



Alberta College of Occupational Therapists

Council Meeting Minutes

March 25, 2024

**Attending:**

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

Marianne Baird – CEO and Registrar  
Benny Mutoni – Recording Secretary

***Voting Councillors Today - Heidi & Dennis***

**Regrets:**

Dr. Tom Smith – Councillor, Public Member  
Christie Bergman – Councillor, Public Member

**1) Gathering**

Council confirmed there was quorum in attendance, and with one Public Member available for voting there will be just one occupational therapist (OT) member voting. Jennifer called the meeting to order at 5:50 p.m. A roundtable was held to check-in with all attending.

**2) Approval of Agenda**

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

**MOTION:** To approve the March 25, 2024, ACOT Council meeting agenda as presented - Dennis (MOVED) Heidi (SECONDED). CARRIED.

**3) Update on Strategic Plan**

Marianne shared the following:

- ACOT continues to meet most deliverables in the strategic plan tracker, including social media following growth that is modest but has nearly doubled over the past year.
- ACOT continues to give Acting Against Racism & Intolerance (AARI) presentations on request, noting at the last presentation for Edmonton Public School Board (EPSB) OTs, it was reported that ACOT's AARI work aligned well with EPSB's work regarding diversity, equity and inclusion.



- Government reports they are close to providing feedback on our refreshed Standards of Practice (SoP) and Code of Ethics (CoE), after which ACOT will update Council and begin presentations for registrants about the new SoP and CoE content.

#### **4) University of Alberta Occupational Therapy Department Report**

Gayla Grinde, Assistant Teaching Professor in the Occupational Therapy Department at the University of Alberta joined the meeting at 6:00 p.m.

Gayla reviewed the report submitted to ACOT, going over changes to reporting for accreditation, a personnel update, a program and curriculum update, as well as notable activities and field work from student affairs.

Gayla then took questions from Council:

Q: What happens when you are 10 or 12 placements short?

A: It is not uncommon, and we are able to fill them. We are waiting for some placements to be answered, but there might be a slight delay as we follow proper channels.

Q: When it comes to the year one curriculum revamp, what is your vision?

A: A real focus is to do roadshows to get feedback from the clinical community to map better with placements. We are also expanding contextual features of the curriculum and leveraging occupational therapy skills and competencies around community development. There are new topics as well we want to leverage such as newer technology pieces. That said, we still want to keep and strengthen the aspects of the curriculum that have worked well in the past.

Q: With the University of Saskatchewan getting its own program, how will this affect the new curriculum and satellite development?

A: This was a fresh piece and did not make it to the report for that reason. From a financial point of view, it will affect U of A as there will be 25 students who will not be part of the program, creating a big pocket of funding that will not be part of the budget. From a resourcing point of view, it will have to be re-envisioned, and more information will be available soon.

Q: Will more University of Alberta seats be available for Alberta students?

A: That will be related to government funding as the government pays for the seats. It will be interesting to see as OT job vacancies will still be high in Alberta. Some of this might depend on research partnerships and other pending collaborations with the government, but it might be too early to say.

Q: What would be the trickle effect as far as placements goes?

A: We are still quite collegial across the nation, and it will be interesting to see how placement and field work unfolds, for Saskatchewan. There are opportunities to re-envision supervision models such as leveraging peer-assisted learning models and student-run clinics.

## **5) Generative Thinking Part 1**

### OTs and Diagnosis

Jennifer re-introduced the diagnosis discussion highlighting the complexity of considering OTs providing diagnoses across various practice areas and settings, with key consideration on OTs' ability to diagnose occupational performance issues. Anchor points for the discussion included:

- Where is Council at with this issue after the discussion in January?
- How do we want to move forward to establish clarity?
- Is there Council support to move forward with further exploration/consultation with registrants?

Marianne shared an update regarding OT coverage for diagnosis activity and echoed the recommendation to continue further consultations through an open forum and/or survey of registrants about diagnosis practices before opening the floor for discussion.

Council discussed the following:

- Diagnosis definition was recapped as “the classification and identification of a disease, disorder, injury or condition using a diagnostic process and in accordance with formally accepted diagnostic criteria and classification systems.”
- Impact of diagnosis on complaints, if any, and using reports from other colleges as reference.
- Council members highlighted the importance of ensuring clarity and accessibility of discussions for all present, including those without a background in OT and its jargon.
- A member noted the next logical step being to open discussion with registrants via survey or open forum, as suggested.
- Another council member noted the substantial opportunity for OT diagnoses to release pressure at bottlenecks and be more a collaborative piece to offer more to Albertans but noted the need for feedback from registrants.
- Working within boundaries and full scope of the OT profession to provide clarity for both registrants and the public to keep them safe as well as informed.
- Emphasis on the importance of OTs being able to communicate clearly and simply with the public, clients, patients, and their families.

Council proceeded with a plan to determine the message to be communicated to registrants and the public, while also planning further exploration through feedback mechanisms.

## **6) Generative Thinking Part 2**

### Collection of Health Equity Data

Marianne introduced the topic of updating ACOT's database to align with the Canadian Institute of Health Information (CIHI) standards, with CIHI anticipated to offer funding for this update in 2024-2025. If funding becomes available, ACOT could use it to update its database. The updated standards would include collecting equity-focused identity data, such as Indigenous identity, although implementation of this

feature is optional. Marianne added that this update could provide benefits in better understanding the demographics of Alberta's registered population, and that the discussion was timely due to the potential availability of funding this year.

Jennifer also added that every health system also contributes to CIHI, making it a major database for planning for the Canadian healthcare system, program development, service development and for research.

Council discussed the following:

- Welcomed the idea of external funding to help to contribute to the collection of Canada-wide data, as well as building partnerships.
- Emphasis on the need for information to be gathered on a voluntary basis.
- Concern about collecting it as "race-based data" that can be misinterpreted with bias was raised prompting a deep discussion on how data has been used in the past, present and will be used in future, as well as access and security of this data. Marianne also shared that the 2021 Acting Against Racism and Intolerance (AARI) survey already collected this data and recommended doing a follow-up to collect, with caveats that it is shared in aggregate, so that individual data could not be used.
- Global push to gather this data to help the overall health systems and serve the public.
- The cost of implementing data collection and whether the available funding would cover the full cost.
- Timing and point of data collection, with emphasis placed on conducting it post-OT registration, only during renewal so there's no misinterpretation of the data being tied to registration decisions.
- Agreement to build in data collection into Alinity, the online program developer, and not turn on the race-based data feature at first. Marianne to discuss this further with CIHI and have agreement in writing for Council to review.

**ACTION:** Tabling discussion to turn on feature collection of race-based and Indigenous identifier data.

**MOTION:** To approve acceptance of the CHI funds to support the update of our database including a build to potentially collect equity-based and Indigenous identity data. - Dennis (MOVED) Heidi (SECONDED). CARRIED.

#### Interest in Attending Canadian Network of Agencies of Regulation (CNAR)

Marianne shared that there is funding for CNAR and that while in the past new Councillors could start attending conferences during their second year on Council, there is still budget room for all Councillors to attend the CNAR conference from October 7-9, 2024, in Ottawa.

Council members provided confirmations of their attendance, accounting for their availability within their individual schedules.

#### Risk Register

Marianne shared that Council last added an item to the risk register in the previous fall after discussing implications of funds balance and budget options, and then opened the floor for any additional items that Council would like to bring forward.

Council discussed amalgamation updates across Alberta and other provinces that followed with recommendations for regulators.

**MOTION:** To approve the risk register as presented - Heidi (MOVED) Dennis (SECONDED). CARRIED.

## **7) Consent Items**

### Review of Last Meeting's Minutes

Council examined the February 20, 2024, ACOT Council Meeting Minutes. With no suggested changes, they moved forward with a motion.

**MOTION:** To approve the February 20, 2024, ACOT Council meeting minutes as presented - Dennis (MOVED) Heidi (SECONDED). CARRIED.

### Ends Policy

Council noted ACOT's mission and vision are in line with the Ends policy, and agreed there is no need for changes to the Ends policy.

## **8) Reflection on Governance**

Councillors provided their reflection on governance with comparison to the Ends Policy:

- Generative thinking discussions were stimulating and rich, keeping in mind to protect the public.
- I appreciate the open safe discussions we can have.
- There was a lot of information with different perspectives that enriched my views.
- It adds a lot with public members to provide a different point of view.
- Great questions that point to clarity.
- Thought-provoking conversations while keeping the public in mind.

## **9) Meeting Survey**

Council then took four minutes to complete the March 25, 2024, Council Meeting Survey.

## **10) In Camera**

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

## **11) Closing Remarks and Adjournment**

**MOTION:** To adjourn the March 25, 2024, Council meeting - Heidi (MOVED) Dennis (SECONDED). CARRIED.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 p.m.