding the line item on liaising with the University of Alberta OT department, Council noted that with the Faculty and Department going through restructuring, this is an opportunity for ACOT to provide input into the evolving curriculum.

***ACTION:*** *Marianne to connect with Mary Forhan, Chair, Faculty of Rehabilitation Medicine OT Department to offer dialogue on how the evolving curriculum will map to ACOT’s Standards of Practice and Code of Ethics.*

***ACTION:*** *Item 3.2 More people nominated to Council than positions available each year – update the comments for this line to reflect the number of Council vacancies that were recruited to, combined with the number of applications received (7 applicants for 2 positions).*

Council then reviewed the Action Items List. There were no questions about the status of the Action Items.

***ACTION:*** *Item #244 – combine this item with the Strategic Plan Update discussion.*

1. **Generative Thinking – Remaining Questions from 2019 Council Annual Self Evaluation**

Council discussed the remaining questions as follows:

Question #1 – How can we ensure all opinions are brought forward during the Council meetings? Discussion: continue with the round-table system to prompt each person in the meeting to contribute their thoughts. When meeting virtually, continued use of the chat box is helpful to ensure all Councilors can include their opinions when others are speaking.

Question #2 – What other facilitation techniques would we like implemented during Council meetings? Discussion: look at separating out the meeting chat management from the chair function. Ask for a timekeeper and a chat manager for each meeting. Consider using the Circle Way technique. This method consists of having one person in the role of guardian who checks on the tone of the conversation and signals a break if needed when the topic or tone is becoming challenging. Anyone can ask for a “circle round” at any time.

***ACTION:*** *Carrie to present further information on the Circle Way at the next Council meeting.*

Question #3 – In future if needed, how would Council like the President to address Council members whose behaviour needs to change? Discussion: it was agreed that the current Council consists of very engaged and communicative members. If issues do arise in future, it is recommended they be addressed starting with an informal approach for less serious issues (e.g. discussion between President and Councillor outside of the meetings), and progressing to a more formal approach for more serious items (e.g. with witness present for the discussion). Scenarios such as when Council has an issue with the Executive or a Public Member undermining the functions of Council were discussed. Options such as a whistleblower process, escalating concerns to a neutral third party such as ACOT’s Operations Manager to bring in external consultants when needed, and seeking the opinion of the Public Members when appropriate were considered.

It was mentioned that the current mentoring structure for new Councillors contributes to avoiding these potential issues.   
  
***ACTION:*** *Marianne to discuss support role for Council with the Operations Manager.*  
  
***ACTION:*** *Marianne and Jennifer to draft steps for handling problematic behaviour with a Councillor.*  
  
***ACTION:*** *Jennifer and Marianne to work with the Governance Committee on creating a Council complaints resolution process.*

1. **Generative Thinking – 2019 & 2020 Council Annual Self Evaluation Results**

Council noted not all of their comments appeared in the 2020 Council Annual Self Evaluation Results.

***ACTION:*** *Marianne to add in the latest responses to the 2020 Council Evaluation.*

It was mentioned that a summary document for the evaluation items that have votes of “disagree” or “strongly disagree” would be beneficial, and there are fewer of these this year.

The timing of the annual evaluation was considered in context of new Councillors starting their terms in September. The length of the annual evaluation with 72 questions was also discussed.

***ACTION:*** *Marianne will create a summary document of items with “disagree” or “strongly disagree” responses for comparison to last year’s responses and create draft actions for each of these items.*

***ACTION:*** *The Governance Committee will review and streamline the Council Annual Evaluation questions.*

1. **Generative Thinking – CLEAR and CNAR Conference Learnings**

***ACTION:*** *defer this item to the November 24, 2020 Council Meeting.*

1. **Committee reports**

Governance Committee   
  
Council reviewed the Past President policy and agreed “he/she” wording should change to “they/their” wording.

***ACTION:*** *Update the Past President Policy’s pronouns to the neutral “they/their”.*

**MOTION:** Update all Council policies to have neutral pronouns – Heidi (MOVED) Arwen (SECONDED). CARRIED.

***ACTION:*** *Jennifer to follow up with ACOT’s Operations Manager about pronoun updates for all ACOT policies and bylaws.*

Council then reviewed the Governance Policies (GPs) 1 – 5 and approved them with no further changes beyond what Governance Committee had recommended.

**MOTION:** To accept Governance Policies 1-5 – Arwen (MOVED) Heidi (SECONDED). CARRIED.

***ACTION:*** *Jennifer to send record of changes to GPs 1 – 5 to Council.*

The update that will be required to ACOT’s bylaw to increase the Public Member proportion of Council to 50% was discussed. The updated bylaws will come to Council for approval in January and will then be reviewed by Field Law in time for implementation on April 1, 2021. There is a question outstanding regarding how the 50% will be calculated.

***ACTION:*** *Marianne will follow up with Andrew Douglas regarding the calculation of 50% Public Members on Council.*

Acting Against Racism and Intolerance (AARI) Committee

This Committee includes a three-member Advisory Panel and a ten-member Standing Committee. Their first meetings will be happening within the next two weeks. Information on this will be brought forward to the next council meeting.

Four responses were received for the Request for Proposal for a consultant to work with the Advisory Panel, Standing Committee and ACOT. The consultant and a representative from Insight Psychological will support the work, provide members of the Advisory Panel and Committee with counselling and support as needed.

Council discussed a negative response from a registrant surrounding the AARI work, and the need for mitigating the risk of the Committee volunteers becoming targets of negative feedback. It was agreed that constructive feedback is always welcomed by ACOT, however destructive feedback that is intended to harm will be handled as a complaint in context of ACOT’s Code of Ethics requirements.

1. **Open Forum**

Council discussed the issue brought forward by a registrant anonymously indicating dissatisfaction with ACOT’s Acting Against Racism and Intolerance work in a non-constructive manner. Council noted destructive feedback that is intended to harm may be handled as a complaint in context of ACOT’s Code of Ethics. The Complaints Director can initiate a formal complaint on her own initiative pursuant to s.56 of the *Health Professions Act* (HPA).

Marianne reviewed the Open Forum Survey questions with Council and noted that Hélène Sabourin, CAOT Chief Executive Officer and Robin Telasky, SAOT Executive Director will be joining the Open Forum.

Andrea mentioned the outcome for the Open Forum is to have feedback from and openness to the Registrants.

When the majority of participants joined the meeting, a round table of introductions of the Councillors and guests was done.

Hélène Sabourin discussed how CAOT has been very active in advocating for the profession of OT. Many tools and resources are being created, including refreshing the Return to Work sheet, a public awareness campaign about OT, and advocating for large employers extended health benefits to include OT services. There has been a focus on the role in terms of supporting mental health. This has proven to be a substantial issue, especially due to the pandemic and OTs returning to work.

Robin Telasky reported that SAOT has been creating tools for OTs as well. A large-scale media campaign has been designed to describe what occupational therapy means to people. SAOT is monitoring issues on proposed changes to insurance coverage of soft tissue injuries. An advocacy campaign has been launched around access to early OT intervention services in schools.

Marianne then provided responses to the questions submitted before the Open Forum:

* CORECOM has an October update which includes an invitation to participate in consultation sessions on the Core Competencies being developed. The links to the update and invitation to the consultation sessions will be sent out in the next eNews.
* The 2020-2023 Strategic Plan is on ACOT’s website. Given all the changes in 2020, Council will relook at the Plan in November 2020 to determine if it needs to be updated with new information.
* Due to Bill 30, an increase to the number of Public Members on Council to 50% will be required. This is the case for all health Colleges’ councils. ACOT’s bylaws are in process of being updated to reflect this requirement.
* The mandatory training on preventing sexual abuse and sexual misconduct is still required to be completed by all registrants by the end of February, and a condition for practice permit renewal.

An attendee asked how the increase in the percentage of public members may change the culture of Council, whether the size of Council will increase, and what the government’s view and reasoning were behind this change. Peter, Public Member of Council noted many jurisdictions have moved in this direction, and there is concern about the volume of work Council requires, with fewer regulated members to do the work.

An attendee asked if cross-provincial licensing is being considered. Marianne mentioned that the Association of Canadian Occupational Therapy Regulatory Organizations (ACOTRO) is developing a memorandum of understanding for occupational therapists’ registration in one province to be acceptable across Canada. This will be discussed further at the ACOTRO meeting in November and must be considered in context of what our governing legislation permits.

Council thanked the attendees for joining the Open Forum.

1. **Open Forum Debrief**

Council agreed that there was a blend of registrants who wanted to engage in conversation and some who attended solely to listen. There was a significant discussion around the increase of public members requirement and cross-jurisdiction registration.

***ACTION:*** *Send out a post-Open Forum survey to the attendees.*

***ACTION:*** *Send out an eNews with question themes and answers from the Open Forum.*

***ACTION:*** *Increase next Open Forum to 1 hour and add a brief round table to ask participants “what did you think, did we address everything you’re interested in?”*

**Committee Reports Continued**

Competence Committee

The review and evaluation rubric was tested on 6 Continuing Competence Program (CCP) submissions. A survey about it was sent out to registrants, with 170 responses received. The Committee will now focus on reviewing the responses.

The Competence Committee is also focused on updating the review and evaluation policies and procedures.

Resuming review and evaluations of CCP submissions (formerly known as audits) will be communicated by virtual roadshows and eNews in late 2020 – early 2021.

Whitney noted Alberta Health Services (AHS) and Covenant Health aligns with Competence Committee work in terms of competencies and the CCP.

***ACTION:*** *Marianne to explore AHS and Covenant Health alignment with the CCP and report findings back to Council.*

**MOTION:** To accept the Governance Committee Report, the Acting Against Racism and Intolerance Committee Report, and the Continuing Competence Committee Report as presented – Arwen (MOVED) Peter (SECONDED). CARRIED.

1. **Consent Items**

September 15, 2020 Council Meeting Minutes

**MOTION:** To approve the September 15, 2020 Council Meeting Minutes with no additional changes beyond the edits submitted prior to this meeting – Peter (MOVED) Jennifer (SECONDED). CARRIED.

RL 2.1 Budget vs Actuals Q2 2020

Marianne highlighted selected line items in the budget vs actuals including:

ACOT’s employee benefits provider has been charging less than the contracted amount, and we are in contact with them to correct this. We have confirmed all eligible staff have coverage in place.

Information technology (IT) and memberships and subscriptions costs have been analyzed for further precision in budgeting for next year.

**MOTION:** To accept RL 2.1 Budget Vs. Actuals Q2 2020 – Whitney (MOVED) Carrie (SECONDED). CARRIED.

Complaints Activity Report

Marianne reviewed the Complaints Activity Report and there were no questions about it. Council expressed appreciation for the addition of tracking information for potential complaint inquiries.

**MOTION:** To accept the Complaints Activity Report – Jennifer (MOVED) Arwen (SECONDED). CARRIED.

Practice Inquiries Activity

Marianne reviewed the practice inquiries activity reports for COVID and non-COVID items. Council commended the Director of Policy and Practice’s work on and structure of the report and noted in future we may need to look at whether an additional person is needed for this area.

1. **Reflection on Governance**

Councillors agreed we met our Ends Policy during the meeting, through:

* Registrants coming to the Open Forum with good questions,
* Discussions happening at a strategic level on trends and anticipation of future requirements, such as 50% public membership on Council,
* Discussions on the work of the AARI Committee and its importance to the public,
* The dedication of Councillors,
* The materials provided for the meeting,
* A desire to challenge ourselves to bring stakeholders and the public to future Open Forums.

1. **Meeting Survey/Evaluation**

Council then completed the meeting’s survey/evaluation.

**MOTION:** For an in-camera meeting – Peter (MOVED) Arwen (SECONDED). CARRIED.

The meeting adjourned at 2:57 p.m.