

Microsoft Teams

Attending:

Jennifer Lee – President, Regulated Member
Arwen Caines – Vice President, Regulated Member
Carrie Hait – Regulated Member
Whitney McKenzie – Regulated Member
Dr. Tom Smith – Public Member
Christie Bergman – Public Member
Dennis Fitzgerald – Public Member

Marianne Baird – CEO & Registrar
Mallory Foreman – Recording Secretary

1. Gathering

Council confirmed there was quorum in attendance.

Jennifer called the March 21, 2023, ACOT Council Meeting to order at 5:49 p.m.

A roundtable was held to check-in with all attending.

2. Approval of Agenda

With no changes suggested for the agenda, Council brought forward a motion.

MOTION: To approve the March 21, 2023, ACOT Council Meeting Agenda as presented - Dennis (MOVED) Arwen (SECONDED). CARRIED.

Jennifer asked if there was anyone from Council who would be interested in providing a positive and supportive hello to the ACOT staff members. Arwen had previously attended one of the staff's daily check-ins late in February during the busiest part of registration renewal season, and Jennifer had emailed staff shortly thereafter, both of which were well received. Christie replied that she would be happy to speak to the staff.

ACTION: *Marianne to contact Christie to attend a future staff check-in or staff team building day.*

3. Review Open Forum Outline

Marianne mentioned that H el ene Sabourin the Chief Executive Officer of the Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists (CAOT) confirmed she will attend the Open Forum. Also, Robin Telasky, Executive Director from the Society of Alberta Occupational Therapists (SAOT) is joining us.

Council arranged the speaking order for the Open Forum

A Councillor mentioned that it would be good to ask the attendees what their feedback is on the eLearning module.

Context: The national eLearning module was developed with the Association of Canadian Occupational Therapy Regulatory Organizations (ACOTRO) and in partnership with occupational therapy regulatory bodies across Canada to educate occupational therapists about the 2021 Competencies for OTs in Canada.

4. Open Forum

Before having the guests join, Jennifer asked everyone around the table to introduce themselves to H el ene and Robin. Further introductions were done with the one guest in attendance.

Jennifer noted the open forum exists as a space to hear about what is happening within ACOT, and in return, to hear the guest's concerns, thoughts, questions, and feedback. She also recognized the collaboration with SAOT and CAOT.

H el ene provided with her update from CAOT:

- They have received a \$150,000 grant for collaborative primary care teams. This will be used to create learning modules on collaborative leadership.
- CAOT has met with Veterans Affairs Canada to discuss challenges that OT's experience such as dilution of the OT role, issues with fee payments, etc.
- Immigration and Refugee Canada will be meeting with CAOT.
- Met with federal Ministers to discuss addictions and mental health issues, and with the Minister of Health regarding the health human resource crisis.
- Accessibility Standard Canada is establishing a technical committee. CAOT will be submitting expert names to sit on that committee.
- CAOT was able to provide input to the National Seniors Council regarding aging at home.
- Advocating for the Canadian student loan program to include Occupational Therapy for loan forgiveness.
- The TRC task force has been working for five years. They are currently looking at transition, and they have approved a commitment statement.

- CAOT continues to advocate for OT to be included by extended health benefits providers. The coverage for OT services is not enough as mental health is at a crisis across Canada.
- They have been included in work on Canadian guidelines for post-covid services.
- The 2025 CAOT conference will be held in Edmonton.

Robin spoke on behalf of SAOT:

- SAOT has a new sub-committee under the Professional Affairs Committee focused on Workers' Compensation Board (WCB) issues for OTs. WCB is the lowest payer for OT contracts in Alberta. A case document will be prepared in June.
- The Alberta Retired Teachers' Association has added OT services to their benefit plan.
- SAOT will be welcoming two OT students for summer positions.

Jennifer and Marianne provided the updates from ACOT:

- ACOT has released a call for applications for new Council members.
- The refreshed Standards of Practice (SoP) and Code of Ethics (CoE) have been submitted to the government as required by Bill 46.
- The Continuing Competence Program will be updated over the next year to recognize the SoP and CoE changes and the 2021 Competencies for OTs in Canada. Stay tuned for upcoming sessions where this will be discussed.

Questions and feedback from the guest (a Registrant with ACOT):

1. Regarding the National Competencies eLearning Modules
 - The videos were helpful and well done. It was quite easy to manage.
2. What kind of issues are you facing as an OT?
 - No specific issues in the workplace. OTs at this site are well respected.

The guest asked if there will be future collaborations between ACOT, CAOT and SAOT for learning opportunities.

- This highlights the difference between the mandates of ACOT and SAOT. ACOT's training must support regulatory requirements such as the continuing competence program. However, training on equity, diversity, and inclusion is a possible area for future collaboration.

Members of Council mentioned that the ACOT Open Forums vary in size. These meetings have been held on different days and times to assess if there are easier periods in the day for Registrants to attend.

Council thanked all for attending the March 2023 Open Forum.

5. University of Alberta Department Update

Gayla Grinde, Assistant Teaching Professor at the University of Alberta (U of A) sent her regrets. However, she had sent the U of A report to Council. Highlights included:

- The UofA has increased availability of seats for the Master of Science in Occupational Therapy Program for students from Saskatchewan.
- There is an ongoing issue with a lack of mental health placements.
- There has also been a significant increase in the number of students who need accommodations.
- The curriculum renewal working group is ongoing.
- Equity, diversity, and inclusion activities include a Space of Reconciliation in Calgary and Edmonton for Indigenous students.

Council discussed possible reasons for the ongoing lack of mental health placements for OT students.

The Department had asked if there was a decrease in the amount of OTs working in mental health. In ACOT's annual reports it shows in 2014-2015 8% of Alberta OTs worked in mental health, and in 2021-2022 the amount was 10.8% of Alberta OTs.

- A \$20,000 grant is available to support education opportunities for students in remote and under-served areas.
- The 2023 CAOT conference will be held in Saskatoon. The Department will have a booth at the conference and will encourage students to attend.
- The combined Master of Business Administration (MBA) Occupational Therapy degree has its first cohort.

Council discussed that having students obtain an MBA degree will be especially beneficial if they choose to start their own private practice. A Councillor asked about the reasoning for starting the OT/MBA degree.

ACTION: To continue monitoring the volume of self-employment in Occupational Therapy and to continue to record the number of Registrants who self-report.

ACTION: Marianne to send Christie the report from the U of A that described their rationale for starting the OT/MBA program.

9. Open Forum Debrief

Council discussed why so few people attend ACOT's open forums. Is there a better way to gain the Registrants' interest? Councillors suggested having a "Did you know?" section about the open forums and to post about it on ACOT's social media. The latter

part may also gain the attention of the public to attend, yet still be helpful reminders to the Registrants.

ACTION: Add a “Did you know?” section in the eNews’ regarding the open forums.

ACTION: Post about future open forums on ACOT’s social media pages.

The short list of attendees may be because there are fewer concerns about how ACOT is running. The largest open forum held was about six years ago when many Registrants had concerns with how Council/ACOT was being operated.

It was suggested to have an open forum with communication and questions about private practice. It can be focused on ACOT’s private practice resources.

A Councillor had spoken to one of their colleagues regarding the National eLearning Module on competencies. The colleague appreciated the format of the learning, how it was online and interactive, and found it easier than reading through an abundance of material. Could ACOT consider using an interactive video format for further training in competencies? The online sessions with Alanna Ferguson, Director, Competence & Practice were very valuable.

Marianne noted that creating interactive videos is resource intensive, so it made sense when we partnered with national OT regulators to create the eLearning. Further development will be evaluated strategically, and we will be assessing learning management platforms such as the free Moodle program. We can also look at pre-recorded sessions with Alanna.

ACTION: Marianne to explore the option of a video format for future training on topics and to speak with Alanna Ferguson, Director, Competence & Practice regarding recording her training sessions.

10. Generative Thinking

Discussion on Annual Evaluation Item

The Council Annual Evaluation consists of over forty questions. Following up on one of the items, Council discussed the right balance of providing personal experience and representing all OTs and the public interest when making decisions for ACOT.

Council agreed that no matter who brings their voice forward, everyone has their personal biases and views on different things.

Further comments:

- Are diversity elements among us valuable to bring forward? Sometimes this is relevant regarding different practice areas and sometimes it is not relevant.

- Sometimes it is not constructive to highlight differences.
- It is positive to have variety of OTs and a variety of Public Members within Council.
- Our conversations are important, and personal perspectives help to contextualize conversations to make them relevant.
- It is important to strike a balance of perspectives.

Onboarding Committee

Following up from last month's discussion regarding Public Members not receiving formal onboarding to Councils from government, ACOT's Executive agreed that a committee for on-boarding would be beneficial.

The Governance Committee (GC) has worked diligently to create an onboarding process. Having an on-boarding committee would be welcoming for new Councillors, and it could track where everyone is at in their onboarding.

The Government of Alberta has the order of where Public Members are needed. The Colleges with the least number of Public Members are the priority.

Christie agreed to lead the new Onboarding Committee.

MOTION: To create an Onboarding Committee of Council - Arwen (MOVED) Carrie (SECONDED). CARRIED.

ACTION: *Marianne to produce draft Terms of Reference for the Onboarding Committee.*

Committee Recruitment

Should joining committees be mandatory or voluntary for Council Members? Council discussed the time commitment for each committee, noting the Competence Committee (CC) needs a new Chair and GC needs a Public Member. Marianne described the time commitment for the CC, and Arwen described the time commitment for GC.

Christie indicated that she would like to join the Governance Committee. Dennis stated that he would like to join the Governance Committee, however he cannot make a commitment until June.

It was recommended new Councillors be given six months to settle into their role on Council and then to ask them to join a committee. This could be written into the onboarding procedures.

Risk Register

Highlights from prior risks that are ongoing: technology changes, cyber-security, and the need for more Councillors for committee work.

Succession planning: With half Registrants and half Public Members on Council, there is a chance that a Public Member will need to step into the role of President. The current bylaws state that Public Members can hold Vice President but not the President position.

Comments:

- It would not be an issue to have an extra Registrant(s) as a non-voting member(s). This would provide more members for committee work.
- Having a Public Member who is on the Executive Team is not a negative thing, but it is still a good opportunity to have an OT as President as this presents Occupational Therapy as a self-regulating profession.
- There could be a balanced representation, an OT as the President, and a Public Member as the Vice President.
- The current bylaws give the impression that Public Members are not welcome to join the Executive.
- There is also the Past-President position for support to the Executive.
- The focus is to ensure meetings are functioning equitably with all voices being heard. This requires more soft skills and relationship building than content expertise.

ACTION: GC to review the Bylaws section regarding Public Members and who can serve as President of Council.

ACTION: relook at membership on Executive this time next year.

E1: Ends Policy Review

Council viewed the ends policy and asked themselves if the current wording still resonates.

As the Ends Policy was re-considered, the following comments were made:

- Still on point
- Comfortable with the wording
- Everyone should feel heard - should bringing a balanced perspective be included in the policy?

It was suggested that the survey at the end of the Council meetings should include a question: “Were all perspectives heard?” or “Was this a balanced perspective meeting?”.

The topic of enforcement was considered for inclusion in the Ends Policy. The issue of evidence of Registrants making false declarations was brought up for context.

Should the Ends Policy instead state: “sets, maintains, and enforces?”:

- Enforce is a harsh word. Perhaps “follow through”, “Administer”, or “Maintain” would best reflect ACOT’s approach.

Council agreed that the current wording of “Maintain” was appropriate for the Ends Policy.

MOTION: To maintain the current Ends Policy with no changes to the wording - Arwen (MOVED) Christie (SECONDED). CARRIED.

ACTION: Add a question to future end of meeting surveys asking, “Were all perspectives heard during the meeting?”

11. Committee Reports – Governance Committee

The Governance Committee was asked to view the policy regarding how ACOT handles reserve funds. The GC suggested the current Registrar Limitation (RL) 2.2’s wording be changed from the dollar amount of the restricted reserves to a percentage for the operating budget to be maintained. Council agreed to change the wording from “one million representing one year of operating costs” to “one year of operating costs” so that the amount or percentage didn’t have to be updated each year.

Further discussion about RL 2.2 (Finance) included:

- Current events of banks failing in the United States
- The current limit amount of protected reserves by the Royal Bank of Canada and the options of Servus Credit Union which guarantees 100% of its deposits through the government of Alberta.

ACTION: Marianne to determine if Servus Credit Union deposit guarantee applies to business as well as personal accounts.

MOTION: To accept the Registrar Limitation 2.2 wording changes as presented, effective July 1, 2023. Carrie (MOVED) Whitney (SECONDED). CARRIED.

12. Consent Items

Council reviewed the February 21, 2023, Council Meeting Minutes. With no suggested changes, a motion was brought forward.

MOTION: To approve the February 21, 2023, Council meeting minutes as presented – Christie (MOVED) Whitney (SECONDED). CARRIED.

13. Reflection on Governance

Council had a roundtable to share their reflections about the meeting:

- Continuing to ensure all perspectives are heard
- Brought to attention some underlying ideas about how to balance discussions
- Openness to bring challenging items to the front
- The public is protected through the discussions and decisions made
- Great meeting

14. Meeting Survey

Council then took five minutes to complete the Council meeting evaluation.

MOTION: To move to an in-camera session – Whitney (MOVED) Arwen (SECONDED). CARRIED.

MOTION: To adjourn the March 21, 2023, Council meeting – Whitney (MOVED) Christie (SECONDED). CARRIED.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:21 p.m.