



Alberta College of Occupational Therapists

Council Meeting Minutes

February 24, 2026

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

Christie Bergman – Councillor, Public Member

Dennis Fitzgerald – Councillor, Public Member

Marianne Baird – CEO and Registrar

Benny Mutoni – Recording Secretary

Regrets:

Dr. Zahid Rafiq - Councillor, Public Member

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

1. GATHERING

Arwen called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

MOTION: To approve the February 24, 2026, ACOT Council meeting agenda as presented – Heidi (MOVED) Joyce (SECONDED). CARRIED.



3. STRATEGIC PLANNING

President and VP roles effective Sept 1, 2026

Arwen shared the voting procedure to be followed for both president and vice president (VP) positions as follows:

- Individuals interested in the President and VP position will identify themselves
- The individuals will share with Council their reasons for running
- The individuals will be asked to step out of the virtual meeting room
- Remaining Council will have a discussion regarding the candidates
- Council will vote

Arwen opened the floor for individuals interested in the President position.

Heidi was the sole Council member that put her name forward for the President position. Heidi shared that her interest stemmed from experience as VP which allowed her to contribute to the profession through experiences such as the diagnosis discussion. Heidi shared that her primary focus would be protection of the public. She also added that her understanding of regulation has grown in the past few years and hopes to expand this as President.

Heidi was asked to virtually exit the room, and Council had a discussion followed by a vote. Council members voted to support Heidi for the position.

Arwen then opened the floor for individuals interested in the VP position.

Joyce put her name forward for the position of VP, citing her deep commitment to the protection of the public mandate and effective governance. She shared that the role aligns with her values of collaboration and thoughtful leadership. Joyce also expressed her hope to serve as a bridge between Council and governance work. Additionally, she noted her experience serving as a Council member for the past two years.

A Council member asked Joyce about time commitment and whether she would be able to continue participating in the Acting Against Racism and Intolerance (AARI) Committee as well as leading the Governance Committee while serving as VP. Joyce responded that she would monitor her commitments and assess her capacity as needed.

Joyce was asked to virtually exit the room and Council had a discussion. Council members voted in favor of Joyce for the VP position.

MOTION: To appoint Heidi as ACOT President, term starting September 2026 - Christie (MOVED) Joyce (SECONDED). CARRIED.



MOTION: To appoint Joyce as ACOT Vice President, term starting September 2026 - Dennis (MOVED) Heidi (SECONDED). CARRIED.

Arwen invited Heidi and Joyce back into the meeting, informed them of the discussion decisions, and congratulated them both on their upcoming positions

Diagnosis Update

Marianne shared briefing notes with Council including a background, progress report, diagnosis course syllabus, a draft practice statement and recommendations.

Marianne opened the floor for discussion.

Council members discussed the diagnosis course pre-requisites required to take the course and to challenge the course exam, including the specified practice years associated with the completion of those requirements. Council members reviewed and considered the implications of these timelines as part of the discussion. Council provided clarifying edits for the draft practice statement.

Additional comments included the following:

- Raising some of these kinds of questions that we know from real world practice is going to be helpful for staff and will guide presentations.
- Early intervention diagnosis is crucial, and I believe OTs will play a huge role in what that looks like for families in Alberta.
- It is important to showcase value in the course, not just for the OTs, but the public as well.

Questions and responses included the following:

Q: Is there a way to audit the course?

A: That might depend on the university policies and procedures.

Q: Will there be an opportunity to learn more about the course beyond the course outline, such as gaining a better understanding of the modules and overall content? This would be to provide individuals who may be on the fence with additional information when deciding whether to take the course.

A: That could be a possible future direction to take.

Q: Will there be opportunities for continued work after completing the course to help maintain the ability to diagnose, such as through case studies or other measures to support ongoing competence?

A: We'll discuss this further with Dr. Miini and share an update at the next Council meeting.

Q: Do we know the price associated with the course?

A: The price is not yet set. Keeping in mind that there's a lot of administration work that happens in the background, the course will have to be paid for. ACOT will collaborate with the University of Alberta, but the price will ultimately be set by the university to cover its costs of running the course.

Q: One of the complexities might be OTs outside the education system giving diagnoses to children that the education system might hesitate to acknowledge. Is this a concern?

A: That could happen and it might be a process. Over time parents might recognize that early intervention is beneficial to their children and bring this forward to the schools. This kind of feedback to the education system could have an impact.

Council discussed and voted on decision points.

MOTION: To approve the course outline as presented for sharing with and validation by the Diagnosis Course Advisory Committee. - Christie (MOVED) Heidi (SECONDED). CARRIED.

MOTION: To require the diagnosis course or successful passing of the course exam for all OTs who communicate a diagnosis that will be reasonably expected to be relied upon. - Christie (MOVED) Heidi (SECONDED). CARRIED.

MOTION: To approve the practice statement for OTs establishing diagnoses with the formatting edits discussed. - Joyce (MOVED) Dennis (SECONDED). CARRIED.

MOTION: To require 3 years practice experience as the prerequisite to taking the diagnosis course for OTs. - Heidi (MOVED) Joyce (SECONDED). CARRIED.

MOTION: To require 5 years practice experience as the prerequisite to challenge the diagnosis course exam. - Christie (MOVED) Joyce (SECONDED). CARRIED.

Government Communication

Marianne shared that she has been in touch with the Health Professions Regulation Unit about sending a diagnosis update to all health regulatory Colleges and is awaiting a response before proceeding with communications to the other Colleges.

4. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Competence Committee

Marianne shared the following updates:

- The Committee is preparing for another round of review and evaluations and all the Committee training required for this each year.
- The Committee will have a busy year looking at potential new developments for 2027, with three sub-committees looking into items such as use of peer circles, risk-based selection for competence assessments and competence reviews.

Acting Against Racism and Intolerance (AARI) Committee

Marianne shared the following updates:

- The Committee work has been continuing, especially on learning modules.
- The Committee is currently awaiting guidance from legal counsel regarding what type of module content can be offered, keeping in mind the implications of Bill 13 (the *Regulated Professions Neutrality Act*), which may limit the type of diversity, equity, and inclusion content that can be provided, even on a voluntary basis.
- The Committee successfully welcomed new members last week, adding people from disability and 2SLGBTQI+communities.

MOTION: To approve the Competence Committee and AARI Committee Reports as presented - Heidi (MOVED) Dennis (SECONDED). CARRIED

5. CONSENT ITEMS

Review of Last Meeting's Minutes

Council examined the January 24, 2026, ACOT Council Meeting Minutes. With no suggested changes, they moved forward with a motion.

MOTION: To accept the January 24, 2026, ACOT Council Meeting minutes as presented - Joyce (MOVED) Dennis (SECONDED). CARRIED.

RL 1: Treatment of Staff and Volunteers

Marianne shared that ACOT strives to keep staff and volunteer roles filled in a nonbiased way, as well as creating a positive environment for them through things like policies and the team charter.

Marianne also shared the staff engagement survey, noting positive results.

RL 4: Treatment of Public and Registrants

Marianne shared the following:

- ACOT's culture aligns with the values in the strategic plan, and this positively affects the treatment of public and registrants.
- ACOT takes many steps to keep key partners informed about ACOT's mandate and work.
- ACOT selects a cross-section of diverse people offering different perspectives of registrants for its committees.
- ACOT often send out communication about registrants' responsibilities, especially around renewal time.



MOTION: To approve RL 1 and RL 4 as presented - Dennis (MOVED) Joyce (SECONDED). CARRIED.

6. REFLECTION ON GOVERNANCE

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

- It was a great meeting, and the diagnosis discussion was handled very well.
- I appreciate that the diagnosis piece continues to move forward, and I appreciate being part of these conversations.
- The diagnosis work continues to proceed slowly, methodically and purposefully.
- It is nice to have all these different voices and perspectives that keep the focus on public protection.
- We did a great job keeping the public first in our discussions.

Council members also took time to acknowledge this would be the last meeting for Carrie, and thanked her for her years of service, noting her keen eye for detail will be missed.

7. MEETING SURVEY

Council took four minutes to complete the Council meeting survey.

8. IN CAMERA

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

9. CLOSING REMARKS AND ADJOURNMENT

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

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m.