



Your Vision, Our Focus

ALBERTA COLLEGE  
AND ASSOCIATION  
OF OPTICIANS

# ANNUAL REPORT 2020





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The 2020 annual report covers highlights of the College/Association initiatives for the fiscal year from January 1 to December 31, 2020.

## About the ACAO

The Alberta College and Association of Opticians (ACAO) is the regulatory body established to govern the practice of opticianry in Alberta. The ACAO exists to regulate and improve the practice of opticianry by ensuring that opticians provide quality professional care in eye health.

The Alberta College and Association of Opticians was established in 1961. The ACAO ensures opticians are providing competent and effective care to their patients. The main function of the ACAO is to protect the public.

## The ACAO is responsible for:

- Assessment, registration and licensing of all opticians and Contact Lens Practitioners in Alberta;
- Interpretation of the Health Professions Act, the Opticians Regulation and the Bylaws,
- Public and registrant complaints and inquiries,
- Establishment of standards of practice and guidelines,
- Monitor the competence of opticians through continuing education,
- Protect the public from unsafe or unethical opticianry practice,
- Protect the use of regulated title designation and initials, RO and RCLP,
- Review the professional conduct of members based on complaints.
- Provide continuing competency to opticians that will promote ethical practice and provide tools and resources for our opticians to continue to enhance their knowledge and skills.

## Dual Mandates

ACAO directs dual roles for the optician profession thus, the organization is responsible for two mandates. Regulatory Mandate – The Alberta Government delegates the power and authority for self-regulation to the College of Opticians of Alberta through the Health Professions Act. This legislation requires health professions to organize and carry out governance responsibilities in a manner that protects and serves the public interest. This mandate is a legislated responsibility privileged by the Alberta Government. Association Mandate – Members of the optical profession direct the ACAO to also provide association services for its professional members. Association activities work to advance the interests of the profession. These activities may include marketing, professional development, consumer education, advocacy, forecasting trends, and networking.

## Strategic Pillars and Goals

Building Relationships: Opticians are often a patient's first touchpoint for eye care; the care opticians provide is in collaboration with other healthcare providers.

- BR 1: Opticians, optometrists, and ophthalmologists partner to create a collaborative approach to patient care.
- BR 2: Opticians are stronger together through an engaged membership.
- BR 3: Opticians positively influence regulation in Alberta through collaboration with stakeholders.

Increasing Awareness through Education: Opticians are healthcare professionals contributing to and improving Alberta's healthcare system.

- EA 1: Public can be aware and informed about opticians as health care professionals including how the ACAO protects and serves the public interest.
- EA 2: ACAO members are aware of and engaged to contribute to regulatory and association focused functions and activities.
- EA 3: ACAO members recognize the quality assurance program and the impact it has on improving opticians' practice.

Strengthening Governance: Opticians are granted the privilege of self-regulation for the purpose of protecting and serving the public.

- SG 1: ACAO Council prioritizes recruitment of its governance officers and development of its processes to support legacy transfer in roles and committees.
- SG 2: ACAO Council plans for and implements activities to increase and sustain governance knowledge in those who participate in governing the organization.
- SG 3: ACAO Council members commit to and make time for identifying and practicing governance skills and abilities.

# Mission

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Our mission is to protect the public by keeping them informed and by pro-actively regulating and educating our members.

# Vision

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Our vision is to be dedicated to providing quality service by competent and educated health practitioners. We strive to achieve our vision by being progressive, accountable and accessible to the public and our member

# Values

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Accountability, Ethicality, Fairness, Effectiveness, Openness, Transparency

# Message from the President

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The Alberta College and Association of Opticians (ACAO) Council is meant to lead the regulatory body for the opticians of Alberta. We have been the voice of opticianry in Alberta since 1961 and advocate on behalf of opticians. In our role we are also mandated under the *Health Professions Act* (HPA) to protect the public. Before 2016, we did hold the name of College of Opticians of Alberta (COA). We will be reassuming this name, as we divest from activities deemed to be association in nature.

Bringing on a new Executive Director and Registrar after a lengthy tenure of our former Executive Director/Registrar created many opportunities for the ACAO. Jennifer Bertrand, CAE, began with the ACAO in March 2020. An operational assessment into the workings of our organization enabled more work into our governance, and further alignment of our strategic pillars. This research has enabled the ACAO to work further on governance, communications and strengthening of policies.

The COVID-19 crisis impacted the ACAO significantly however we did have a pandemic plan in place and were able to continue the business of the College remotely with little disruption. We had to pivot our communication strategy sending out frequent updates to our registrants concerning public health orders from the Alberta Chief Medical Officer of Health. We also communicated to registrants and the public that we are "The first touchpoint of eyecare; the care opticians provide is in collaboration with other health care providers". We have continued to keep the registrants informed through emails and on our website.

Bill 30 that was introduced by the Government of Alberta has been initiated to increased public consultation within of our health care systems. The bill requires the Council of the ACAO, any Hearing Tribunals and Complaint Review Committees be comprised of no less than 50 % Public Members. The bill also mandates that individual colleges fund all expenses related to the Public Members. The bill comes into effect April 2021 and these changes have now been implemented by our Council.

There now are five Regulated Members, and five Public Members on our Council. This has meant several changes to our bylaws and policies. We will be adopting an appointment process utilizing our composition matrix and will seek inclusivity, respect, a further commitment to public protection, and ability to make evidence-based decisions that support the College's public protection mandate. The overall Council will work to have knowledge and expertise in strategic communication, stakeholder relations, legal and regulatory management, and risk management strategies.

The government has also introduced legislation mandating the total separation of all colleges and associations. Currently we are a combining college and association, and steps have been made in previous years to have an internal separation of college and association functions, financial tracking, and committees. Further separation is on track to be complete by 2022. The name of the ACAO will change back to our previous name, the College of Opticians of Alberta (COA). The establishment of a provincial association is being researched by a steering committee consisting of registrants and stakeholders. The College will continue all functions as set out in legislation. Licensure does not change, the role of the College to manage complaints, hearing tribunals, standards of practice and continued competence will remain. The College must show they are strong to be able to self-regulate while maintaining fiscal viability.

We have renamed the Quality Assurance program and is now the Continuing Competence Program to align with legislation. We continue to assist registrants to accomplish their tasks and goals of continued competence. We have provided information and a webinar to the registrants to help understand this new process.

The scope of practice continues to be a request put forth to the Government of Alberta. This expanded scope would allow qualified registrants to perform a refraction and give a written result to patients between ages 18-64 for the purpose of buying glasses or contact lenses. This scope expansion has been in the works for many years, and was an item listed on the UCP's platform in the last election. We hope to complete this in 2021 with Standards of Practice to follow. We continue to seek collaboration as one of the three O's in eyecare, Opticians, Optometrists, and Ophthalmologists.

*Respectfully Submitted,  
Margaret Cayenne, RO, RCLP  
President*

# Executive Director & Registrar Message



It is hard to believe that we have weathered a year of COVID-19 already. Alberta's opticians adapted to rapidly changing workplace and health care guidelines throughout 2020, facing these challenges with grace, determination, and professionalism. The ACAO as an organization also learned to work differently, adapting organizational strategies, policies, and processes to reflect a new uncertain reality and a changing legislative landscape. I would like to take this opportunity again to sincerely thank the ACAO Council, staff, and members for their ongoing commitment to public safety and service, as well as the program staff at NAIT and SAIT and our fellow provincial and national regulatory colleges and associations for their collaboration and support. I would also like to thank the government departments and officials who have helped us to understand the significant changes to health care legislation and to navigate the process of regulatory change. In addition to careful financial management to withstand the current economic circumstances and prepare the organization for the future, the ACAO focused on the following key initiatives in 2020:

## College and Association Separation (Bill 46)

One of the key priorities emerging in 2020 relates to the mandatory separation of college and association required by Bill 46. As a result of this impending change, the ACAO pivoted some of its activities to prepare for separation, including drafting a plan and proposal for the Minister of Health, assessing college and association functions, preparing a cost and staffing analysis, and determining how to proceed with association development. This work continues in 2021 and will entail significant updates to the college's bylaws, policies, and procedures.

## Increased Public Member Representation (Bill 30)

The ACAO also focused on changes related to Bill 30, which increased public member representation on the councils of regulatory health colleges to 50%. The ACAO addressed this change by reducing the number of registered optician members on the ACAO Council to five. The Minister of Health will appoint a corresponding five public members to the ACAO Council (to date, three appointments are complete). This change also required updates to the ACAO's bylaws, policies, and procedures and takes effect in April 2021.

## Scope of Practice

The ACAO continued to work with the Government of Alberta on the request for an expanded scope of practice to allow qualified opticians to perform refractions and write the results of their assessment as a prescription. The ACAO's proposal was submitted to Alberta Health in March 2020 and the government consultation process was carried out in May. Since then, the ACAO has provided clarifying information as needed to assist with the Minister's decision on the proposal. Bill 30 and Bill 46 resulted in some delays in the regulatory change process; however, should the ACAO's request proceed for approval, we anticipate royal assent and proclamation in the Spring of 2021.



## Standards of Practice

The ACAO carried out a final consultation process in 2020 to discuss guideline changes with contact lens practitioners and completed revisions to the Standards of Practice in the Fall of 2020. Following review by the ACAO Registration Committee and Council, the revised standards were published and took effect in January 2021.

## Governance

The ACAO finalized its Strategic Plan in June 2020 and completed updates to its governance structure, including revising its committee structure, establishing an annual planning framework, and revising its governing policies and procedures. The Council also updated its nomination process and adopted a composition matrix to identify key values and competencies necessary for effective governance.

## Strategy Development

As part of the new planning process, the Executive Director and Registrar presented an operational plan with a focus on three key strategy areas: stakeholder engagement, communications, and governance. In addition to the governance work outlined above, the ACAO carried out a comprehensive membership survey and benchmarking study in 2020 to prepare for strategy development. Tactical activities related to the strategy objectives will be carried out in 2021.

## Organizational Assessment

Upon joining the ACAO in March 2020, the Executive Director and Registrar completed an organizational assessment and presented 25 recommendations to the Council for improvements to governance and operations. While work on these recommendations continues, the ACAO completed the following in 2020:

- Modernized the organization's governance structure and updated or established related policies and procedures,
- Reviewed and revised policies to ensure continued alignment with the Health Professions Act and Opticians Regulation,
- Developed strategies specific to identified gaps in relation to stakeholder engagement, communications, and governance,
- Established an anti-bias and anti-discrimination policy and incorporated this policy at the governance and operational levels,
- Completed an assessment of information technology infrastructure and security, and
- Updated financial policies and procedures to ensure appropriate controls and oversight, as well as effective budget strategy and monitoring.

It is a privilege to work with Alberta's opticians and I look forward to serving the ACAO in 2021 as we continue to navigate the pandemic and the changes to health regulation.

*Respectfully Submitted,  
Jennifer Bertrand, CAE  
Executive Director and Registrar*

# Public Member Message

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The Alberta College and Association of Opticians (ACAO) is required under the *Health Professions Act* (HPA) to have three Public Members on its Council of Directors. The role of a Public Member is to bring new and different perspectives and expertise to Council discussions and to ensure the ACAO Council acts in the best interest of the public and meets the requirements of the HPA. In October 2020 the Council wished farewell to Public Members Judy Todd and Shaffin Kherani. Lana Bentley remained on Council as the Public Member and her term runs until 2022.

This past year presented Council with two major issues including the ongoing pandemic and adopting the changes required by Bill 46. Specific to the former, Registered Opticians continued to provide Albertans with quality optical care in the face of the pandemic. The Council provided information to members related to the rapidly evolving health care restrictions. The pandemic caused major disruption to the economy and Registered Opticians were impacted by this as well. In spite of the loss of income and disruption to their operations, registration and payment of membership dues remained consistent thus confirming that opticians see the value in the College.

The ACAO continued to pursue an expansion of the scope of practice on behalf of its membership. It was disappointing to learn that the expansion did not occur given the many benefits that it would have provided to Albertans. The Council worked diligently to implement the changes required by Bill 46. The separation of the college and association functions of an organization would be disruptive under the best of circumstances however; it is especially impressive that this work concurred as the organization managed the pandemic as well as providing all of its usual services.

Overall, this past year has been remarkable. Though not ideal, we sometimes learn about an organization's resilience and capacity by observing how it performs in the face of adversity. By that measure, the ACAO had an incredible year. The staff team are committed, thorough, and relentless in their pursuit of positive organizational impact. The Council and staff team worked collaboratively to meet the complex needs of membership and Albertans. Optimism abounds and I believe that with the addition of three new Public Members the Council team will continue to grow and fulfill its mandate.

*Respectfully Submitted,  
Lana Bentley MSW, RCSW (6772)  
Public Member*

# Highlights 2020

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## Standards Practice

Following a comprehensive consultation with members, the Government of Alberta, and the Alberta College of Optometrists, the ACAO has made revisions to the Standards of Practice for Registered Opticians and Registered Contact Lens Practitioners. The revised standards came into effect in early 2021. The changes related to contact lens dispensing were made in consultation with the Alberta College of Optometrists to ensure patients are not billed for current and valid services already provided by a regulated eye care provider and to expand patient choice when seeking eye care services in alignment with Government of Alberta priorities.

## 2020 Membership Survey

Our key annual objectives included preparing stakeholder relations and organizational communication strategies to enhance our engagement and interactions with members, the public, the government, employers, post-secondary institutions, and partners. To prepare for this work, we conducted a membership survey and benchmarking study in November of 2020, the results of which may now be used to establish a baseline for monitoring stakeholder and member perceptions.

The 2020 ACAO Membership Survey was intended to assist the Council to better understand the membership and the optical profession in Alberta. A standardized questionnaire was used to allow for a valid and reliable interpretation of survey results, as well as to establish a baseline for future surveys so that the ACAO can begin to monitor data and evaluate trends over time. A standardized electronic questionnaire was developed based on a review of historical and benchmarking data, reviewed by a communications consultant, and approved by the ACAO's Association Committee (population subsample). A total of 1,192 survey invitations were sent directly to registered members via email. The survey resulted in 30.3% response rate with a 92% completion rate and a median completion time of 10 minutes.

## Benchmarking Study

The ACAO continued to move forward with its strategic mandate in early 2021 by identifying the objectives and tactics that will inform its stakeholder relations, organizational communications, and governance strategies over the next three years. As part of the preparation for this work, the Council undertook both a benchmarking study with relevant stakeholders and a membership survey with ACAO members. In addition, the Executive Director completed an organizational assessment, which identified a number of related recommendations.

The ACAO will now be focusing on implementation of these objectives and tactics over the next three years. Due to the pending separation of the ACAO as required by Bill 46, some of the association-specific activities may be transferred to the new association in 2022.

ACAO and Sandyhill Communications identified 49 organisations whose communications and engagement approaches were relevant and/or analogous to the ACAO's. These were Canadian healthrelated associations and/or regulators, including, but not limited to, those responsible for professional opticians in other provinces, as well as a number of groups responsible to Alberta's Health Professions Act.. Of the 49 recipients, 16, or roughly 32%, filled out and returned the questionnaire, providing enough information to allow ACAO the confidence to determine how its approaches compare to industry best practices.

## Purpose

- Provide context for the improvement of ACAO stakeholder relations (member engagement; stakeholder communications and interaction; collaboration with other organizations)
- Provide context on how ACAO can better communicate broadly to educate and inform on the intrinsic value of the profession as a component of health care
- Provide information allowing ACAO to align its governance structure, approaches, and policies with existing health sector best practices.



## Adoption of Diversity and Inclusion Policy

ACAO staff emails have been redesigned to reflect diversity and inclusion principles, including acknowledgment of indigenous peoples and gender diversity, as well as a commitment to eliminating discrimination and bias. The Council adopted the process and built the initiative throughout the organization.

## Response to the Pandemic

One of the first things we discovered is that the ACAO—its Council, staff, and office structure—were ready for the pandemic. Our systems and hardware allowed us to transition to a remote work model on March 16, 2020, with full services still provided to members and the public. At a time when many organizations were struggling to develop a new workplace framework, the ACAO had already transitioned effectively. This flexibility matters: it is what allows the ACAO to continue to meet its mandate to protect the public.

Opticians had to face different challenges, including deciding whether to close or to continue to offer emergent and critical care to patients in accordance with Chief Medical Officer Dr. Deena Hinshaw's public health order. This impacted how opticians offer health services, as well as their livelihoods.

Following the announcements made by Alberta Health, we were immediately impressed by those opticians we had a chance to engage with via phone and email and were pleased with the level of professionalism and willingness to help through the crisis. Registered opticians and registered contact lens practitioners undoubtedly provide an essential health service. Without functioning eyeglasses, safety glasses, and contact lenses, our frontline workers would not be able to do their jobs safely and effectively in the fight against COVID-19.

The ACAO Council and staff kept these evolving circumstances top of mind, discussing the best ways to keep opticians informed and to support them through the pandemic. Some of the key activities the Council and staff engaged in as a response to the pandemic included:

- Regular updates following Alberta Health announcements that impact ACAO members
- Key notices on patient and practitioner care and workforce planning
- An urgent care list for ACAO members to notify the public if they are open for emergent/critical care or are temporarily closed
- Liaising with Alberta Health and other provincial and national stakeholders to share information and discuss strategic responses
- Marketing materials to inform the public about the importance of emergent/critical optical care for essential workers
- Re-Opening for Routine Care
- PPE Guidelines, ordering forms and supplier lists and discounts.
- Pandemic Support Forum - We made a new section of the Opticians' Forums page where opticians could share and discuss how their optical practices were handling the pandemic and share pandemic resources with each other.
- Pandemic Support Facebook Group - Opticians were able to connect with other practitioners and share pandemic resources on the ACAO Pandemic Support Facebook group.

Opticians played an important role in supporting front line workers during the pandemic. The ACAO created a series of posters to highlight the ways opticians provided service. Our goal was to gather information about who was providing services so that we could connect front line workers with fast and safe options for their eye care needs. Our visual campaign highlighted different critical service providers and gives some examples of the services that opticians are still able to provide to help them carry on.

## Business Continuity and IT Disaster Recovery Plan

During the initial organizational assessment, it was identified that the ACAO develop Business Continuity Plan to assess security and critical infrastructure. It is the policy of the ACAO to maintain a comprehensive Business Continuity Plan for all critical organization functions. The Executive Director and Registrar is responsible for ensuring compliance with this policy and for conducting a regular review of emergency preparedness not less than every three years.

# Governance Update

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## Governance Committee

The Committee is responsible for the recruitment, nominations, governance issues and policy development for the Alberta College and Association of Opticians (ACAO). We have worked on a number of projects this past year and many of our efforts have been through participation in Zoom and telephone meetings. COVID-19 certainly presented us with challenges, but the committee took on each task in a determined manner.

The committee spent time with the contact lens amendments to the Standards of Practice. The goal of the amendments was to:

- Increase patient access to regulated health professionals, versus unregulated suppliers.
- Increase patient choice
- Align our standards more closely with optometry and ophthalmology, improving transition of care between profession and even the playing field between professionals.

The committee worked on the "streamlining" of Council Policies and Governance Policies for a combined Governing Policies Manual. This will provide much better access and understanding for the Council and members alike. We formulated the guidelines and skill-development process that will bring excellent new members to Council. With respect to Bill 46 change for 2021, the committee worked on bylaw changes that reflect the accommodation of the separation of the College and Association including Council composition, and appointments to Council. This is still ongoing, however, the goal for this separation will be achieved by the proposed date for completion.

*Respectfully Submitted,  
Gene Kerns, RO, RCLP  
Committee Chair*

## Annual Planning Framework

At its September 2020 planning meeting, the Council adopted a new annual planning framework based on recommendations arising from the Executive Directors operational assessment. This includes development of an annual operational plan in alignment with the strategic plan, key performance indicators to allow for measurement of target objectives, and committee planning worksheets linked to the strategic and operational plans to ensure effective use of available resources.

Council approved an interim operational plan with three key interrelated objectives arising from recommendations in the operational assessment. The interim operational plan will carry the ACAO through to 2021 when the Council will initiate the new annual planning process.



## Operational Plan Development

In addition to the annual planning framework, Council approved annual objectives as part of an interim operational plan. The new planning framework will come into effect in January 2021 and as part of the new process, the Council will review its strategic plan to determine if any updates are required. The Executive Director and Registrar will then prepare an operational plan for 2022 based on the strategic plan, and this new plan will inform the Council's budget preparation process and highlights from the operational assessment of the ACAO.

As the ACAO moves forward, the Council may begin to explore new ways of thinking and doing, including taking greater risks to support organizational excellence. Organizations tend to move into this phase when its needs are met; that is, if the organization has a strong financial position, its operations are running smoothly, and there are no external factors impacting risk tolerance.

Based on this assessment, which included a survey conducted with ACAO staff and Council members, the Executive Director and Registrar presented 25 recommendations to the Council in the areas of organizational effectiveness, financial management, culture, program effectiveness, and registration practices.

The recommendations are summarized below:

## Governance

Review and revise the organization's governance structure in light of innovative practices within regulatory and association frameworks and to prepare for the internal separation of college and association. Develop policies and procedures to effectively manage, measure, and monitor the performance of the organization, as well as to recruit, orient, and support the ACAO Council.

## Programs and Communications

Explore the value proposition of the organization and develop an organizational communication strategy that addresses member and stakeholder engagement, marketing, and regulatory and public awareness. Enhance the current volunteer and member recognition program, evaluate existing programs and services to determine viability/sustainability, and identify opportunities for the development of new programs and services.

## Fair Registration Practice

Publish an anti-bias and anti-discrimination statement, develop corresponding training materials for volunteers and staff, review registration processes against best practice documentation, and develop a monitoring process to eliminate emerging threats to fair practice. Develop an internal audit process for the periodic review of registration policies and procedures.

## Finance and Operations

Review all financial policies and procedures, implement appropriate controls and oversight where necessary, and develop a more comprehensive budget development and monitoring strategy to explore assumptions, environmental trends, and risks. Review staffing structure, competency gaps, staffing needs of the association, and related personnel policies. Assess the Information Technology needs of the organization, including development of a Business Continuity and IT Disaster Recovery Plan to assess security and protect critical infrastructure. Carry out a privacy audit and develop a privacy management plan, including a review of policies related to the collection of personal information.



## Council & Committees

The Council of Directors governs the ACAO. Because we are a self-regulating body for opticians in Alberta, we rely on members to fill most of those positions. Elected Council members are Registered Opticians (RO's) in good standing; these are peers in the field, chosen by opticians, and dedicated to serving the members and the public.

### Council Responsibilities

The Council is responsible for making sure that the ACAO meets its objectives. With the help of the public members the Council of Directors forecasts the long-term needs of the public. In this way, we can determine educational priorities and practice standards for opticians in Alberta. The ACAO relies on the Council to decide how to keep up to date on emerging technology and practices, so that we can better serve the public.

The Council works together with the Government of Alberta, other provincial regulatory bodies, and post-secondary institutions. We rely on them to collaborate with registrants and other health professionals in similar fields. Through collaboration, the Council can ensure that registered opticians are able to adapt to changes in practice environments, and advances in technology.

Opticians in Alberta can transition to work almost anywhere in Canada because of the relationships we have with other provinces. We are trusted as licensed health professionals because of the Council's cooperation with government and other regulatory bodies. Finally, opticians can be sure that their accredited education and continuing education provide them with all of the skills and knowledge they need, thanks to the Council's work on education standards.

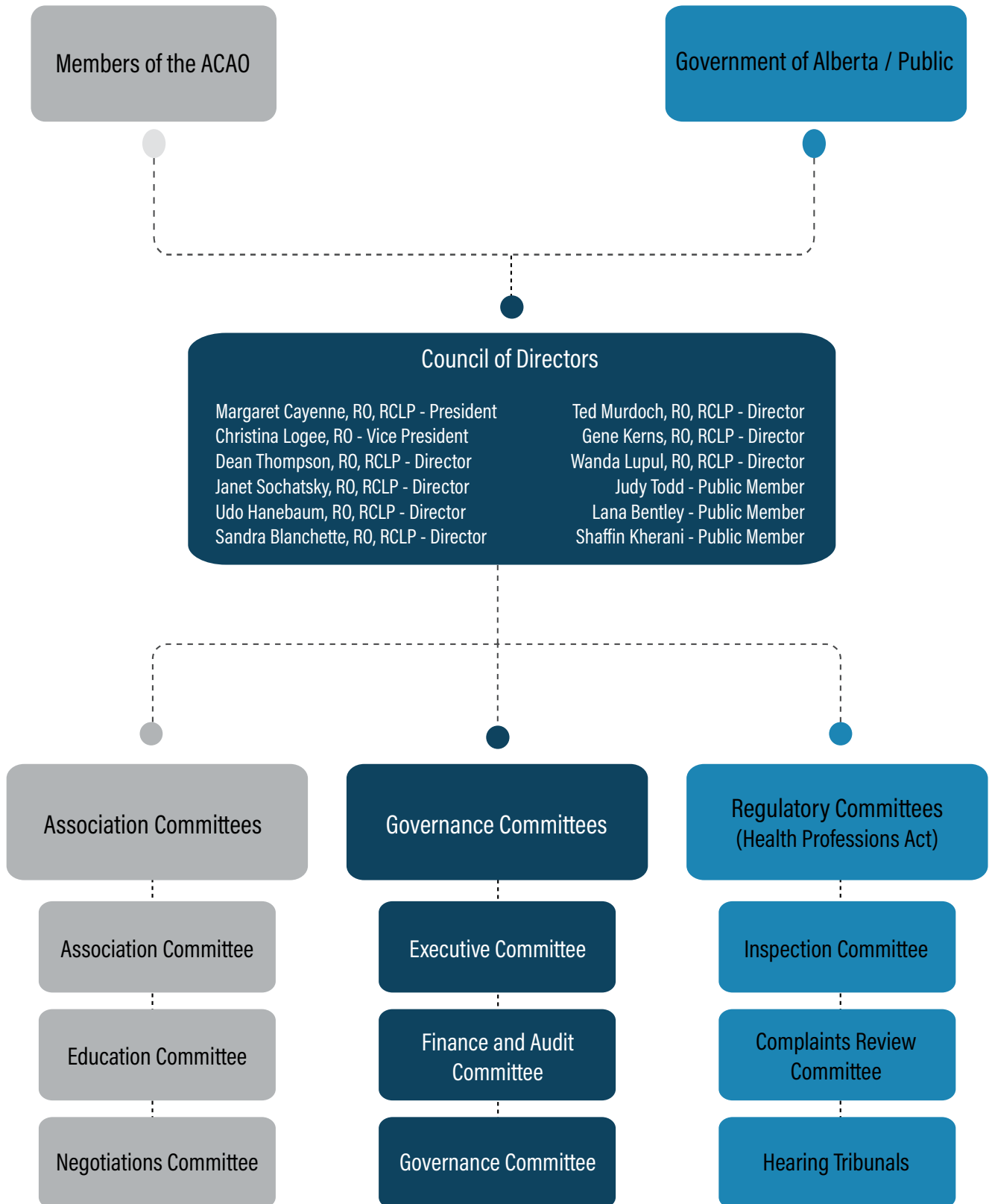
### Elections

Each year in May, the ACAO holds an Annual General Meeting (AGM). During the AGM, we have an election for Council. Once elected, each Council Member serves a three-year term. As long as they are in good standing, any Alberta optician can be nominated for the Council of Directors. This process will change in 2021 to comply with guidelines set out as a result of the separation of college and association.

### Public Members

The Government of Alberta appoints public members, who are not opticians, to participate on the Council. By including public members, we can gain insight and provide better service to the public. The public members are there to help us connect, but also to make sure that we are accountable to the public. Their insight is so valuable to Council.

# Organizational Structure



# Regulatory Responsibility

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The Alberta College and Association of Opticians (ACAO) is responsible for monitoring opticians' performance and assuring the public that it meets required standards. The ACAO has committed to ensuring quality improvement for opticians by mandating our Continuing Competence Program (CCP).

The majority of optical regulators in Canada are undertaking this change. By working together, we greatly reduce expenditures of time and money. July 1, 2020 we launched a new Continuing Competence Program. This program strives to be more adaptive to each member's educational goals. With the new continuing competence program, opticians will be prepared to identify and correct their individual deficiencies to better strengthen their competence. We will continue to get the word out reach out to members on a regular basis.

## Competence Committee

2020 was not what any of us were expecting, and the Competence Committee was no stranger to its effects. Due to COVID-19, the committee canceled the education events for much of the year, but we were able to move to an online platform to meet the needs of the program and provide necessary information events to registrants.

The Alberta Opticians and Associations (ACAO) mandate is to protect the public and proactively regulate our optician members in Alberta. This requirement includes a Continuing Competency Program (CCP). A Continuing Competency Assessment and Online Learning Plan was launched in 2020. The goal of this new approach to continuing education is to sustain and enhance competence with the context of opticians' practice. Opticians are now able to accurately identify gaps in their current knowledge with a private online assessment and then create six learning goals to focus on during their three-year cycle. The committee hosted a webinar in November 2020 that included how to complete the assessment, what to expect, how to set learning goals, and what type of resources that can be accessed to fulfill learning goals.

As a sneak peak into 2021, we are working on addressing the comments made in our membership survey that fall under the Competence umbrella. We are working on our program policy, audit procedures and checklist.

*Respectfully Submitted,  
Christina Logee, RO  
Vice President / Committee Chair*

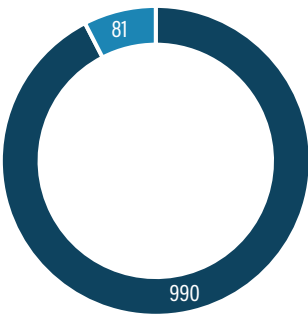
# Registration Overview 2020

The Alberta College and Association of Opticians developed and launched a series of videos on Becoming an Optician. These videos were created in partnership with our national regulator groups.

You may view these videos at [www.acao.ca/becoming-an-optician](http://www.acao.ca/becoming-an-optician). Provisional Opticians are those who have completed the education and are awaiting the National licensing Examinations. This group practice under supervision. Students (associates) are not a regulated category of member.

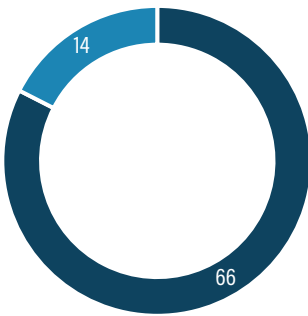
We monitor their supervision while they are training through a cooperative program with NAIT called Field Supervision. The final numbers for our registration for 2019 totaled 1, 071 members.

Regulated Members



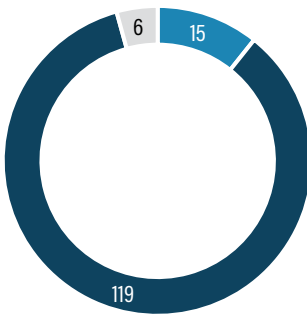
■ Active ■ Non-Practicing

Licensing Exam Candidates



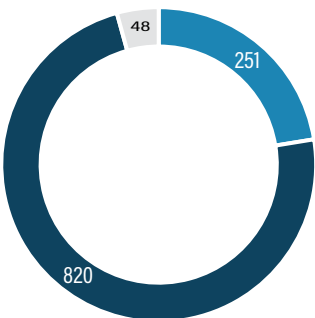
■ Eyeglass ■ Contact Lens

New Registrants and Return to Practice



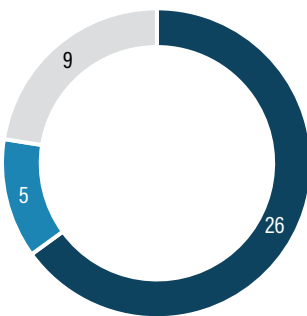
■ Reinstated ■ New Members ■ PLAR

Demographics



■ Male ■ Female ■ Over 65

Suspensions and Retired



■ Suspended (Non-Payment) ■ Left the Province ■ Retired

## Professional Conduct

The Health Professions Act (HPA) mandates the Alberta College and Association of Opticians (ACAO) to manage complaints, investigations, and the discipline process in an effective and timely manner. To ensure easy access and transparency, our website includes a dedicated area for anyone to navigate through the ACAO complaint process. This information can be found at:

<https://acao.ca/public/complaints-and-disciplines/>

### Inquiries

When an inquiry does not meet the requirements of a formal complaint, the ACAO still endeavors to respond to and resolve the issues brought up by members of the public, registrants, and other health care practitioners. The ACAO receives several inquiries throughout the year, and most of them are handled by answering questions, clarifying regulations or legislation, or contacting the registrant involved to mediate a solution to the situation. In 2020 the ACAO handled six (6) inquiries which did not meet the requirements of a formal complaint.

### Complaint Trends

In 2020 we received seven (7) new complaints. Four (4) were dismissed for insufficient evidence of unprofessional conduct and three (3) were carried forward into the next year. Complaints included accusations of insufficient supervision of unregulated staff, unprofessional interactions between health professionals, inaccurate marketing, and insufficient record keeping.

### Facilitated Resolution

For some complaints, it may be appropriate for the Complaints Director to facilitate a resolution instead of sending the complaint to a hearing. Handling certain complaints in this way can be faster and more cost effective for everyone involved, however a facilitated resolution is only used when the Complaints Director deems it appropriate and when the complainant and registrant both agree to the allegations and sanctions. A facilitated resolution agreement is never used when the complaint involves sexual abuse and/or sexual misconduct. In 2020, the ACAO completed one (1) facilitated resolution agreement to resolve a complaint that had been carried over from 2019.

### Sexual Abuse and Sexual Misconduct

In 2020, there were no complaints involving sexual abuse and/or sexual misconduct.

### HPA Section 118 (Incapacity)

In 2020, there were no complaints involving incapacity under section 118 of the HPA.

### Hearings

There were no hearings held in 2020.

## Patient Relations

In accordance with the Health Professions Act of Alberta, the Alberta College and Association of Opticians maintains a patient relations program. This program includes providing educational materials to registrants, staff, council members and other volunteers regarding patient boundaries and preventing and addressing sexual abuse of and sexual misconduct towards patients by regulated members. In 2020, the ACAO updated our website to include a fillable complaint submission form alongside the description of the complaint process for patients.

The ACAO is committed to ensuring patient protection and continues to maintain a fund to provide treatment and counselling for patients who meet the requirements set out in section 135.9 of the HPA. Administration of this fund is handled by a third-party to ensure patients have access to appropriate resources that may be able to assist them.

Complaints and Discipline	2020
Complaints received	7
Complaints carried over from previous year (2019)	3
Complaints involving sexual abuse or sexual misconduct	0
Complaints dealt with under s. 118	0
Complaints carried over to following year (2021)	3
Complaints referred to investigation	7
Complaints closed	7
Complaints dismissed, redirected or resolved informally	6
Complaints referred to alternative complaints resolution	0
Complaints referred to hearing	0
Hearings held	0
Hearings closed to the public	0
Decisions appealed	0

# Association Functions

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## Association Committee

2020 was a year full of drastic changes for life, business and the Alberta College and Association (ACOA).

The committee held virtual appetizer nights and webinars for opticians, and we were happy with the turnout and engagement. Other initiatives explored included setting up an PLI insurance program for opticians in Alberta to provide opticians additional Errors and Omissions coverage should they require it. In December, BMS was selected as our broker to provide the insurance.

We are happy to announce that SAIT launched its optical program in 2020. By having both the SAIT program and the NAIT Optical Sciences program will provide additional options to students and will benefit the entire profession. The Association committee also saw the amalgamation of the Association and Education committees to allow for easier crossover in terms of continuing education delivery for opticians and hosting of such events.

Internally we moved towards the legislated separation of the College and the Association arm of the ACAO. The College and the Association have been collaboratively working in order to complete the separation in the given timeframe. The Association committee has now struck an ad hoc Association Steering Committee in order to be more streamlined and efficient in dealing with all of the tasks required of separation.

The Association is continuing to plan out its next steps in the separation process and plan by completing key tasks including governance policies, bylaw development and business plans that will outline how the Association will support opticians support and while working towards building a self-sustaining organization once the separation is complete in 2021.

*Respectfully Submitted,  
Dean Thompson, RO, RCLP  
Committee Chair*

## Negotiations Committee

The Negotiations Committee is an arm's length committee of the Alberta College and Association of Opticians. The Government of Alberta approved the running of this committee under Section 27 of the Health Professions Act to address negotiation of contracts for Alberta's opticians. Opticians have the right to opt out of the negotiated contracts.

The committee has seen some changes, we welcomed a new member Nola Hornung, and said farewell to a long-time member Tracy Woywitka. With the new rules for the upcoming split of the College and Association we do need to have a minimum of three members and are in the process of appointing a new member. The Committee has started negotiations with Alberta Health Services with respect to our existing contract which was renewed in July 2020. Also, we are trying to streamline the process and make it easier and more efficient to submit.

*Respectfully Submitted,  
Rick F. Miller RO, RCLP, O.A.  
Committee Chair*





# Financial Statements 2020

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## **ALBERTA COLLEGE AND ASSOCIATION OF OPTICIANS**

Index to Financial Statements

Year Ended December 31, 2020

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## INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

To the Members of Alberta College and Association of Opticians

### *Opinion*

We have audited the financial statements of Alberta College and Association of Opticians (the College), which comprise the statement of financial position as at December 31, 2020, and the statements of operations, changes in net assets and cash flows for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the College as at December 31, 2020, and the results of its operations and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations.

### *Basis for Opinion*

We conducted our audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements* section of our report. We are independent of the College in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in Canada, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with those requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

### *Other Information*

Management is responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon, in the Annual Report.

Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and will not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information identified above and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated.

The Annual Report is expected to be made available to us after the date of the auditor's report. If, based on the work we will perform on this other information, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to communicate that fact to those charged with governance.

### *Other Matter*

The financial statements for the year ended December 31, 2019 were audited by another firm of Chartered Professional Accountants who expressed an unmodified opinion on those financial statements on March 13, 2020.

### *Responsibilities of Management and Those Charged with Governance for the Financial Statements*

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations, and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, management is responsible for assessing the College's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters relating to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless management either intends to liquidate the College or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

Those charged with governance are responsible for overseeing the College's financial reporting process.

### *Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements*

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements. As part of an audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards, we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the College's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by management.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of management's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the College's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the College to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

# ALBERTA COLLEGE AND ASSOCIATION OF OPTICIANS

## Statement of Financial Position

December 31, 2020

	2020	2019
<b>ASSETS</b>		
CURRENT		
Cash	\$ 1,411,521	\$ 1,125,300
Accounts receivable	98,294	34,577
Prepaid expenses	6,300	22,004
	1,516,115	1,181,881
TANGIBLE CAPITAL ASSETS (Note 3)	352,603	389,744
TRADEMARK (Note 4)	472	720
	\$ 1,869,190	\$ 1,572,345
<b>LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</b>		
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities (Note 5)	\$ 44,156	\$ 38,212
Goods and services tax payable	39,512	40,049
Deferred membership fee revenue	849,561	850,780
	933,229	929,041
NET ASSETS		
Unrestricted	382,886	52,840
Invested in tangible capital assets and trademark	353,075	390,464
Discipline contingency fund (Note 6)	200,000	200,000
	935,961	643,304
	\$ 1,869,190	\$ 1,572,345

LEASE COMMITMENTS (Note 7)

# ALBERTA COLLEGE AND ASSOCIATION OF OPTICIANS

## Statement of Operations

Year Ended December 31, 2020

	2020	2019
<b>REVENUES</b>		
Membership fees	\$ 913,364	\$ 843,823
Discipline ( <i>Note 6</i> )	63,463	30,212
Examination	29,283	45,162
Continuing education programs	23,982	-
Application fees	10,461	20,886
Wage subsidy	6,875	-
Field supervision	3,600	14,200
Advertising	2,594	3,508
Convention	-	6,919
Insurance recovery	-	25,000
	<b>1,053,622</b>	<b>989,710</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>		
Salaries and benefits	404,145	394,822
Office	62,819	71,578
Amortization	48,219	47,889
Meetings and convention	32,829	59,813
Professional fees	30,000	15,000
Membership fees	24,132	16,543
Committees	24,053	20,956
Interest and bank charges	23,483	27,134
Professional conduct matters	21,767	21,036
Examination expenses	15,742	17,888
Sub-contracts	15,453	43,250
Utilities and property taxes	13,973	14,128
Insurance	10,423	10,490
Field supervision expenses	7,597	10,709
Telephone	7,369	8,802
Laddering project	6,617	15,372
Equipment lease	4,792	5,611
Advertising	2,864	-
Education awards	2,444	700
Council expenses	2,244	11,167
	<b>760,965</b>	<b>812,888</b>
<b>EXCESS OF REVENUES OVER EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$ 292,657</b>	<b>\$ 176,822</b>

# ALBERTA COLLEGE AND ASSOCIATION OF OPTICIANS

## Statement of Changes in Net Assets

Year Ended December 31, 2020

	Unrestricted	Invested in Tangible Capital Assets and Trademark	Discipline Contingency Fund	2020	2019
<b>NET ASSETS - BEGINNING OF YEAR</b>	\$ 52,840	\$ 390,464	\$ 200,000	<b>\$ 643,304</b>	\$ 466,482
Excess of revenues over expenses	277,413	(48,219)	63,463	<b>292,657</b>	176,822
Purchase of tangible capital assets	(10,830)	10,830	-	-	-
Interfund transfers (Note 6)	63,463	-	(63,463)	-	-
<b>NET ASSETS - END OF YEAR</b>	<b>\$ 382,886</b>	<b>\$ 353,075</b>	<b>\$ 200,000</b>	<b>\$ 935,961</b>	<b>\$ 643,304</b>

# ALBERTA COLLEGE AND ASSOCIATION OF OPTICIANS

## Statement of Cash Flows

Year Ended December 31, 2020

	2020	2019
<b>CASH PROVIDED BY (USED IN):</b>		
<b>OPERATING ACTIVITIES</b>		
Excess of revenues over expenses	\$ 292,657	\$ 176,822
Item not affecting cash:		
Amortization	48,219	47,889
	340,876	224,711
Changes in non-cash working capital:		
Accounts receivable	(63,717)	(31,688)
Prepaid expenses	15,704	(10,472)
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	5,944	(3,387)
Goods and services tax payable	(537)	2,629
Deferred membership fees revenue	(1,219)	63,352
	(43,825)	20,434
	297,051	245,145
<b>INVESTING ACTIVITIES</b>		
Proceeds on disposal of tangible capital assets	-	6,000
Purchase of tangible capital assets	(10,830)	(56,580)
	(10,830)	(50,580)
<b>INCREASE IN CASH</b>	<b>286,221</b>	<b>194,565</b>
Cash - beginning of year	1,125,300	930,735
<b>CASH - END OF YEAR</b>	<b>\$ 1,411,521</b>	<b>\$ 1,125,300</b>

# ALBERTA COLLEGE AND ASSOCIATION OF OPTICIANS

Notes to Financial Statements

Year Ended December 31, 2020

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## 1. PURPOSE OF THE COLLEGE

The Alberta College and Association of Opticians (the "College") is a self-governing professional organization established pursuant to the Opticians Act of Alberta. On March 23, 2011, the Opticians Act of Alberta was repealed and transitioned to the Health Professions Act of Alberta. As a result, the College is now governed under this Act which also resulted in a name change for the organization. The proclamation of Bill 14: Health Professional Amendment Act (2016) on May 27, 2016 resulted in another name change for the organization.

The College is a not-for-profit organization, as described in Section 149(1)(l) of the Income Tax Act, and therefore is not subject to income taxes.

## 2. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

These financial statements were prepared in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations. Significant accounting policies observed in the preparation of the financial statements are summarized below.

### Cash

Cash consists of cash on hand and cash on deposit, net of outstanding cheques and deposits at the reporting date.

### Tangible capital assets

Tangible capital assets are stated at cost less accumulated amortization. Tangible capital assets are amortized over their estimated useful lives at the following rates and methods:

Buildings	25 years	straight-line method
Computer software	30%	declining balance
Computer equipment	30%	declining balance
Office equipment	20%	declining balance
Examination equipment	20%	declining balance

Tangible capital assets acquired during the year but not placed into use are not amortized until they are placed into use.

When conditions indicate a tangible capital asset is impaired, the carrying amount of the tangible capital asset is written down to the asset's fair value or replacement cost. The write down of tangible capital assets is recorded as an expense in the statement of operations in the year the impairment occurs. Write downs are not reversed.

### Trademark

Costs incurred to develop and secure the College's logo and slogan are capitalized and amortized using the straight-line method over 10 years.

When conditions indicate that the trademark is impaired, the carrying amount of the trademark is written down to the its fair value or replacement cost. The write down of the trademark is recorded as an expense in the statement of operations in the year the impairment occurs. Write downs are not reversed.

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# ALBERTA COLLEGE AND ASSOCIATION OF OPTICIANS

Notes to Financial Statements

Year Ended December 31, 2020

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## 2. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES (*continued*)

### Revenue recognition

The College follows the deferral method of accounting for contributions. Restricted contributions are recognized as revenue in the year in which the related expenses are incurred. Unrestricted contributions are recognized as revenue when received or receivable if the amount to be received can be reasonably estimated and collection is reasonably assured.

Membership fees are recognized as revenue proportionately over the fiscal year to which they relate.

Revenues from convention, discipline courses, examinations, field supervision, insurance recoveries, continuing education programs and other sources are recorded when they are earned and collection is reasonably assured.

### Contributed goods and services

The College records the fair market value of contributed goods and services only in the circumstances when the fair market value is determinable and when the goods and services would otherwise be purchased by the College.

### Financial instruments

#### *Measurement of Financial Instruments*

Financial instruments are financial assets or liabilities of the College where, in general, the College has the right to receive cash or another financial asset from another party or the College has the obligation to pay another party cash or other financial assets.

The College initially measures its financial assets and liabilities at fair value.

The College subsequently measures all its financial assets and financial liabilities at amortized cost.

Financial assets measured at amortized cost include cash and accounts receivable.

Financial liabilities measured at amortized cost include accounts payable and accrued liabilities.

#### *Impairment*

Financial assets measured at cost or amortized cost are tested for impairment, at the end of each year, to determine whether there are indicators that the asset may be impaired. The amount of the write-down, if any, is recognized in operations. The previously recognized impairment loss may be reversed to the extent of the improvement, directly or by adjusting the allowance account. The reversal may be recorded provided it is no greater than the amount that had been previously reported as a reduction in the asset and it does not exceed original cost. The amount of the reversal is recognized in operations.

(continues)

# ALBERTA COLLEGE AND ASSOCIATION OF OPTICIANS

## Notes to Financial Statements

Year Ended December 31, 2020

### 2. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES *(continued)*

#### Use of estimates

The preparation of financial statements in conformity with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amount of assets and liabilities, disclosure of contingent assets and liabilities at the date of the financial statements and the reported amounts of revenues and expenses during the period. Such estimates are periodically reviewed and any adjustments necessary are reported in earnings in the period in which they become known. Significant estimates used in the preparation of the financial statements include the estimated useful life of tangible capital assets for the purpose of calculating amortization. Actual results could differ from these estimates.

### 3. TANGIBLE CAPITAL ASSETS

	Cost	Accumulated amortization	2020 Net book value	2019 Net book value
Buildings	\$ 513,352	\$ 232,262	\$ 281,090	\$ 301,624
Computer software	136,586	99,084	37,502	53,575
Computer equipment	195,814	168,949	26,865	30,453
Office equipment	68,776	61,885	6,891	3,773
Examination equipment	5,719	5,464	255	319
	\$ 920,247	\$ 567,644	\$ 352,603	\$ 389,744

### 4. TRADEMARK

	Cost	Accumulated Amortization	2020 Net book value	2019 Net book value
Trademark	\$ 2,485	\$ 2,013	\$ 472	\$ 720

### 5. ACCOUNTS PAYABLE AND ACCRUED LIABILITIES

Included in accounts payable and accrued liabilities are source deductions payable of \$8,125 (2019 - \$nil).

### 6. DISCIPLINE CONTINGENCY FUND

A discipline contingency fund has been established to fund unforeseen expenses associated with discipline activities. Council has approved the annual contribution to the discipline contingency fund be equivalent to the revenues received from discipline online courses and fines and cost recoveries associated with member discipline. In 2020, Council passed a motion to set the maximum amount of the fund at \$200,000, with any amounts in excess of the \$200,000 to be transferred into the unrestricted fund.

# ALBERTA COLLEGE AND ASSOCIATION OF OPTICIANS

## Notes to Financial Statements

Year Ended December 31, 2020

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### 7. LEASE COMMITMENTS

The College has a long term lease with respect to a photocopier. The lease agreement expires on October 15, 2024. Future minimum lease payments as at December 31, 2020, are as follows:

2021	\$	4,792
2022		4,792
2023		4,792
2024		4,193
		<hr/>
	\$	18,569

### 8. FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

The College is exposed to various risks through its financial instruments. The following analysis provides information about the College's risk exposure and concentration as of December 31, 2020.

#### **(a) Credit risk**

Credit risk arises from the potential that a counter party will fail to perform its obligations. The College is exposed to credit risk from advertisers and educational institutions. This is minimized through the College providing services to well-established advertisers and education institutions. The College performs continuous evaluation of its accounts receivable and records an allowance for doubtful accounts when necessary.

#### **(b) Liquidity risk**

Liquidity risk is the risk that the College will encounter difficulty in meeting obligations associated with financial liabilities. Liquidity risk is measured by reviewing the College's future net cash flows for the possibility of a negative net cash flow. The College manages the liquidity risk resulting from accounts payable and operating leases through the preparation and monitoring of budgets and maintaining cash on hand.

### 9. COMPARATIVE FIGURES

Some of the comparative figures have been reclassified to conform to the current year's presentation.



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ALBERTA COLLEGE  
AND ASSOCIATION  
OF OPTICIANS

Your Vision, Our Focus