Alberta College of Occupational Therapists

Council Meeting Minutes

September 26, 2026

Attending:

Heidi Knupp – President, Regulated Member

Joyce Vayalumkal – Vice President, Regulated Member

Kristin Ward – Councillor, Regulated Member

Elya Cary – Councillor, Regulated Member

Shinu Bobby Johnrin – Councillor, Regulated Member

Christie Bergman – Councillor, Public Member

Dennis Fitzgerald – Councillor, Public Member

Dr. Zahid Rafiq - Councillor, Public Member

Voting Members for this Meeting – Christie, Dennis, Joyce, Shinu, Kristin & Zahid

1. **GATHERING**

Heidi called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m.

2. **ENDS POLICY AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Council set up the tone for the meeting, with Council members providing their input on what they hoped to accomplish during this meeting.

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

MOTION: To approve the September 26, 2026, ACOT Council meeting agenda as presented – Kristin (MOVED) Christie (SECONDED). CARRIED.

3. STRATEGIC PLANNING

Update on Strategic Plan

Marianne shared that ACOT continues to work on all strategic plan items, with the following key updates highlighted:

- ACOT responded to the government's invitation for a proposal to increase OT scope of practice by including our diagnosis proposal as well as the proposal for wound care below the dermis.
- ACOT is researching risk-based selection, peer circles and competence interviews relating to potential Continuing Competence Program (CCP) future directions.
- Marianne continues to speak to University of Alberta (UofA) OT students a few times a year.

A Councillor noted the quick response to government's invitation to submit scope expansion proposals and thanked everyone for the work involved in preparation.

Q: Have we heard back from government?

A: Not yet, however, there are a few regulators that have just started receiving other colleges' submissions for review..

Review of Action Items

Examples of action items completed included the following:

- Published a jointly developed video on informed consent with the College of Physiotherapists of Alberta, Alberta College of Speech-Language Pathologists & Audiologists, and College of Alberta Psychologists. Marianne noted the impact the video had, with schools and boards reaching out with follow-up questions.
- ACOT updated Council's orientation welcome package material.
- ACOT shared Quebec's proposed list of diagnosis for OT with the Diagnosis Course Advisory Committee for input.

Saddle Lake Event

- Saddle Lake invited Colleges to attend their 150th anniversary of the signing of Treaty Six.
- The Council member that represented ACOT shared their update, highlighting plans that Saddle Lake had for care provision on their lands. The Council member noted that there is no roll-out plan yet.
- Other Council members appreciated ACOT being represented, in the interest of public protection through engaging with community.

Practice Inquiries Activity

Marianne reported the following:

- The volume of practice queries is down, which is often the case over summer.
- Frequent query topics included documentation, employer practices, ethical scenarios, private practice, and general registrant support.

One Council member found it to be a positive sign that registrants are reaching out to get clarification and guidance on how to better protect the public.

Another Council member noted the complexity of some of the queries and shared appreciation for the way these queries are handled.

4. GENERATIVE THINKING

RPNA Guiding Principles

Marianne brought forward the guiding principles for responding to the requirements of the *Regulated Professions Neutrality Act* (RPNA).

Council discussed the Human Rights Committee's origins and ongoing deliverables as they relate to the principles in the RPNA. A desire for evidence showing how OT practice is experienced by the public emerged, to determine whether reports such as the In Plain Sight Summary Report from British Columbia that details Indigenous-specific Racism and Discrimination in British Columbia is applicable to OTs in Alberta.

MOTION: To accept the guiding principles as written - Joyce (MOVED) Kristin (SECONDED). CARRIED

ACTION: Marianne to relook at the Terms of Reference for the Human Rights Committee and discuss updates to the Committee's deliverables with them in November.

ACTION: Add research on OTs and discrimination to the work plan for the Human Rights Committee, with a focus on whether the public is affected by this in Alberta.

Diagnosis Consultations Package

Marianne shared the Diagnosis Consultations package with Council.

Marianne then checked if there was approval in principle for these materials, which ACOT planned to start presenting in the upcoming weeks.

A Council member appreciated that all documents were well-written and had clarity.

Upon review, Council had no suggested adjustments.

Q: Where will this be presented?

A: It will be online as it has guests based in Alberta and across Canada.

MOTION: To accept the consultation package principles as written - Dennis (MOVED) Shinu (SECONDED). CARRIED

PhD Recognition Briefing Note

Marianne shared that ACOT Council previously only recognized Doctorates of OT (DOTs) from the United States. Canada does not offer DOT programs, which are referred to in our *Occupational Therapists Profession Regulation*. More recently, a legal opinion clarified Canadian Doctors of Philosophy (PhDs) can be recognized by ACOT Council if the person's area of research was related to OT.

Marianne shared that the regulated OT in this instance did research based on health apps.

MOTION: For Council to recognize the PhD program for this regulated member in this instance- Dennis (MOVED) Joyce (SECONDED). CARRIED

5. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Competence Committee

Marianne shared the following:

- The Committee has had a busy summer with 321 individual level review and evaluations completed.
- Out of the registrants reviewed, 75% had acceptable CCP submissions, 19% had conditional CCP submissions, and 6% had unacceptable CCP submissions.
- All registrants were notified of their results, and all registrants with not acceptable CCP ratings completed coaching conversations.
- Surveys will be sent out to registrants that had review and evaluations.
- The Committee is recruiting new members to spread the workload, as the volume of review and evaluations increases each year when our number of registrants increases.

Human Rights Committee

Marianne shared the following updates:

- The Committee had a meeting and reviewed the Diagnosis Package, sharing input that informed the consultation package.

- The Committee will be going through changes as their Terms of Reference are updated to a more human-rights focus.

Onboarding Committee

Marianne shared the following updates:

- The Committee met in July to review and update the procedure manual for Council. Our two new Councillors were provided with the updated orientation checklist within the procedure manual.
- There will be a follow up with new Council members in about six months to assess progress and provide necessary support.

MOTION: To approve the Committee Reports as presented - Christie (MOVED) Shinu (SECONDED). CARRIED

6. OPEN FORUM

Marianne welcomed participants to the open forum, then invited participants and Council to introduce themselves.

Marianne started the meeting by sharing ACOT's website page highlighting the difference in the roles of ACOT, associations such as the Society of Alberta Occupational Therapists (SAOT), Canadian Association of Occupational Therapy (CAOT), and employers.

Marianne then provided a diagnosis update, outlining the events leading to development of the Diagnosis Course Advisory Committee, diagnosis course development to date, and upcoming consultations on the Standard of Practice on Diagnostic Practices.

Marianne then shared an RPNA update noting the following:

- The RPNA limits Colleges from regulating expression outside of work settings.
- The RPNA also limits colleges from requiring mandatory education on diversity, equity and inclusion concepts.
- ACOT is currently analyzing all its resources to determine which ones require updates to comply with the RPNA, and what those updates will look like.
- There is a lot of interpretation to be done and ACOT is working hard to do this diligently, noting that Council will review and approve guiding principles to follow for this work.
- All changes must be in place by August 2027.

Marianne opened the floor for discussion and questions.

Q: What other diagnoses are on the list?

A: Marianne showed a sample list of diagnoses being considered, which would be posted ahead of consultations taking place in mid-October, noting the sample is not a complete or exhaustive list of diagnoses.

Q: What will insurance look like for OTs in the private practice setting? For example, do we know if there going to be extra insurance required?

A: A few weeks ago, we spoke with one of the insurance providers that provides group insurance for OTs, BMS, about the standard of practice for diagnosis within OT scope of practice. BMS confirmed that if it is in OT scope of practice, it would fall under the current coverage. However, we expect that as OTs move into diagnosis and as claims arise around that, liability insurance premiums could be affected over time.

Q: What criteria was used to choose the sample list of diagnoses?

A: Quebec's government was looking at diagnosis for additional health professionals, including OTs. Quebec did research on this, and we used their initial sample list, then added further diagnoses based on feedback from open forums and surveys.

Q: Do we have a timeline for when training will begin?

A: The overall target is late 2027, but a lot will depend on when we receive government approval.

Marianne thanked all participants and encouraged them to monitor the ACOT e-news updates for upcoming consultation links, future open forums, and other communications.

7. CONSENT ITEMS

Review of Last Meeting's Minutes

Council examined the June 29, 2026, ACOT Council meeting minutes and requested two adjustments:

- correct the typo on 10th bullet point (page 2)

- Correct wording about the audit (page 5)

MOTION: To approve the June 29, 2026, ACOT Council meeting minutes with the adjustments discussed - Dennis (MOVED) Christie (SECONDED). CARRIED

Registrar Limitation (RL) 3: Asset Protection

Marianne shared she is in compliance with all requirements and shared the following updates:

- ACOT holds insurance for everything from building contents, directors and officers' liability and cyber insurance.
- ACOT holds funds in laddered guaranteed investment accounts.
- ACOT has independent audits every year.
- Large purchases are discussed with Council for approval before proceeding.

RL 5: Compensation and Benefits

Marianne shared the following:

- The Registrar does not set their own salary. This is negotiated with and approved by Council.
- Staff compensation and benefits are reviewed annually and compared to the consumer price index and with health care organizations in the province, to determine percentage increase.
- Staff members are encouraged to use up their vacation time in the year it was earned, so we don't accrue a significant liability for vacation payouts.

MOTION: To approve RL3 and RL5 as presented - Dennis (MOVED) Christy (SECONDED). CARRIED

Complaints Activity Report

Marianne shared the following:

- ACOT received 5 inquiries in this reporting period, with none resulting into complaints.
- ACOT had 7 open complaints, with one of these being closed at the time of the Council meeting. The closed complaint was not accepted due to falling outside the College's mandate.
- ACOT has closed 5 complaints since the beginning of March 2026.

A Council member commended the College for being a safe space that people can contact with queries, and to raise public or professional concerns, if needed.

MOTION: To accept the Complaints Activity Report as presented – Joyce (MOVED) Shinu (SECONDED). CARRIED

8. MEETING SURVEY

Council took 15 minutes to complete two surveys, the Council individual meeting survey, and the annual self evaluation survey.

9. REFLECTION ON GOVERNANCE

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

- We had a great open forum with a lot of engagement, and we focused on public protection.
- Different points of view were received with open dialogue and respect for one another.
- We had a healthy discussion keeping the public at the forefront.
- The good turn out at the open forum means that the information ACOT is putting out is being received.
- The open forum was a good reminder of what ACOT's role is, which is a regulator, not an advocate.
- The different perspectives at the table brought good conversation and a reminder that we serve a diverse public.
- We had a great discussion about ongoing deliverables for different committees. This will hopefully bring about more data-backed information that can inform future decisions.

10. IN CAMERA

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

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

The meeting was adjourned at 2:11 p.m.