

**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

Christie Bergman – Councillor, Public Member

Dr. Zahid Rafiq - Councillor, Public Member

Marianne Baird – CEO and Registrar

Benny Mutoni – Recording Secretary

***Voting Members for this Meeting – Carrie, Christie, Dennis, Heidi, Joyce & Zahid,***

**1. GATHERING**

Arwen called the meeting to order at 6 p.m.

**2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

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

**MOTION:** To approve the October 28, 2025, ACOT Council meeting agenda as presented – Carrie (MOVED) Dennis (SECONDED). CARRIED.

**3. U OF A OT DEPARTMENT REPORT**

Cori Schmitz, Associate Chair & Teaching Professor in the Occupational Therapy Department at the University of Alberta (U of A), joined the meeting at 6:18 p.m.

Cori reviewed the report submitted to ACOT going over curriculum renewal and development, curriculum fees, admissions updates, fieldwork updates, as well as notable activities.

Cori added that she will include admission numbers missing in the report in a follow up email.

Cori then took questions from Council.

Q: Is there awareness of some key partners such as insurers not recognizing the mental health training that OTs have?

A: As we developed our mental health curriculum over time, we consulted key partners such as Alberta Health Services to ensure our content aligns, positioning new graduates and entry-level OTs for mental health therapy roles. Our mental health curriculum is quite robust. This includes our students completing one mental health placement.

Q: You mentioned that this is the last cohort with the Saskatchewan Group, and that'll be 25 seats that are moving to Saskatchewan. Are you planning to keep those 25 in the upcoming cohort for general admission, or is that cohort going to get smaller?

A: The cohort will get smaller. To increase and open seats would cause more pressure on the clinical community, so that's being done very carefully. By the time I next send you a report, I should be able to include that information.

Q: How many seats are there, excluding the Saskatchewan seats?

A: There are 120 seats.

Council thanked Cori for attending the Council meeting.

#### **4. GENERATIVE THINKING**

##### ***Canadian Network of Agencies for Regulation (CNAR) Sharing Learnings***

Marianne opened the floor for Council members to share the key learnings and takeaways from the CNAR conference. Council members shared the following:

- One of the speakers, Mark Tewksbury, Canadian Olympic gold medalist's journey was inspirational with his approach to winning. The "feedback not failure" approach was similar and applicable to the OT approach. I also learned a lot from the physician/poet/public speaker who shared that finding the thread of different things opens up creativity. Another keynote speaker, who identified as transgender, shared an eye-opening experience on how people accept and respect male and female professional individuals before and after transition. The pre-conference sessions on artificial intelligence (AI) were very interesting and had many learning moments.
- One of the keynote speakers discussed competency for Council members. This gave me much to think about and how it can be applied to our work with our onboarding committee.
- A public and client input session I attended acknowledged that almost all regulatory bodies are for the protection of the public and yet most do not engage with the public. Some of these bodies conducted research with the public and were able to build a strategic plan to engage the public in more proactive and appropriate ways. I thought this was an interesting way to look at public protection and engagement. This could be something we do.
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- The AI sessions were valuable, and I had a moment of insight thinking about AI and how it plays into things. A key takeaway was that it is not AI that we're trying to contain, but rather it's the registrants we are trying to support, and the public we are looking to protect.
- It was good getting to meet some of the ACOT staff members attending CNAR.

### **Governance Awards**

Marianne provided a brief overview of the Governance Awards and asked whether Council members were interested in submitting a self-nomination and if so, who would lead the effort.

Council members agreed to proceed with self-nomination.

One member volunteered to lead the effort and requested support. Marianne and another member agreed to join the support team.

**ACTION:** Marianne, Joyce and Arwen to create a first draft of the Council self-nomination for a Governance Award.

### **Annual Self Evaluation Results**

Marianne shared Council's annual self evaluation responses.

Based on the self evaluation responses, Marianne noted some potential follow up items and brought them up for discussion:

- The feedback regarding wanting more training related to committee roles.*

Marianne asked if members felt the need for more training outside different committees, and received the following feedback:

- A Council member noted a need for training stating it has come up in the Governance Committee a couple of times in that it is a big role and training on expectations of the members would be beneficial. The Council member added that this would be especially helpful in bettering understanding of what the Committee is governing and what the role within that is.

Marianne suggested that she could reach out to The Council on Licensure, Enforcement and Regulation (CLEAR) or CNAR to put together a training package or provide training sessions for the Committee.

Council supported this idea.

Marianne asked if members would prefer CLEAR or CNAR to attend one of the evening sessions that the Governance Committee does, or if it would be best to put together an asynchronous session.

It was suggested that an asynchronous session would be more ideal. A Council member suggested to keep in mind that the training material would be of more value if it could be easily accessed year-round. The member added that this can be re-used in the future by new members or as a refresher for members already serving on the Committee.

**ACTION:** Marianne to reach out to CLEAR and CNAR to put together a training package or provide training sessions for the Governance Committee.

ii) *A comment on meetings between different cities that Council members live in.*

Marianne shared background that this has been previously brought up and that Council has met in Calgary in the past, adding that it was quite costly. This was followed by a choice, at the time, to keep the meetings in Edmonton for cost savings. Marianne then opened the floor for discussion.

A Council member noted the convenience of meeting in Calgary but expressed concern about the added travel time for members living farther away.

A Council member suggested a compromise in which at least one meeting is held in Calgary, or another location, to accommodate members' convenience. Council members were in favor of this suggestion.

**ACTION:** Marianne to look into having at least one Council meeting in Calgary and revise the Council meeting schedule accordingly.

iii) *A comment, looking at whether the Onboarding Committee is still needed or should it be rolled back into the Governance Committee.*

Marianne noted that the Onboarding Committee has met less frequently than intended, with meetings at first focused on updating the onboarding checklist items, then primarily serving as check-ins. Marianne then requested input on whether the Onboarding Committee should be reintegrated into the Governance Committee.

A Council member noted that there might be a different path for onboarding regulated Council members and onboarding Public Members.

Another Council member noted that there could be two streams, one with focus on onboarding new Councillors and another focusing on succession for leadership. The Council member added that having clear objectives and outcomes could be of value.

Marianne proposed that Council have a meeting in the near future to look at the objectives as well as measures and discuss the two-stream possibility. Council members agreed.

iv) *A comment suggesting holding an annual event for staff and Council to meet.*

A Council member supported the idea for Council and staff to meet, interact and get to know each other. The Council member suggested that when Council meets for an extended period, arrangements could be made to meet at the ACOT office or a restaurant to share dinner with ACOT staff members.

Another member noted that, since ACOT has staff and Council in both Calgary and Edmonton, a split meeting could be held, with each group gathering in their respective city and connecting via video.

**ACTION:** Marianne to schedule a joint meeting with Council and ACOT staff in 2026.

### ***Diagnosis Activities Update***

Marianne shared that the Diagnosis Course Advisory Committee met this morning, and shared the following updates:

- Dr. Miini Teng presented her course development proposal, previously reviewed by Council, to the Committee.
- The Committee had great questions that will help clarify course content going forward.
- The competence ACOT is looking to develop is in the diagnosis process itself, and this is being re-iterated.
- Dr. Teng will attend Diagnosis Course Advisory Committee meetings going forward and is flexible to adjust things in the course to reflect the Committee's input, where appropriate.
- The Advisory Committee still needs to finalize certain policy items such as determining course eligibility and who might be eligible to challenge the exam. The Advisory Committee will bring forward the recommendations for policy directions to Council for approval.

A Council member requested clarification on what it meant to challenge the exam.

Marianne explained that ACOT recognizes some OTs are already performing diagnoses effectively, and that ACOT does not want to unintentionally restrict them until they have completed the course/exam. ACOT needs to establish parameters to identify who these individuals might be.

A Council member noted that while they recognize some OTs are already doing diagnosis, it is important that formal certification is granted by ACOT. The Council member suggested that such OTs could meet with the instructor to determine appropriate next steps.

### ***Draft Strategic Plan***

Marianne shared the draft Strategic Plan and asked Council whether it resonates, and what kinds of adjustments they might suggest.

Q: What do the strategic pivots in the report mean?

A: The report highlights elements from the previous strategic plan, with the focus for the next plan as the proposed strategic pivots.

A Council member noted that the pillars in the previous strategic plan were quite broad, whereas the current plan appears more focused, with specific areas such as diagnosis highlighted as a pillar.

Marianne noted that ACOT staff had also discussed this. It was suggested that the pillar shift from diagnosis to supporting OTs in working to their full scope of practice.. Council members agreed.

Council discussed the language used in the Political, Environmental, Social and Technical (PEST) and Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analyses and suggested revisions to make them more neutral and balanced.

Marianne added that Stormy Lake requested this input by November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2025, and asked Council to provide additional feedback by November 5<sup>th</sup>, 2025.

## 5. COMMITTEE REPORTS

### ***Acting Against Racism and Intolerance (AARI) Committee***

Marianne shared the following:

- ACOT will be doing a call out in the next week to invite OTs from LGBTQ2SI+ and/or Disability Communities to Work with ACOT on its AARI Committee.
- There was discussion about how to add new members to the Committee, and they landed on having up to three subcommittees that are self run, with a focus on the deliverables from the final AARI report. The subcommittees will come together quarterly to look at common themes that the committees are working on.

Q: What are the three subcommittees, and how do these protect the public?

A: One is specific to anti-racism, another is specific to OTs with disabilities, and then one specific to LGBTQ2SI+ OTs. ACOT has been creating learning modules for OTs on how to approach working with people from marginalized communities. The goal is to have clients experience safe OT services.

Q: Are subcommittee members to be compensated or is it voluntary?

A: The members will be compensated.

Q: Why is there a need to have separate committees?

A: This was brought forward by the AARI Committee. Keeping in mind that when we set up the Committee, we wanted to give it decision making power and elevate marginalized voices. We therefore need to listen to what they are suggesting regarding creating subcommittees.

A Council member noted that the AARI Committee has invited Council members to their meetings, and attending might provide a better understanding of the work being done by the Committee.

## 6. CONSENT ITEMS

### ***Review Last Meeting's Minutes***

Council examined the September 27, 2025, ACOT Council meeting minutes. With no suggested changes, they moved forward with a motion.

**MOTION:** To approve the September 27, 2025, ACOT Council meeting minutes as presented – Carrie (MOVED) Heidi (SECONDED). CARRIED.

### ***RL 2.1: 2025-2026 Q2 Budget vs Actual***

Marianne shared the following updates:

- Revenue is slightly below what we predicted, but not materially lower.
- Expenses are tracking lower than predicted, especially for investigations and legal costs, as there have been no hearings in the first two quarters of the year.

- Strategic planning expenses and CNAR expenses are projected to come through in the next two quarters.
- ACOT is not expected to pull anything from reserves to cover expenses this year. This opens opportunities to bring in consultants as needed to help meet some of the new strategic planning objectives.

**MOTION:** To approve RL2.1 as presented - Dennis (MOVED) Christie (SECONDED). CARRIED

### ***Review Risk Register***

Marianne requested input on the risk register, specifically whether any additional risks should be included and whether any ratings or mitigation strategies should be adjusted.

A Council member brought forward labor unrest and changes in the health system as potential risks.

**MOTION:** To approve the Risk Register with the additions discussed – Dennis (MOVED) Joyce (SECONDED). CARRIED.

## **7. REFLECTION ON GOVERNANCE**

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

- In all discussions, the public was at the forefront.
- We continue to put protection of the public at the center of discussion.
- I agree, especially when it came to the AARI discussion, that we kept public protection in mind.
- Great questions and great discussions.
- Very effective meeting and well handled.
- Even with varying opinions, our focus was brought back to how decisions impact the public.
- It is a privilege to be on this board, and I appreciate how we can feel comfortable discussing matters affecting the public.

## **8. MEETING SURVEY**

Council took four minutes to complete the Council meeting survey.

## **9. IN CAMERA**

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

**MOTION:** To adjourn the meeting – Joyce (MOVED), Carrie (SECONDED). CARRIED.

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