



Alberta College of Occupational Therapists

Council Meeting Minutes

October 27, 2021

### **Microsoft Teams**

Attending:

Jennifer Lee – Vice President, Regulated Member

Arwen Caines – Regulated Member

Heidi Knupp – Regulated Member

Whitney McKenzie – Regulated Member

Carrie Hait – Regulated Member

Tiffany Poltz – Public Member

Dr. Tom Smith – Public Member

Christie Bergman – Public Member

Marianne Baird – CEO & Registrar

Ambere Porter for Mallory Foreman – Recording Secretary

Regrets:

Andrea Petryk – President, Regulated Member

Elizabeth Taylor – Past President

### **1. Overview of Meeting & Approval of Agenda**

Jennifer called the meeting to order at 5:34p.m.

Jennifer reviewed the Agenda and Council added a discussion to Generative Thinking on Bill 49.

**MOTION:** To accept the agenda with the adjustment discussed – Heidi (MOVED), Tiffany (SECONDED). CARRIED.

### **2. Strategic Planning**

#### Strategic Plan Action Items Report

Marianne noted most items in the Strategic Plan are on track for completion as scheduled. Highlighted items:

a) Looking to create a similar public advisory network to BC PAN with the Federation to increase public engagement. Most Colleges do have some difficulty with public

engagement. A structure is proposed where there are several public members that may or may not include members currently on College Councils. They would address questions submitted by various Colleges.

b) Alberta Health has provided advice on how to improve our request to update Schedule 15 of the *Health Professions Act* to add the ability for OTs to diagnose. We are working through this with legal. Diagnosis is occurring in some OTs' current practice, so the Schedule 15 needs to be updated to reflect this.

### Action Items Update

Discussion on the Action Items presented included:

a) New – Marianne invited to attend the Academic Advisory Committee of the OT department in November, where they will discuss the curriculum. This Committee has been dormant for a few years and will likely help the OT department with their accreditation.

b) Item #338 is in progress. We are mapping performance review items from Covenant Health and Alberta Health Services (AHS) to our Continuing Competence Program (CCP) to try and reduce the amount of work people have to do to comply with the CCP. We are also starting to reach out to CBI, Life Mark, Care West, Capital Care, Millard Health.

Question: Are any other OT Colleges across Canada doing this mapping with employers and their performance agreements?

***ACTION:*** Marianne to check with other OT regulators across the country whether they map CCP requirements to employers' performance review components.

### Practice Inquiries Activity

Marianne noted the volume of practice inquiries is increasing and this may indicate that more OTs are hearing we are providing this service. Scope of practice and ethical scenarios questions continue to be the most frequent ones. We are reprioritizing each practice guidance document update in part, based on the inquiries.

Council noted a 49% increase in queries is a lot and asked how is staff managing this? Is there something else that we could think of to be supportive of the staff? Do we need to look at more resourcing?

Marianne stated she is grateful that we have Alanna as backfill for Angela and a new OT student is joining us on Nov. 1 who may be able to assist with some of the work. Rebalancing workload is a constant discussion with the staff. Overflow comes to Marianne when needed. In future, will look at budget possibilities for resourcing as needed.

**MOTION:** To accept the Strategic Plan Action Items Report, Action Items Update and the Practice Inquiries Report for information – Tom (MOVED), Arwen (SECONDED).  
CARRIED.

### 3. Generative Thinking Part One

#### Bill 49

Marianne indicated Bill 49 was introduced in the house yesterday. It deals with labour mobility within Canada. It does and doesn't change things for ACOT. We already have a Labour Mobility Support Agreement (LMSA) through the Association of Canadian Occupational Therapy Regulatory Organizations (ACOTRO). The LMSA and Regulatory History forms are used across the country. Bill 49 is focused on expediting the registration process, but we already meet the timelines outlined in the Bill. It does add on another layer of reporting to Alberta Labour & Immigration, as they will ask for proof that we did things in certain timelines. We already do this within the timelines, but we will have to show the tracking, which does create an administrative burden.

Council noted this means more work for staff and asked if we need to look at increasing fees. Marianne indicated we aren't in need of this yet.

Council discussed the benefits of distributing communications about all that the College does with its small staff.

***ACTION:*** Marianne to send a future eNews outlining all the functions the College performs with its small staff complement.

#### **4. University of Alberta OT Department Report**

Gayla Grinde, Assistant Teaching Professor at University of Alberta Faculty of Rehabilitation Medicine's OT Department spoke to the report provided. Gayla's work focuses on mental health, interdisciplinary work and external supervision. The report outlined personnel changes, upcoming accreditation through CAOT, plus program and curriculum changes.

U of A for Tomorrow – the Service Excellence Transformation – a new committee that will navigate the transformation of the university. The design phase is ending, and the building phase is beginning. Re-definition of the OT program and Rehab Medicine will go into 2023. We are presently still within our own faculty.

COVID – students that have vaccine exceptions and others have met with the academic chair. Fieldwork placements are a concern for these students and will need to be addressed. Council asked if vaccine exempted students will be able to use the exemption at placements?

Gayla noted this is a complex issue with concerns about setting precedents and the emphasis is on accommodation, but this is new. Employers are looking at setting limits on this as well. Lots of employers are managing this issue across the province.

**MOTION:** To accept the University of Alberta report as presented – Tiffany (MOVED), Arwen (SECONDED). CARRIED.

#### **5. Generative Thinking Part Two**

##### Vice-President Election

Executive Votes:

Andrea's President term ends in December. The vote for President would be for January 2022 for a term of two years.

Council will achieve a balance of Public members and OT members voting by Whitney voting and Carrie not voting for the next meetings until January.

Two Councillors have put their names forward for VP, so Carrie will resume her voting rights today for the election only.

**MOTION:** Jennifer to move into the role as President starting in January 2022. – Arwen (MOVED), Tiffany (SECONDED). CARRIED.

Arwen and Heidi both spoke to why they would like to be Vice-President. Council then discussed the two candidates.

**MOTION:** Arwen to take on the Vice-President role effective in January 2022. – Carrie (MOVED), Tiffany (SECONDED). CARRIED.

### Acting Against Racism and Intolerance (AARI) Next Steps

Council discussed the different stages and speeds that various employers and organizations are taking on this work. There is lots to digest and consider regarding what is within ACOT's mandate.

Question: thinking of the University, is there anything we can do to help them with Indigenous people/students?

Marianne noted the U of A OT department does have the AARI report, and it will be on their committee agendas soon. ACOT is working with the Physiotherapy Alberta College and Association (PACA) and the Alberta College of Speech Language Pathologists and Audiologists (ACSLPA) to approach the Faculty of Rehabilitation Medicine to collaborate on AARI work, e.g., to seek grants to develop an online course. Updating the current Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) on Indigenous history or developing some more advanced content will be explored as areas to collaborate on. This would potentially be like the Prevention of Sexual Abuse & Misconduct course, so we could assign it as mandatory modules.

Council discussed different ways the AARI report is being used – at one Councillor's workplace they have been using their bi-weekly meetings to discuss the report, and an OT student referenced the report in a presentation at AHS recently. Once Councillor noted they have been having AARI conversations with their family.

Question: With the work being done in other organizations – how can we collaborate and benefit from the work that the others are doing? What quick wins can we do in the College and in the Council? Looking at anti-oppressive practice as a whole – how can we support registrants to protect the public?

A Councillor indicated they struggled with the report as it took a different direction than they had expected. It is important work but how does it connect to the regulator standpoint of protecting the public? It was noted further detail on this would be looked at over the coming weeks.

Marianne showed a draft AARI Report Recommendations Tracking document that will help identify what we will take on and what might be explored as an association role. A draft of the completed tracker will be brought to the next Council meeting. Council noted that they appreciate the tracking document.

All but one of the AARI Committee members has decided to continue with the work. A summary of what will be taken back to the AARI Committee for further exploration included:

- Define fit of recommendations with ACOT versus with the Society of Alberta Occupational Therapists (SAOT)
- Work closely with the University, and start preparing future OTs
- Explore collaborative opportunities to work with other organizations that are already doing this work
- Inspire and lead in this work within OT
- How do we hold people accountable to practice so they do not cause harm to the public?
- How can we support each other in this work?

The group acknowledged that check-ins and acknowledgement of how complex this work is are helpful.

***ACTION:*** AARI work to be added to the Strategic Plan Refresh session agenda.

***ACTION:*** Council to come with new ideas of how we would move this work forward.

### Risk Register

Recently items in the Risk Register include:

a) There is a global increase in hacking and ransom ware attacks. ACOT is in the process of purchasing cyber insurance and we already have information stored in the Cloud, with good security practices. Two factor authentication has been implemented for registrants and staff.

b) Cross jurisdictional practice and investigations is an issue with potentially more costs associated.

Council asked about item #26 on the Register, regarding OT students training to accreditation requirements. With having additional placements (e.g., ACOT is now offering an OT student placement) how does the U of A ensure the proper training is taking place? A new OT program curriculum in place could increase the risk. Is there a robust evaluation of the placement setting/employers?

Marianne noted that students have four placements at different organizations that must meet various criteria such as a placement in a mental health setting, a physical health setting, a community setting, etc.

***ACTION:*** Marianne to group the risks in the Risk Register by type and potentially reduce the COVID risk rating now that COVID is no longer a new risk. Further risks to add to the register include the vaccine mandate and its risk to the supply of OTs, in turn affecting the public's access to OTs; the levels of burnout among OTs and the College's role to monitor this; capacity issues for OTs that can arise from burnout, possibly leading to substance use and incapacity.

## **6. Committee Reports**

### Governance Committee (GC)

Two GC reports were reviewed, one for September and one for October.

September –

a) Whitney is now a voting OT member and Carrie will be the non-voting OT member. In the case that an OT member is absent Carrie would be able to vote in their place to keep the ratio of voting OT and Public members constant.

b) The Council annual questionnaire will have an optional comment area for each section rather than for each question.

c) Registrar review – GC consulted with some other organizations and discovered that what we are using is consistent with others. Adding two new external people to provide feedback as part of the Registrar's evaluation would support this work, along with a focus on the measurable outcomes of the strategic plan.

d) Bylaw change to compensation – President and Vice-President’s compensation is referred to generally in the Bylaws for transparency and will be specified re: dollar amount in a procedure document for tracking.

**MOTION:** To accept the changes to the Registrar’s Review and evaluation process as presented – Heidi (MOVED), Arwen (SECONDED). CARRIED.

**MOTION:** To accept the addition of a compensation procedure noting specific amounts provided to the President and Vice President – Tiffany (MOVED), Arwen (SECONDED). CARRIED.

October – GC looked at Council procedures and updating the Councillor onboarding procedures, removed some lines that discussed governance policy, measuring Ends within meetings and financial audits as these were better reflected in other policies or procedures. The Oath of Confidentiality was reworded.

Council agreed this was “tightening things up and making things clearer”.

**MOTION:** To approve the changes to the Bylaws, Oath of Confidentiality and on-boarding as presented. – Whitney (MOVED), Tom (SECONDED). CARRIED.

### Competence Committee

All CCP review and evaluations are now completed, including coaching conversations with those registrants who had “not acceptable” or “conditional” ratings for their CCP submissions. All current Competence Committee members will be continuing with the committee. It was a lot of work to complete the review and evaluations but an exciting and an invigorating process.

Question: how did registrants respond to the coaching conversations?

Marianne indicated most of the coaching conversations went well, and most registrants came prepared and updated their submissions quickly based on the conversations. All conditional and not-acceptable submissions will be pulled again next year for repeat review and evaluation.

**MOTION:** To accept the Competence Committee report for information – Jennifer (MOVED), Tiffany (SECONDED). CARRIED.



### Acting Against Racism & Intolerance Committee

The AARI report has gone out to registrants and the public via eNews and the website. The AARI Advisory Panel and Committee are now merged into one, and they will be focused on the implementation of the recommendations in the AARI report. The Committee would like to have periodic touchpoints with Council. December will be the next Committee meeting and then in 2022 there will be touch-points scheduled with Council.

**MOTION:** To accept the AARI Committee report as presented - Tom (MOVED), Arwen (SECONDED). CARRIED.

## **7. Consent Items**

### Review of Last Meeting's Minutes

Jennifer reviewed the Meeting Minutes, asking for any edits for each page.

***ACTION:*** on page 2, update the September 30 closure notice for this year to indicate this will also occur going forward in future years.

**MOTION:** To accept the September 2021 Council meeting minutes as presented with the revision suggested – Heidi (MOVED), Arwen (SECONDED). CARRIED.

### Registrar Limitation (RL) 2.1: Finances 2021 Quarter 2 (Q2) Budget vs Actual

Marianne noted ACOT's budget versus actuals is healthy and we continue to look for cost savings opportunities e.g., savings around credit card processing fees after a change from the Moneris to the Elavon processing service. A Guaranteed Income Certificate (GIC) was put in place last year to get some additional revenue. Legal costs continue to be under budget, as we allow extra room for this in case we have more investigations and hearings than anticipated.

**MOTION:** To accept the Q2 Budget vs Actual Report as presented – Whitney (MOVED), Arwen (SECONDED). CARRIED.

### Complaints Activity

There are four active complaints and five have been closed this year. All Colleges are reporting an increase in complaint activity over the past couple of years, and we do not know the reasons why, although one could assume people are becoming more familiar with the complaints process over time. Inquiries about the complaints process are also on the rise.

**MOTION:** To accept the Complaints Report as presented – Tiffany (MOVED), Tom (SECONDED). CARRIED.

### **8. Annual Meeting Survey Results**

Most items scored in the “agree” or “strongly agree” range, with a handful of items scoring in the “neutral” or “disagree” range. There are some comments we need to address, and people are encouraged to bring forward their thoughts in or after the Council meetings.

Council thanked Heidi for making the survey much shorter than is used to be, and agreed it was easier to complete this year with fewer redundancies.

**ACTION:** *bring a plan back to Council to address the comments that were received.*

This is in part, how we improve our excellence in governance.

### **9. Reflection on Governance**

Council agreed the Ends were met during this meeting via an efficient, focused meeting process that spent an appropriate amount of time on each topic. It was refreshing to not be rushed through items this time, the discussions were fruitful, and the Executive will continue to look at the agendas to make sure they are the right size and have the right content for future meetings.

### **10. Meeting Survey**

The survey was completed by those in attendance.

**11. Adjournment** - the October 27, 2021, Council Meeting concluded at 8:49 p.m.