



Alberta College of Occupational Therapists

Council Meeting Minutes

November 24, 2025

**Attending:**

Arwen Caines – President, Regulated Member

Heidi Knupp – Vice President, Regulated Member

Dennis Fitzgerald – Councillor, Public Member

Dr. Zahid Rafiq - Councillor, Public Member

Marianne Baird – CEO and Registrar

Benny Mutoni – Recording Secretary

**Regrets:**

Carrie Hait – Councillor, Regulated Member

Joyce Vayalumkal – Councillor, Regulated Member

Kristin Ward – Councillor, Regulated Member

Christie Bergman – Councillor, Public Member

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

**1. GATHERING**

Arwen called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

**2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

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

**MOTION:** To approve the November 24, 2025, ACOT Council meeting agenda as presented – Heidi (MOVED) Zahid (SECONDED). CARRIED.

### **3. STRATEGIC PLANNING**

#### ***Update on Strategic Plan***

Marianne shared that ACOT continues to meet most of its deliverables, with the following highlights:

- Social media following continues to slowly grow each month.
- ACOT continues to be active with its key partners.
- Registrant volume is up by just over 3% this year.

#### ***Review of Action Items***

Marianne shared that the following examples of action items have been completed:

Work on the diagnosis course, and the diagnosis, risk management, change management, and communications plan.

#### ***Practice Inquiry Activity***

Marianne shared the following:

- Practice queries are starting to increase again; this is typical for this time of year.
- Cross-jurisdictional practice, documentation, and ethical scenarios are some of the most frequent topics.
- ACOT has several marketing and advertising queries in response to an e-news communication about testimonials.

### **4. GENERATIVE THINKING**

#### ***Draft Strategic Plan for 2026 to 2028***

Marianne shared the latest iteration of the next strategic plan for ACOT with some updated language, as requested. Marianne checked whether there were any additional suggestions from Council.

Council expressed satisfaction with the draft, noting overall positive feedback and no suggested changes.

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

Marianne reported that during the development of the diagnosis course and related policy options, several elements were identified that may have unintended consequences.

One of the examples was the potential five-year practice requirement before taking the diagnosis course. This could create challenges for individuals with fewer years of experience, whose employers require diagnosis ability.

Marianne noted that these items will be brought forward with proposed policy options for Council's consideration in January, adding that communication with other Colleges regarding the course is on hold until further specifics are finalized.

Q: Where did the five-year requirement come from?

A: When we started discussions with the diagnosis committee, one of the things brought up for consideration was five years of practice experience before OTs could take the course. It was one example for consideration.

Q: Are there employers that would be requiring OTs to diagnose?

A: Yes, some employers such as the Alberta Health Services (AHS) may sometimes require provisional diagnosis ability for mental health positions.

Marianne shared the intention to engage a psychometrist with expertise in examinations and competency testing, to review the developing course and ensure the exam appropriately assesses required competencies. This expertise will also help inform any policy considerations such as allowing OTs to challenge the exam.

### ***Potential Legislation Changes***

Marianne provided an update on *Bill 13*, noting that it may place limits on the diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts of Colleges. Marianne explained that it is still unclear whether the legislation would require ACOT to revise its Standards of Practice or Code of Ethics, particularly regarding statements related to diversity, equity and inclusion.

Marianne added that ACOT will continue to monitor the Bill's progress, and if it is enacted, ACOT will be prepared to make any necessary adjustments to its documents.

Marianne inquired whether the Council supports ACOT continuing its Acting Against Racism and Intolerance (AARI) initiatives, provided that any related resources, such as learning modules, are made optional. Marianne also asked whether the Council would be comfortable with ACOT revising its language to align more closely with human rights-focused language if needed.

Council provided the following feedback:

- We don't know where this Bill will end up, so we don't have to change anything yet.
- We have made the commitment to this (AARI) work and stated that it's important to us as recently as the strategic plan. We can reframe it to still meet our values and our goals as a College, within the acceptable language of the government.
- It is a struggle understanding this Bill, considering all the work done with diversity, equity and inclusion. I think we need to continue with the work and find ways to maintain the values we have, while still following the government's direction.
- There seems to be a growing sentiment in favor of the Bill. If the Bill goes through in the present form, we can try to salvage some of the work we have started.
- It will be interesting to see how other Colleges move forward with this as well.

### ***Council Charter***

Marianne noted one of the action items completed was the Charter language changed to client driven. Marianne then suggested that key principles and core values are updated to keep track with ACOT's next strategic plan, with Council supporting this.

Marianne invited Council to suggest any revisions to the Charter's mutual expectations. Council indicated that they had no changes to propose.

**ACTION:** Marianne to update the Charter key principles and core values to align with ACOT's next strategic plan. Marianne to send the updated Charter out for signatures.

### ***OTs and Testimonials***

Marianne reviewed an example related to the recent communication ACOT issued regarding OTs and the use of testimonials. Marianne shared a situation in which an OT disagreed with ACOT's position and explained how ACOT responded by referencing relevant requirements in the *Health Professions Act (HPA)* and noting that ACOT's guidelines advise against using testimonials for advertising.

Marianne presented this example to council for their input. This included:

- I'm in favor of not allowing the testimonials as it can be a potential way of taking advantage of clients.
- There is a difference between testimonials and reviews and, Google reviews. I support the distinction we make, which is to not solicit them.

Q: Can they have them on the website?

A: No. People tend to use their websites for marketing and only post the good reviews, which may be misleading, as per the *HPA*.

Q: What happens in Google Reviews are linked to the website?

A: This scenario has not yet occurred, but it is an issue that warrants further consideration.

## **5. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### ***Governance Committee***

Heidi shared the following updates from the Committee's meeting on November 19, 2025:

- The Committee reviewed the conflict-of-interest protocol as well as Council roles and responsibilities and had no suggestions or recommendations for changes.
- A typographical error was identified in the Councillor roles and responsibilities document and has been corrected.
- The Committee reviewed the Council Charter and confirmed that it continues to reflect the values of the current strategic plan. The Committee also noted that the vision and mission will be updated in alignment with the upcoming strategic plan.

**MOTION:** To accept the Governance Committee Report as presented - Zahid (MOVED) Dennis (SECONDED). CARRIED.

## 6. CONSENT ITEMS

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

Council examined the October 28, 2025, ACOT Council meeting minutes. With no suggested changes, they moved forward with a motion.

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

### ***Registrar Limitation (RL) 7: Emergency Succession Plan***

Marianne shared the following:

- The RL outlines procedures to ensure coverage in the event of an unexpected CEO/Registrar absence.
- Marianne has been facilitating cross-training for her role by rotating team OTs to provide coverage during absences, giving them exposure to the responsibilities of the position.
- Marianne has also encouraged the operations manager to begin cross-training for her role.

**MOTION:** To approve Registrar Limitation 7: Emergency Succession Plan as presented. - Dennis (MOVED) Zahid (SECONDED). CARRIED.

### ***Complaints Activity Reports***

Marianne shared the following:

- ACOT continues to receive various inquiries, some of which periodically lead to formal complaints.
- The complaints department has had another busy year, with 7 complaints currently open and 10 closed to date.
- One of the closed complaints was reviewed by the Ombudsman's office after the Complaint Review Committee upheld the complaint. The Ombudsman concluded that ACOT's process and decision were administratively fair.

## 7. REFLECTION ON GOVERNANCE

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

- The discussion was productive and meaningful despite the smaller group.
- We effectively addressed several big agenda items.
- Good engagement from the small but mighty cohort present.
- Great discussion, and we can always circle back to some of the items members might have missed today.

## 8. MEETING SURVEY

Council took three minutes to complete the Council meeting survey.



## **9. IN CAMERA**

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

**MOTION:** To adjourn the meeting – Zahid (MOVED), Heidi (SECONDED). CARRIED.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:17 p.m.