

CAAA 2018 AGM Minutes

Apr 29, 2018

Present: Council members: Lowell Ask, Liye (William) Zhao, Carmen Lawlor, Boxin Wanglin, Yang Su, Don Fan, Colton Oswald, Heather Thompson;
Committee chairs: Marc Raedschelders, Heather Thompson, William Zhao, Yang Su

Chair: Lowell Ask

Minutes: Lindsay Babcock

Members: 105 members present

1. Meeting called to order – 1:06pm
2. Proposed agenda approved - 1st Kimberley Coupland, 2nd Chris Tornack, carried
3. Last Meeting minutes read and approved - 1st Ling Duan, 2nd Kimberley Coupland, carried
4. Opening Remarks and Report – Lowell Ask, President

Good Afternoon,

It has been a privilege to serve as a member of the council. This is my last term on council, as I have now served 6 years.

I would like to introduce our council: Liye (William) Zhao, Carmen Lawlor, Boxin Wanglin, Yang Su, Don Fan, Colton Oswald, and Heather Thompson.

We continue to work towards regulation under the Health Professions Act. As we move towards this goal, we must work to understand our roles and responsibilities. We must apply critical self-assessment in developing standards; work on good communication (information sessions and a council email address, for example); and build a team of professionals (already consult with lawyer and psychometrician).

Thank you for your support.

5. Registrar/Executive Director report – Paul Hu

Good afternoon,

Thank you for attending this year's AGM. I am very pleased to see all of you.

As required by the new Bylaws, I would like to make a report on the activities of the College since last AGM, as well as our plans for the future.

The activities of the College can be roughly divided in five major areas: first, registration and registration renewal; second, registration examination; third, complaints and disciplines; fourth, new regulations, policies and standards; fifth, office management. Most of the information is included in the 2017 Annual Report which is posted on the CAAA website. Today, I would like to make a brief report on some highlighted activities.

First, registration and registration renewal. For the year 2017, 690 members from 2016 renewed their registration, which includes 9 inactive members. 70 new members were registered, including 8 members from other provinces and 17 members under restricted registration. Meanwhile, 17 members transferred, retired or cancelled their registration. As of the end of last year, 743 members were registered with the CAAA.

Heather Thompson will make a report on the activities performed by the Registration and Program Review Committee later.

Second, registration examination. Registration examination is an important instrument to select qualified applicants to enter the profession. Exam Committee members, examiners and participants in the Pan-Canadian Exam development - they all worked very hard, but their efforts are often under appreciated. Here, I want to thank them for their commitment. Their contribution will not go unnoticed. Dr. Zhao will make a report on behalf of the Examination Committee later. Here I want to mention a few things.

- In 2017, the Examination Committee developed our own Safety and Jurisprudence Examination with the assistance of a psychometrician. We used to borrow an online Safety Examination developed by British Columbia. Last year was the first time that we developed our own Safety and Jurisprudence Examination.
- In 2017, the CAAA worked with other provinces to review and update the Competency Profile for the Practice of Traditional Chinese Medicine and Acupuncture in Canada. The Competency Profile is a document, which lists the abilities that registrants must possess in order to practice safely, competently and ethically. The update was validated through a comprehensive review and survey. It will serve as the basis for acupuncture education as well as for the registration examinations.

Third, complaints and disciplines. Last year, the office received four formal complaints, which concern unauthorized practice of acupuncture; alleged insurance

fraud; unskilled practice; and informed consent to treatment. Marc, as chair of the Conduct and Competency Committee, will make a report shortly.

Another thing I want to mention is the investigator training workshop which was offered by the College in December 2017. Hopefully, investigations can be done in a timely manner in the future.

The fourth area is new regulations, policies and standards. The mandate of the College is to govern and regulate the profession in the public interest by setting high standards in practice, education, competence and ethical conduct. The mandate is fulfilled by establishing and enforcing regulations, policies and standards. In 2017, we made achievements in the following areas.

- The Safety Handbook for Alberta Acupuncturists was approved by the Health Disciplines Board. Together with the Handbook of Occupational Hazards and Controls for Alberta Acupuncturists, it will provide effective guidance for members' professional practice.
- Patient Records Standards. Patient records are very important documents for patients, practitioners, regulatory body and third-party agencies like insurance companies. To protect the public interest, the CAAA proposed more specific standards on patient records, and two workshops were offered to members. The new standards will be implemented as determined by the Council.
- Minimum Standards for Professional Acupuncture Education was also in progress. The Registration and Program Review Committee and the Council reviewed the draft. Now we are in the process of seeking expertise in designing a more detailed curriculum to deliver the competencies required in the Competency Profile.
- Another important yet challenging work is the transition to the Health Professions Act. We have been working with Alberta Health to accomplish this. They provided two presentations to our council in 2017 and presented very helpful advice. We will continue our efforts and try to complete the transition as soon as possible.

The last area is office management, including personnel and finance management.

In 2017, we optimized our office operation. Instead of part-time positions, the office now has three full-time employees, including myself. One is responsible for coordinating examinations and bookkeeping; the other is for providing assistance with registration applications. I am responsible for overseeing the operation of the office. With clearly defined responsibilities, the office has been operating very efficiently and effectively.

For financial management, the office worked closely with the Treasurer and the Budget, Finance and Audit Committee. The Committee developed important policies and conducted a very thorough internal review of the Books in December 2017. An accounting firm was contracted for an external audit. Both the internal and external audits went very smoothly. Dr. Su will make his report on behalf of his committee shortly.

In 2017, the office also compiled an Orientation Manual for employees, and council/committee members. It provides some guidance about the roles and responsibilities of each party and the expected procedures to conduct College business.

Above is a brief summary of the activities of the College in 2017. You will hear a detailed report from committee chairs shortly.

For future plans, I would propose the following.

First, let us start from the foundation. Education is the very foundation of any profession. Our profession needs a more solid foundation. We will complete the Minimum Standards for Professional Acupuncture Education this year. We hope in the future acupuncture education will be delivered at an appropriate level.

Second, framework. Legislation provides the legal framework for a profession to operate within. The current framework under the Health Disciplines Act does not support the growth of the profession. We will try our best to complete the transition to the Health Professions Act as soon as possible.

Third, regulation and governance of the profession. The major advantage of self-regulation is to utilize the expertise of regulated members to regulate and govern a profession. Our council and committees play an important role. Based on my personal experience, our council members and committee members worked very hard and made great contributions to the profession. However, as a relatively young regulator, it is inevitable for all of us to experience some learning curves. To help our council members to fully understand the roles and responsibilities as a regulator, the College will offer a customized orientation workshop by a lawyer who is an expert in the regulatory field.

Fourth, internal operation. The current organizational chart was designed for operation under the Health Disciplines Act. Under the Health Disciplines Act, the governing body is expected mainly to administer and implement the Act, Regulation and established Standards, and acupuncture is considered as only a treatment technique. Over the last few years, the College has been working very hard to correct this concept, because acupuncture is actually a system based on the holistic principles of traditional Chinese medicine, with its own theoretical foundation, diagnosis, treatment principles and treatment modalities, as well as standards of competency and practice. This is a fundamental change, and implies tremendous

amount of work. As we transition to the Health Professions Act, more positions will be required, such as Complaints Director, Hearings Director, and probably Competence Director, Communications Director. I have presented my report to Council and will start seeking competent people for those positions soon. Hopefully, in the near future, we will have the right team to do the right work to move the profession forward.

Fifth, external collaboration. We need to continue our efforts on public education about what acupuncture is, and on collaborating with other stakeholders to gain their support for our profession. Acupuncture is relatively new in the West. People do not have adequate knowledge about acupuncture. Many would think puncturing the skin for therapeutic purpose would be acupuncture, which is not the case. As I mentioned previously, acupuncture is a system. Although it takes time for the public to understand and accept acupuncture as a system, we shall act now, all of us.

Acupuncture has huge potential for people's health and wellness. The profession is a great profession. However, we face many challenges. Only through united efforts by all of us, regulators, educators, and each individual member, can we move the profession forward.

Recently, a colleague asked me: what do you think are the achievements of this Council? A very good question without time to think about. Time flies. Two years passed swiftly. Our achievements are overshadowed by so many challenges in front of us. I did some reflection on it. Here is what I can recall we did over the last two years.

- From May to December 2016, the Council did an internal audit of the operations of the College and reviewed all policies; had a board development workshop and identified challenges faced by the profession and outlined the prospects for the profession; reviewed the regulation policies proposed for under the Health Professions Act.
- From January to April 2017, based on the discussion at the council level, we completed a report, Acupuncture in Alberta: History, Status and Prospects; made efforts to improve the bookkeeping system; amended the Bylaws; and spent lots of time to deal with complaints and legal challenges.
- From May 2017 to April 2018, the focus of the Council was to complete the transition to the Health Professions Act; improving communication with membership; and promote the profession.

In my opinion, three major accomplishments by this council are:

1. Accurately identified the challenges faced by the profession, and outlined the prospects for the profession, which serves as the blueprint for the profession in years to come.
2. Improved the bookkeeping system and financial integrity of the profession.
3. Made efforts to promote the profession and enhance communication with membership.

To conclude, I would take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to our Council members for their guidance and support; to committee and ad hoc committee members for their much valued contribution; and to our members for your understanding and efforts; and my colleagues for their assistance. A finer day of the profession is each and every tomorrow!

6. Financial/BFAC Report – Yang Su, Treasurer/BFAC chair

Time flies, and it is time to hand over our transcripts. I am pleased to present my Treasurer/BFAC's report on the 2017 Audited Financial Statements and BFAC activity for AGM.

Our agenda for this report will include discussing: BFAC Activity, our new Financial Plan, and will conclude with general comments and any questions you may have.

Within BFCA, we are dedicated to preserving the integrity of our organization by practicing Responsibility, Accountability, Sustainability and Transparency. First, responsibility. The BFAC Members are: Boxin Wonglin, Ricky Wong, Yang Su. In 2017, our tasks were to: Keep up-to-date records as well as an audit trail for all transactions; make sure all committee spending was in line with the budget; review all internal processes and reporting methods to the council; appoint an external professional auditor; and prepare a financial report to the AGM.

Second, accountability. In order to maintain accountability, we: modified the Travel, Expense and Honorarium Policy for council and committee members; established the new Honorarium Policy for continuing education speakers; established the Administration Fee Schedule; and established the new Policy for Purchase Goods and Services that are over \$10,000.00.

Third, sustainability. Here is the chart and steps to show how our membership fees are being managed:

- Purchase administration
- Registrar/ED
- Internal bookkeeping
- BFAC internal audit
- External independent professional bookkeeping

- External independent professional accountant firm for financial report, financial statement and audit

The following are policies implemented to ensure that all spending is appropriate and absolutely necessary and that we are obtaining the best possible value for our dollar: the Honorarium Policy for Committee Members and Administration Staff; the Honorarium Policy for Continuing Education Speakers; the 2017 Budget; the Administration Fee Schedule; and the Policy for Purchased Goods and Services that are over \$10,000.00.

Fourth, transparency. Transparency is developed through the financial report. The financial report can be viewed as a separate document.

This year we updated our financial plan. The goals of our new financial plan are to: balance the book or make a small surplus; continue to build a long term sustainable financial model; hire designated paid positions required under the HPA; continue to monitor and reduce any unnecessary spending; continue to promote our profession in action as we promised in the last election; continue to further develop our relationships with the government and move our profession to the HPA.

In order to achieve these goals, here are the significant changes that have been or are going to be implemented:

- Increase the exam fees from \$1500.00 to \$ 1600.00. Starting this year, exam fees will be linked to the cost of inflation and examination committee.

- Modify the honorarium for committee members. Under the new honorarium pay schedule, there will be no payment for any meeting under two hours (it was previously \$150.00). Travel time cannot be taken into working hours, no exception.

- We will continue to hire a professional auditor to ensure all spending is accurate and appropriate.

- BFAC will provide another funding of up to \$100,000.00 for council to use for promotion and advertising campaigns, such as radio, Google search and TV advertisements, on behalf of CAAA members.

I would like to conclude with a few general comments. I would like to issue a special thank you to our Registrar/ED Mr. Hu and staff who are doing a fantastic job in assisting BFAC activity. As well, a special thank you to our President, Vice President, and all council members, including the public members who support my role. We all share the same goals, which are to protect the public interest and to protect CAAA integrity. A unified council term will only make our profession greater and stronger.

Being treasurer of the CAAA is a great honor and great responsibility. I will continue to do whatever I can to serve in the best interests of our profession.

Questions?

- Member question: last year's advertising budget – where was it spent?
Answer: radio ad in Calgary and Edmonton

Break

7. Registration and Program Review – Heather Thompson, committee chair

Committee members of the Registration and Program Review (RPRC): Dr Han, Jessica McDonald, Michelle Phillips, Jessica Stankowksi, Zoe Zhao and Heather Thompson.

The year started with site visits in May 2017, and letters were sent to the schools. Heather Thompson was appointed Chair to the committee at the September 2017 Council Meeting and spent the next several months gathering data to be current on the issues facing RPRC. Meetings were held in December with the HDB (Health Disciplines Board) and PVT (Private Vocational Training) regarding the schools and complaints heard across all parties. There was a follow-up Tele-Conference with the HDB in January regarding Minimum Standards and Schools. Our committee held four meetings this year: 1 in-person meeting in December and 3 Tele-Conferences in January, March, and April.

The RPRC is now responsible for developing MSPAE (Minimum Standards in Professional Acupuncture Education). The Minimum Standards Ad Hoc Committee dissolved at the November Council Meeting and the responsibility for this was given over to the RPRC. Additionally, Marc Raedschelders furthered the work on the MSPAE. In a January Tele-Conference with the HDB it was clear that we are not yet ready to embark on consultation regarding Minimum Standards. The HDB expressed concerns particularly about the admissions requirements and any change to admissions standards will have to be a staged.

For Site Visits to schools this year, considering the number and types of complaints the CAAA, HDB and PVT have received, the RPRC is returning to a Site Visit Checklist and will focus this year's time on ensuring consistency, accuracy and reliability of reporting for the areas covered in the legislations: in the HDA/Regulations/SCP, PVT/R, and FOIP/PIPA. We are looking for and documenting: what schools say and do in advertising to recruit students; their current curriculum to establish a base line as we move towards Minimum Standards; review existing policies to help them identify gaps or concerns; and establish if we have complete, accurate and reliable data tracking for transcripts and Clinical Practicum.

We now have our first program application for the CAAA to approve. Alberta Health and Wellness approved all existing schools, based on the SCP document within the HDA/Regulations. That document is 14 pages long and light on details so we have been working to clarify and track the current requirements to the PCE Blueprint document. This application was received before we put a moratorium of new school

applications. We are working with the applicant to review and refine the application, and working on a staged review and implementation process.

The HDB reviewed our current Supervision Policy, and sent it back for some edits. The document will be reviewed and re-submitted.

We have added an item into the budget to be able to conduct site visits to 10% of Restricted members.

We are turning our focus to start to address the issue of unlicensed practitioners. These Practitioners present themselves to the public as eligible to do acupuncture or are using a title that implies they are eligible to do so or that implies they are a member of the CAAA. We have received complaints related to unlicensed practitioners, and are looking into how to proceed.

We have a few areas that we address in an on-going basis. These areas include: CEU applications, insufficient hours, and labour motility applicants.

Looking forward, we are trying to establish some workflow processes to manage the volume and flow of work our committee receives. We are also planning for site visits in May, and preparing to review the CEU policy.

Questions?

- Member related complaint from patient, that it is difficult to search for practitioners on CAAA website; thought there was an unlicensed practitioner, and couldn't figure out if they were – Heather's response: can discuss with web developer about improving the search for practitioners function

- Further discussion – difficult to challenge people portraying themselves as acupuncturists (a 'grey area'), because the CAAA function is regulating members, and this person is not a member. Grey area is, whose jurisdiction is it to pursue legal action, if not ours (CAAA)?

- Member question – should there be a budgeted amount saved for pursuing unlicensed practitioners? Make it more possible to pursue action against them?

- Member concern - not enough clinical practice at schools? H: working with schools to develop best way to ensure that students are getting enough practical experience during their schooling.

- Member question - will changing to HPA stop other medical practitioners from practicing acupuncture? H: no. We may be able to enter into a conversation with other medical practitioners in HPA, to better define training, and maybe institute an exam process (at least safety and modalities).

8. Conduct and Competence Committee – Marc Raedschelders, Committee Chair

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

Here is the annual report from the Conduct and Competency Committee:

This year, the CCC has finalized a few projects and has been busy with complaints and subsequent hearings.

Unfortunately, Dr. Amanda Ballas resigned from her CCC position for personal reasons. We welcomed new CCC member Dr. Brooke Riad. The other members of the CCC are: Dr. Michael McFarlane, Dr. Du, Dr. Heather Thompson, Dr. Ann Zee, Dr. Gord Ariza, and our new public member. I hope that we can expand the CCC membership in the coming year since it can be a challenge to select a hearing committee from a limited list of members, who often have to decline for conflict of interest reasons.

We have developed a Safety Handbook CAAA version. An ad hoc committee consisting of Dr. Cheng Xia, Dr. Du, and myself started this project in 2015 and with the generous help of Dr. Janice Brown together with input from the CAAA membership; a final handbook was presented in 2017.

We have updated the CAAA patient records policy. Previous complaint hearings proved that there was a need to indicate the importance of a clear patient records policy. We suspected that possibly several acupuncturists underestimated the value and importance of good patient records. A good understanding of the professional and legal implications of patient records may very well result in improved patient-practitioner relations. Therefore, information sessions on patient records were organized in Edmonton and Calgary on January 12 and January 26, 2018.

Both the Safety Handbook and the policy on Patient Records will need regular reviews and on-going editing.

Unfortunately, this year we saw a drastic increase in complaints. One complaint hearing was resolved by consent order, which means that the acupuncturist assumes responsibility for specific unskillful practices and accepts appropriate remedial penalties. This process of consent order simplifies the hearing process and we hope to be able to solve some of the future and pending complaints in the same manner if possible.

I believe that the disturbing trend of increased amounts of complaints is the result of poor communication with patients, lack of focus on the cautions for the modalities used by practitioners and insufficient supervision of patients during their treatments. Acupuncturists need to understand that communication is not synonymous to giving lectures on TCM, but rather inquiring about how patients feel about their treatments.

There seems to be a total misunderstanding of the term "Informed Consent". Informed consent is not limited to a patient-signed generic piece of paper. Acupuncturists need to realize that the signed informed consent form needs to be

explained to the patient and has to be relevant to the treatments provided. No need for consent for cupping if you're not going to use this modality on the patient.

It is also the acupuncturist's responsibility to ensure that the patient understands what the treatment will entail and agrees to this treatment. However, it is beyond the scope of this report to expand more on this topic.

To conclude, we need to re-establish a more favourable record of complaints comparable to previous years, with very few if any hearings. Acupuncturists need constant alertness of their actions and practice professional, empathic communication with patients, potentially with follow-up conversations. The better our relation is with the public, the more successful our profession becomes.

Thank you, and success in your practice.

Questions?

- Is verbal consent ok? Example – for a change of treatment after initial treatment. M: Consent should be documented in chart. Consent is an ongoing process. Good communication with patients reduces complaints (research finding). Lecturing about TCM theories is not informed consent for treatment

9. Examination Committee report

Good afternoon,

I will start by introducing the EC (Examination Committee) members: Boxin Wanglin, Yucheng Chen, Cherisse Osness, Wenjun Dai, and Liye Zhao. As well, we had help from consultants: Dwight Harley, Lowell Ask, and Don Fan.

The Pan-Canadian Written test took place on Oct 14, 2017, and the Case Study was on Jan 20, 2018. The pass rate for Alberta was lower than the Canada-wide pass rate; 49% and 42%, vs 60% and 55%. The Safety and Jurisprudence exam was on Oct 14, 2017, and had a pass rate of 97%. The Modalities and Acupuncture points exams were held on Oct 14 and 15, 2017, and had a pass rate of 86% and 51%, respectively.

The 2017 Examination cost was \$123, 459.00, which is reduced by \$25, 000 from the previous year (\$148, 110.00)

We would like to encourage members to participate in the Examination process, both as part of the Examination Committee and as Examiners during the Exam.

Questions?

- Member recommended adjustment of exam tester's payment (regular increase)

- Member related a chiropractor option to take acupuncture, and exam was on a live patient

- Member question about new schools – is there a way to regulate the number of schools, and new practitioners entering profession? L: CAAA not in place to oppose any training program, no limit on schools. Private Vocational Act has certain requirements that schools have to meet first. CAAA does work to promote a high standard of education at all facilities. P: council decided to publish results of reports on CAAA website. It is hoped to help promote good standards between the schools, as well as inform prospective students.

- Member question: a recent graduate, felt there was a lack of communication about what was expected to be studied to pass exam. How are you working to improve communication to help improve pass rates? : Problem is with students' inability to count spine (ex). H: some pressure to be put on schools to help communicate expectations, as well the information session offered to students is poorly attended.

- Member was asked by a public member (student), wants to know what school provides the best pass rate? D: currently working on legal issues involved, but working towards being able to publish school pass rates

- Member comment: failing point location best thing to happen to her

- Member question: why difference in jurisdiction standards between provinces....D: working towards all provinces having same exam components; AB is smallest, ON biggest. Practical exams have support among the provinces, but it often has practical logistical problems in implementing

10. Membership Services Committee – presented by Lyla Yip (on behalf of MSC)

Good Afternoon,

With previous documented meetings that MSC had conducted, we last met during our Skype conference on May 21, 2017. It was at this time that we delegated some tasks to other members for completion. In a few previous lead-up discussions that Margaret and I had shared, we found that our supporting members were either occupied with other matters or they found that the delegated tasks had barriers prior to completion. Considering we lacked enough feedback, we attempted again to hold a conference in the Fall of 2017. The attempt to coordinate members together has been a challenge, as our schedules were conflicting. We have done our best to continue MSC projects in spite of our conflicting schedules, such as supporting CEU events throughout the year.

We have been open to suggestions or requests from our membership pool if individuals are looking for various improvements. I would also make a lasting suggestion that if there are members awaiting momentum from MSC, they are more than welcome to come into contact directly with one of us. Even better so to speak, I advise to help us out directly.

We are happy to confirm that Blue Cross Direct Billing is now available. Constantine communicated with a project manager on several occasions to promote this change. I think we are all excited to have this option to offer our patients!

MSC also had completed a home/auto insurance program that has been made available for all registered members and their family. This information has yet to be posted to the main website and/or made available as an announcement in a newsletter format. I have previously prepared these announcements, as they were ready to be circulated via e-mail. Mr. Ryan Fowler's contact info has been made available on the CAAA facebook page, however I am not certain how much exposure this has managed amongst only the portion of registered members that use this platform of communication.

It was previously proposed that the budget perhaps would serve better the interest of a paid member to represent the profession in a communications-type of role. This could be very beneficial to the CAAA as it could potentially drive further incentive that MSC has not been able to accomplish.

Lastly, I would like to mention that I will be stepping down from the MSC and maintaining a brief hiatus, as I have been taking on extra-curricular leadership roles within my surrounding business community. Although I have thoroughly enjoyed helping with the CAAA in some magnitude the last few years, I will not be able to assist moving forward. I anticipate making a return to the CAAA in the near future.

Questions recommended to be directed to Constantine/MSc through email or other contact

11. 2018 Council Election announcement

- 7 positions, 6 applicants – proclaimed by acclamation
- New council members: Boxin Wanglin, Heather Thompson, Yang Su, William Zhao, Wen Jun Dai, Helen Anderson, and Jessica Wyllie.

12. New Business

- Member question: will MSC/association function continue when transition to HPA? L/P: originally expected to continue, Schedule 1 to the Health Professions Act lists name as CAA (no association). Legal consultation is being considered in decision.
- Member question: Continue ads? Y: will be a decision for the new council, they do agree there is good benefit, but must consider budget.
- Member question: more info about ad L: content sent by email to members
- Member suggestion: request for a digital version of certificate that can be used on website

13. Closing comments – Boxin Wanglin

Boxin thanked members for attendance and Lowell Ask for chairing a good meeting.

14. Move to adjourn – 4:00pm - Michael McFarlane, Kimberley Koupland, carried.