



Attending:

Jennifer Lee – President, Regulated Member
Arwen Caines – Vice President, Regulated Member
Carrie Hait – Regulated Member
Heidi Knupp – Regulated Member
Joyce Vayalumkal – Regulated Member
Kristin Ward – Regulated Member
Dr. Tom Smith – Public Member
Dennis Fitzgerald – Public Member

Marianne Baird – CEO and Registrar
Benny Mutoni – Recording Secretary

Regrets:

Christie Bergman – Public Member

GATHERING

Jennifer called the meeting to order at 8:40 a.m. A round-table icebreaker was held, including an introduction of new Council members Joyce Vayalumkal, and Kristin Ward to attendees.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

MOTION: To approve the September 30, 2023, ACOT Council meeting agenda as presented - Arwen (MOVED) Dennis (SECONDED). CARRIED.

STRATEGIC PLANNING PART I

Update on Strategic Plan

Examples of updates included:

- The continuing competence program (CCP) has been updated to align with our new standards of practice, code of ethics, new competencies for OTs in Canada, and our Acting Against Racism and Intolerance (AARI) report.
- ACOT is working with Alinity, the online program developer, to have the CCP refresh ready in time for our 2024-2025 renewal.

A Councillor asked about the joint training taking place October 24th. Marianne stated that it is on Trauma Informed Lawyering as it relates to regulatory colleges and that it's to inform our complaints and hearings processes.

ACTION: Marianne to send Councillors an email about the trauma informed lawyering training.

Action Items Update

Examples of action items completed included:

- Marianne reached out to Christie about coming to a staff check-in.
- Governance Committee (GC) reviewed the bylaws section regarding public members who can serve as president, as per previous Council discussion
- Marianne found out that the Servus Credit Union guarantee backs 100% of deposits with them, which is backed by the Alberta government. ACOT's policies state that the College has to have its funds in financial institutions with the highest rating and the government of Alberta's credit rating is as high as Canada's large banks. This will be further discussed in January when we review the 2024-2025 budget options and when to move ACOT's Guaranteed Income Certificates (GICs) over to Servus due to the guarantee.

Practice Inquiries Activity

Our volume of queries is down compared to the last reporting period. Inquiries about ethical scenarios and informed consent continue to come in, the latter following ACOT's recently issued informed consent guidelines. There have also been many questions regarding long-term care. There has also been an increase in registration queries compared to the last reporting period, mainly about cross-jurisdictional practice. A Councillor asked whether this increase can be addressed in the risk register regarding complaints. Marianne stated that this may not necessarily lead to a complaints increase but there is potential, and it will be considered for the risk register. Another Councillor asked if ACOT has met with school boards to help educate on health versus education's roles in informed consent. Marianne noted that AARI and ACOT continue to reach out to Edmonton Public about a presentation, and they showed initial interest, but a meeting is yet to come to fruition.

MOTION: To approve the Practice Inquiries reports as presented - Heidi (MOVED) Tom (SECONDED).
CARRIED.

ACTION: add the increased volume of cross-jurisdictional practice queries to the risk register, as a source of potential future complaints.

Generative Thinking - Introduction of Early Bird Fee Options

Marianne reported that each year about 50+ OTs do not renew, with 30 having their permits cancelled, and the other 20 having notes on file with reasons for not renewing such as maternity leave, leaving the country or province.

Marianne suggested adopting a staggered fee option, similar to what was adopted in Manitoba, in order to incentivize early renewal as opposed to waiting to register at the last minute. This may also reduce the number of cancelled registrants that in turn affects clients who can no longer receive services from them during the time it takes to re-register.

Marianne outlined three options for 2024-2025 renewal fees:

- i) no change to fees
- ii) staggered fees, with an early bird fee and a higher full fee in the last two weeks of February
- iii) staggered fees with an early reduced fee option and a higher full fee in the last two weeks of February



Council members discussed what would be an appropriate fee increase that would incentivize earlier renewal, weighed options and were in favor of a staggered fee option including a \$550 early bird fee and a \$650 full fee in the last two weeks of February.

One Councillor brought up the need to measure the effectiveness of the fee increase in getting more registrations submitted in a timely manner. Marianne indicated she would report on this in May and continue to report on this in following years.

Council discussed options for ongoing projects such as digitization and additional staffing.

MOTION 1: To implement a staggered renewal fee of \$550 for January 1 through February 14, 2024, and a \$100 fee raise to \$650 for February 15th through February 29, 2024. Dennis (MOVED) Arwen (SECONDED). CARRIED.

MOTION 2: support ongoing projects during 2024-2025 budget discussions and re-evaluate them in 2025.

ACTION: Marianne to report on the effectiveness of the fee increase in getting more registrations submitted in a timely manner in May 2024.

OPEN FORUM

Marianne welcomed participants and recognized Truth and Reconciliation (TR) Day with a land acknowledgement and encouraged attendees to visit the ACOT website for resources and suggested activities.

Jennifer started off the open forum inviting participants and Council to introduce themselves.

Jennifer opened the floor for Monique Lizon representing the Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists (CAOT) and Robyn Telasky representing the Society of Alberta Occupational Therapists (SAOT) to share updates on their advocacy efforts.

CAOT Updates:

- The OTTR taskforce which comprises CAOT, and other OT organizations officially released a statement of commitment to Indigenous people in Canada, available on CAOT's web page. The statement intends to guide reconciliation efforts of OT leadership organizations to be accountable to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) calls to action.
- At the end of summer, CAOT submitted its pre-budget submission with 4 main recommendations for the government:
 - i) Scale up team-based primary care models to include OT,
 - ii) Address Canada's Health Human Resources (HHR) crisis with how the OT profession can be positioned as a solution,
 - iii) Increase access and funding for OT services,
 - iv) Engage OTs in emergency preparedness and crisis management efforts from a local to international level.
- CAOT has shifted focus to increase awareness of non-insured health benefit plan for Indigenous groups.
- CAOT continues to send letters to the current government to increase awareness of OT and to schedule meetings.

- CAOT met with the Canada Revenue Agency to discuss the disability tax credit form in an attempt to up advocacy efforts and get OT professionals eligible to complete mental health portions of the form.
- CAOT release a suicide prevention statement available on their webpage.
- CAOT is working with other organizations and professions to extend eligibility beyond nurses and doctors to OTs for student loan forgiveness.

SAOT Updates:

- SAOT completed its “Ask an OT”, advocacy campaign to encourage members of the public to write to their health insurer and have OT added to their extended health benefits plans.
- SAOT launched “Support from the Start”, a letter writing campaign looking to re-instate early intervention funding.
- SAOT has many OT month events and resources on its website.

ACOT Updates:

- ACOT's refreshed standards or practice and code of ethics were submitted to the government in the spring as part of requirements under Bill 46. New OT competencies for Canada were incorporated, including an equity-based focus as recommended in our AARI Final Report.
- The CCP is being updated to be in line with when the new standards and code are in place. Information on this will be available in future learning sessions.

Jennifer opened the floor for questions and discussions.

An OT asked about progress on OT services being covered by insurance policies, which was addressed in Robyn's letter writing campaign overview. Another question was asked regarding salary scales for OTs across different settings. Marianne responded that the government prohibits ACOT from setting fees and Robyn added that the Association of Canadian Occupational Therapy Professional Associations (ACOTPA) completed the first ever national fee survey and results are being summarized. SAOT has also been working with the Worker's Compensation Board (WCB) and prepared a business case for increased fees for OTs contracted through WCB, leading to an increase, and efforts are in place for a case to increase these in the coming spring.

A Council member brought forward a question regarding what ACOT's valued proposition is for OTs and responses included:

- Protecting the OT name, increasing standards of OTs and maintaining OT standards to protect the public,
- Providing guidelines in unprecedented times particularly during the pandemic, and
- Raising awareness through learning modules such as the protecting patients against sexual misconduct, respecting children's consent while providing services.

Participants shared experiences with more individual clients seeking out OTs for mental health services, and more people trying to understand occupational deprivation during the pandemic.

An OT asked about available resources to support clients struggling with long COVID, to which Monique and another participant offered to share resources through email.

Marianne thanked the participants for joining the forum and encouraged OTs to consider joining organizations like CAOT and SAOT that advocate for the OT profession.

STRATEGIC PLANNING, GENERATIVE THINKING PART II - DISCUSSION ON EARLY BIRD FEE OPTIONS, CNAR PLANNING

Marianne stated that the Canadian Network of Agencies for Regulation (CNAR) will take place in Vancouver this year, and checked with Council members to confirm who will be in attendance. Marianne agreed to make dinner reservations for Council.

Council discussed its upcoming Board retreat on October 14th with a focus on the “Sixth Thinking Hats” technique and will be facilitated by one of the individuals that worked on the AARI report. This learning will be applied to how ACOT plans to optimize interactions with the AARI Committee in a comfortable and productive manner.

ACTION: Marianne to confirm necessary reservations and send the details to Council members.

ACTION: Marianne to send Councillors their conference confirmations

ACTION: Marianne to verify the time for the Field Law reception and send it to attending Councillors.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Onboarding Committee

The Committee met to look at its terms of reference, and discussed what the Committee will be doing, including:

- i) Ensuring new members are linked up with mentors,
- ii) Checking in with mentors and mentees to confirm they are working through their onboarding checklists.

New Council members were paired up with mentors and encouraged to reach out to their mentors with questions between Council meetings. New Council members were also invited to join the Onboarding Committee, which could still use more members.

Competence Committee

The Committee discussed a plan for the coming year with a focus on whether to review and evaluate the CCP, considering recent changes to the CCP, or instead focus on practice visits and coaching conversations for individuals with non-acceptable or conditional submissions.

Marianne noted the CCP refresh progress that ACOT has made working with Alinity, the online program developer, to have the new CCP ready in before the 2024-2025 renewal cycle opens.

Marianne discussed next steps in place including multiple learning sessions, eNews and social media posts.

A Council member suggested creating an infographic to reflect the three upcoming changes for OTs: the refreshed standards of practice and code of ethics, the refreshed CCP and the new fee structure.

ACTION: create an infographic highlighting the upcoming changes, and share it via social media, and eNews.

AARI Committee

Jennifer shared that the AARI committee met in August and continues to meet every other month, with the following updates:

- i) June 22, the AARI presentation was recorded with Alberta Health Services (AHS) and posted internally, is available to all AHS staff,
- ii) Another AARI presentation was done in September with the Society for Autism Support and Services staff,
- iii) An AARI presentation is scheduled in October for Edmonton Catholic School District staff,
- iv) The AARI Committee reviewed the progress tracker for its 10-year strategic plan and have made it past the first phase of the plan. Transition into the second phase is in discussions and will include a repeat survey from the original report.

One Council member asked about the content of the presentation scheduled for October. Marianne provided a summary of the presentation which includes:

- i) the history of the AARI report,
- ii) news clippings that show that racism and intolerance are still prevalent in healthcare,
- iii) findings from the AARI report,
- iv) upcoming changes to the standards of practice and code of ethics informed by the AARI report findings.

Another Council member shared the positive feedback from staff following the AARI presentation that provided new insights. Marianne added that there has been positive feedback from OT professionals especially regarding AARI statistics, being some of the only available statistics on OTs' experiences with racism and intolerance.

ACTION: Marianne to email the AARI presentation to our new Council members.

MOTION: To approve the Committee Reports as presented - Arwen (MOVED) Heidi (SECONDED).
CARRIED.

CONSENT ITEMS

Review Last Meeting's Minutes

Council examined the June 27, 2023, ACOT Council meeting minutes. With no suggested changes, they moved forward with a motion.

MOTION: To approve the June 27, 2023, ACOT Council meeting minutes as presented - Arwen (MOVED) Dennis (SECONDED). CARRIED.

Registrar Limitations (RLs)

RL. 3: Asset Protection

Marianne shared that the privacy policy has not changed but is to be updated and presented in more plain language, and to cover issues such as how long records are to be kept.



ACOT has increased insurance over the years with Council's approval, with cyber insurance being a recent addition to coverage. In addition, ACOT's information technology (IT) provider gives annual courses to ACOT staff on issues such as phishing scams.

ACOT continues to use Staples and Dollar store for non-high value items, and there has been no purchase over \$25,000 since 2021's national e-Learning module contribution.

The spending approved in 2022 for AARI training modules has not yet been used as they are still under development with the University of Alberta OT Department. This will go into next year's budget.

ACOT continues to use KBH for its auditing services.

There is a plan to move to Servus Credit Union from RBC for all of ACOT's guaranteed investment certificates (GICs) over time and there will be discussion in January on what percentage of the current investments are to be moved over.

A Council member asked for clarification on when investments mature and why there is a plan to move them. Marianne explained that it is laddered maturity and investments can be moved as they mature, adding that the plan to move is based on Servus having no limit on their guarantee and is backed by the government of Alberta while RBC's guarantee of investments is up to \$100,000.

A Council member noticed there has not been a recent review and revision of the business continuity policy. Marianne agreed it would be beneficial to have a review period of every few years.

ACTION: Marianne to implement a review date of every three years for operating policies such as business continuity and infection prevention and control.

RL 5: Compensation and Benefits

Marianne stated that staff compensation adjustments were made based on a 2022 survey with 24 Colleges out of 29 Colleges that participated.

After Quarter 1, ACOT has a projected revenue surplus over expenses with a projection of the surplus going down in Quarter 3 as a result of hearings scheduled.

Marianne shared that vacation, personal leave time and vacation carry-over are stable, with data from two years ago being 50 days accumulated, which has now been brought down to 24 days.

MOTION: To approve RL3 with changes to the review cycle for policies as suggested - Heidi (MOVED) Dennis (SECONDED). CARRIED.

MOTION: To approve RL5 as presented - Tom (MOVED) Arwen (SECONDED). CARRIED.

COMPLAINTS ACTIVITY REPORTS

Marianne shared that there have been a handful of inquiries received, and of those a couple resulted in complaints, and the others were provided information about how to submit a complaint.

ACOT currently has 9 open complains with two booked for November hearings, and there are 5 closed complaints.



MOTION: To approve the Complaints Activity Reports as presented - Tom (MOVED) Arwen (SECONDED). CARRIED.

REFLECTION ON GOVERNANCE

Council provided their input on whether the Ends Policy was met during this meeting:

- Being inspired by the discussions, conversations, and collaboration.
- Bringing back focus that the public is protected especially through registration processes in place.
- Appreciating large participation and attendance in the open forum.
- Learning more about the work that goes on behind the scenes at ACOT and how decisions are made.
- Maintaining touch base with the OT profession.
- *Health Professions Act* touched upon with on a big scope while keeping Council focused.
- Appreciating the volunteer efforts of Council members.
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MEETING SURVEY

Council took five minutes to complete the Council meeting survey.

IN CAMERA

MOTION: to move to an in-camera session – Heidi (MOVED), Dennis (SECONDED). CARRIED.

CLOSING REMARKS AND ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: to adjourn the September 30, 2023, Council meeting – Arwen (MOVED), Heidi (SECONDED). CARRIED. The meeting was adjourned at 1:42 p.m.