Alberta College of Occupational Therapists

Council Meeting Minutes

September 27, 2025

Attending:

Arwen Caines – President, Regulated Member

Heidi Knupp – Vice President, Regulated Member

Carrie Hait – 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

Regrets:

Christie Bergman – Councillor, Public Member

Dr. Zahid Rafiq - Councillor, Public Member

Voting Members for this Meeting – Kristin & Dennis

1. GATHERING

Arwen called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

MOTION: To approve the September 27, 2025, ACOT Council meeting agenda as presented – Dennis (MOVED) Kristin (SECONDED). CARRIED.

3. STRATEGIC PLANNING

Update on Strategic Plan

Marianne shared that ACOT continues to meet most of the indicators and deliverables by, for example:

- Re-running College roles and responsibilities information on social media.
- Continuing to liaise with other colleges, the Federation and the University of Alberta (UofA).

Review of Action Items

Marianne shared the following examples of completed action items:

- ACOT started working with the UofA on the diagnosis for OTs course.
- Marianne spoke to a newcomers' group about collaboration opportunities.
- Revisions have been made to the Council annual evaluation survey that will be completed today.

Practice Inquiries Activity

Marianne shared the following:

- Overall volume of queries was down over the summer, except for registration queries, which increased specifically around cross- jurisdictional practice.
- ACOT is noticing emerging areas for queries including artificial intelligence (AI) and marketing. ACOT also continues to receive frequent queries on informed consent and ethical scenarios.

A Council member commended ACOT staff in different positions for handling the increasingly complex queries, and in so doing considering public protection.

Another Council member found the rise of AI queries interesting.

4. GENERATIVE THINKING

Strategic Planning Session Debrief

Marianne opened the floor for comments and feedback on the Red Deer strategic planning session with Stormy Lake Consulting. Council members shared the following:

- It was a good session and I'm still reflecting on it.
- I found it worthwhile.
- It had a growth mentality for the College, which I found exciting.
- It seemed like they had experience with other Colleges.

- I appreciated the feedback that ACOT Council is united and collaborative on a lot of things.
- I thought they were reasonably thorough.

One Council member expressed mixed views on the facilitators and indicated they would reserve judgment at this time.

Marianne noted that one of the things Stormy Lake did differently than previous facilitators was meet with ACOT staff.

Councillor E-security Training

Marianne checked with Council members to see if they received e-security training.

Some Council members shared that they received the training link but have not yet completed the training. Others reported the training link having access issues.

ACTION: Marianne to notify Shelley about resharing link to Council members that had access issues.

Sole Source Procurement proposal/Update on Diagnosis Activities

Marianne shared that ACOT was able to find an OT, who is also a physician resident, interested in developing the diagnosis course. Marianne added that she reviewed the proposal and believes it aligns with the vision ACOT has for the course.

Marianne presented the proposal for Council to review before approving the spending outlined.

A Council member found that the course was very thorough and provides clear direction.

A public member shared that they appreciate the thought put into it with focus on public protection, including involvement of the University of Alberta (U of A). They added that the more documentation there is, the better.

A Council member noted that the definition (definition 2.1) of OT diagnosis had some gaps and needs to address some of the medical diagnoses. The member also noted multiple references to physicians/nurse practitioners and suggested adding other medical professionals.

Marianne noted that the OT will be attending the advisory committee meetings, where they will be working through clarifying course details further.

Q: The proposal notes that the certificate is valid for three years – what would happen after three years?

A: It is addressed in the proposal -- with light touch renewal and a reflective log. These are things that can be fit into OTs' Continuing Competence Programs (CCPs).

Council members noted that the cost was reasonable.

ACTION: Marianne to work with the contractor to update the proposal to reflect additional medical professionals who will be referred to by OTs.

MOTION: To approve the sole source procurement proposal and spending outlined as presented – Dennis (MOVED) Kristin (SECONDED). CARRIED.

Draft Change Management Communications Risk Management Plan

Marianne shared that a committee met this week to work on this.

A Council member noted that it was thorough with a great level of thought, with many members agreeing that public safety is at the centre of it all.

Q: Staff rated cautiously optimistic was a little less optimistic than some other categories. What was the reason behind that?

A: The OT staff are having trouble seeing what the change is, and with some of the risks – keeping in mind the ideal outcome. It is a working through process.

A Council member suggested that acronyms are moved to the front of the document.

ACTION: Update the Plan to move acronyms to the front of the document.

DOT Recognition Request

Marianne brought forward a request for an OT's Boston University doctorate to be recognized, as it is from an accredited program.

Marianne recommended that Council recognize this person's doctorate. Council members unanimously agreed.

MOTION: To recognize the DOT from Boston University – Dennis (MOVED) Kristin (SECONDED). CARRIED.

Annual Self-Evaluation Survey

Council took 20 minutes to complete the annual self evaluation survey.

Open Forum Preparation

Marianne shared the open forum outline and asked Council members to review and share input.

5. **OPEN FORUM**

Council and guests completed a round table for introductions.

Marianne shared a background of Council's decision to permit OTs to diagnose once they have successfully completed a diagnosis course approved by council and have been added to ACOT's diagnosis roster.

Marianne provided a detailed update on progress including the following:

- A Diagnosis Course Advisory Committee was created and has been meeting monthly since May 2025 to guide curriculum development.
- The Committee has established its Terms of Reference, work plan, and a draft communications, risk management and change management plan, and will work on refining how diagnosis will be defined for OTs.
- The course will emphasize safety, risk management, and expertise within an OT's practice area.
- ACOT is developing a diagnosis roster within its registration system and partnering with the U of A to evaluate course development and outcomes.
- Collaboration opportunities for messaging will also be explored with CAOT and SAOT.
- ACOT is aiming towards the pilot diagnosis course running in summer of 2026.

Marianne opened the floor for questions and discussion.

Q: How much time will OTs have to spend doing the course?

A: The certification is anticipated to be 15 weeks part-time; primarily online and during evenings.

Q: Do we have a list of diagnoses?

A: It is complex to consider, so the Committee will be working on that. We will likely have that list closer to the time that the pilot runs.

Q: What is the estimated cost of the course?

A: That will be determined by the U of A, yet to be confirmed.

Q: What was the motive behind Council making the decision to let OTs diagnose?

A: What motivated the decision was confirmation from government that diagnosis is not a restricted activity. Council spent about a year and a half studying this and decided it was in the public interest to move forward with the decision.

Q: Is there someone to reach out to if there is a diagnosis that we wanted to advocate for?

A: Yes, you can contact the ACOT Registrar directly, via email.

Q: Once the course is completed, will there be supervision in our community of practice just to ensure building confidence and ensure diagnosis is done correctly?

A: This is something that could be done by the OT associations and is yet to be discussed with them. There would be collaborative opportunities for ACOT and SAOT.

Q: Do OTs diagnose in any country that we know of?

A: Not that we know of, this is fairly new.

Q: For the pilot, is there a certain number of students you are looking for? How would this be determined?

A: While we haven't landed on a number, around 15 people would be manageable. If we have great interest in the pilot program, we will likely do a lottery and get a random sample of those who submitted names.

Marianne followed up with a question for OTs in attendance asking how they anticipate this impacting their personal practice. Responses included:

- Service access in the north is incredibly difficult and expensive for families. I would like to make accessing services easier for families.
- This would clear some of the roadblocks as a private practitioner where other professionals have a say as to whether or not I'm needed to help a patient.
- This would ease the collaboration process between many OTs and other professionals, through OTs sharing their knowledge, for example motor implications.

Marianne thanked the participants for joining the forum.

6. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Competence Committee

Marianne shared that the Committee was busy over the summer with review and evaluation, as well as coaching conversations with registrants.

ACOT also had a record amount of people with conditional ratings on their Continuing Competence Program (CCP) submissions who requested a coaching conversation.

Marianne added that the Committee has identified two new public members from other Colleges – one from the Alberta College of Social Workers, and another from the College of Chiropractors of Alberta. These members will be joining the Committee in January 2026.

Acting Against Racism and Intolerance (AARI) Committee

Marianne shared the following updates:

- There is great work going on, especially with development of learning modules. Two modules are available and six more will be ready in the coming months, addressing anti-racism, anti-Indigenous racism, and related topics.
- The Committee had a delay in inviting members of the 2SLGBTQI+ communities, and this will be addressed by October/November 2025.

Q: Who are the key partners?

A: The U of A connected ACOT to Kaarina Valavaara, Paige Reeves and Rebecca Alley. ACOT is also working with a US-based OT who has developed an anti-racism learning module that we will adapt for the Canadian context.

Q: Is there a piece to be put in for 2-Spirit members and support them in the right way?

A: Yes, this is something still under development and the Committee has an opportunity to work on this.

MOTION: To approve the Committee Reports as presented - Dennis (MOVED) Kristin

(SECONDED). CARRIED

7. CONSENT ITEMS

2026 Draft Meeting Schedule

Marianne presented the 2026 draft schedule with the dates of the different conferences and holidays to work around.

Council discussed the proposed meeting workflow.

Members had no objections to the proposed dates and workflow.

A Council Public Member noted that April is a busy period and they may attend the meeting online rather than in person.

MOTION: To accept the ACOT Council meeting workflow and schedule as presented. - Dennis (MOVED) Kristin (SECONDED). CARRIED

Review of Last Meeting's Minutes

Council examined the June 23, 2025, ACOT Council meeting minutes. With no suggested changes, they moved forward with a motion.

MOTION: To approve the June 23, 2025, ACOT Council meeting minutes as presented – Dennis (MOVED) Kristin (SECONDED). CARRIED.

RL3: Asset Protection

Marianne shared the following:

- ACOT holds insurance for everything from building contents, directors and officers' liability and cyber insurance.
- There are plans in place for business continuity in the event of sudden departure of the CEO and Registrar.
- ACOT has independent audits every year.
- ACOT keeps guaranteed investment certificate (GIC) funds at Servus Credit Union, taking advantage of their 100% deposit guarantee.

MOTION: To accept RL3 as presented - Dennis (MOVED) Kristin (SECONDED). CARRIED

RL 5: Compensation and Benefits

Marianne shared the following:

- Staff benefits have not been changed in the last year; the CEO & Registrar participates in the same benefits plan as all staff.
- Staff members are encouraged to use up their vacation time in the year it was earned.
- The CEO and Registrar's contract is up for negotiation in 2026.

Q: Is there a policy in place addressing holiday carryover or is it "use it or lose it"?

A: The CEO & Registrar's contract specifies "use it or lose it", while staff are permitted to carry over a week from year to year, or more in extenuating circumstances.

MOTION: To approve RL5 as presented - Dennis (MOVED) Kristin (SECONDED). CARRIED

Complaints Activity Reports

Marianne shared the following:

- ACOT received 11 inquiries over the summer, with none resulting into complaints.
- ACOT currently has four open complaints.
- A total of 10 complaints have been closed since March 1st, 2025.
- The nature of complaints has been less severe this year compared to last year.

MOTION: To approve the Complaints Activity Reports as presented – Dennis (MOVED) Kristin (SECONDED). CARRIED.

8. REFLECTION ON GOVERNANCE

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

- It was great to have the open forum where people had questions and were engaged.
- Questions and responses regarding impact of ability to diagnose put public protection at the forefront.
- Because of the background work Council has done, we were able to answer many of the questions from the open forum.
- It was very productive and collaborative.
- Council's care throughout the diagnosis process prepared us for the open forum.
- Open forum discussion materials were well prepared, and it was good to hear different perspectives.
- It was a great meeting.

9. MEETING SURVEY

Council took five minutes to complete the Council meeting survey.

10. IN CAMERA

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

MOTION: To adjourn the meeting – Dennis (MOVED), Kristin (SECONDED). CARRIED

The meeting was adjourned at 12:53 p.m.