



COLLEGE & ASSOCIATION OF
Acupuncturists
OF ALBERTA

ANNUAL REPORT

January 1 to December 31, 2018

submitted to

Health Disciplines Board

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- Audited 2018 Financial Statements

I. PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I have had the privilege of serving the College and Association of Acupuncturists of Alberta (the CAAA) as president for a year now. Looking back, I feel proud of the achievements accomplished in 2018 by the CAAA through the hard work and efforts of our members, councillors, as well as all committees, staff, many volunteers and the Registrar/Executive Director.

Of significant importance in the CAAA's progress throughout 2018 were the positive relationships that were built and strengthened with our members, other health professions, insurance companies, and government departments. These relationships opened doors to new opportunities and initiatives for the future development of the CAAA.

In 2018, one of our priorities has been the transition from Health Disciplines Act to the Health Professions Act. After significant communication and consultation with our members, the Transition Task Force completed the proposed regulation policies for the profession of acupuncturists under the Health Professions Act.

The Budget, Finance and Audit Committee smoothly passed both the annual internal audit and the external professional audit and worked out the financial budget for 2019. The CAAA retained a professional accounting firm for bookkeeping, and the CAAA office has developed very detailed and organized procedures to keep financial records.

The Examination Committee established the Safety and Jurisprudence question bank, and successfully administered the Alberta Acupuncturist Registration Examination in October 2018.

The Conduct and Competence Committee effectively worked on complaints received and made appropriate orders to ensure protection of the public interests and fairness to our members.

The Registration and Program Review Committee has completed the draft Minimum Standards for Professional Acupuncture Education. It is currently under consultation with key stakeholders and all registered acupuncturists.

Another priority throughout the year was, as always, staying connected with our members. In 2018, the CAAA increased the frequency of consultation meetings with members, working groups, conversations and surveys, and the quarterly newsletter resurfaced. All members of the CAAA are encouraged to submit articles on their research and clinical experience to the newsletter.

A scholarship of \$8,000 from Alberta Acupuncturist and Traditional Chinese Medicine Practitioner Association (a non-professional association) was established to encourage research and publication. Interested members may now apply for this scholarship to conduct research in related areas.

The CAAA also engages a variety of activities to familiarize the public with the benefits of acupuncture and traditional Chinese medicine. Some of these activities also provide acupuncturists with the chance to connect with the public directly to demonstrate their skills and professionalism.

We support Alberta government's new law, Bill 21, *An Act to Protect Patients*, to ensure that Albertans are safe when accessing health-care services. Bill 21 establishes mandatory penalties for sexual abuse and misconduct by health professionals regulated under the Health Professions Act (HPA). Although the profession of acupuncturists is currently governed under the Health Disciplines Act (HDA), protecting patients from sexual abuse or sexual misconduct is equally important to us. It is now under discussion at the council level that new applicants will be required to submit a criminal record check and disclose any completed or ongoing conduct investigation under HPA, or equivalent investigation in other jurisdictions. If a hearing tribunal finds that a CAAA member's action constitutes sexual abuse, that member's practice permit will be cancelled. When a hearing tribunal finds actions that constitute sexual misconduct, the member's practice permit will be suspended. The bill requires disciplinary actions for sexual abuse and misconduct to be clearly and consistently posted online. The bill also stipulates that a regulatory college must provide complainants with access to treatments and counselling.

We wish to thank all committees of the CAAA for their effective and hard work to achieve our goals and move our profession forward. Special thanks to Mr. Paul Hu, our Registrar and Executive Director, for his invaluable efforts which have helped us to successfully accomplish the important work in our College.

Sincerely,

Boxin Wanglin, President of the CAAA

II. PUBLIC MEMBER REPORTS

March 1, 2018

It is with great pleasure that I continue my tenure on Council for a second term. I am exceptionally grateful for this experience, and for the opportunity to work with such passionate and committed fellow Councillors. This past year, the CAAA has continued its progress towards the development of policies, guidelines, and structures necessary for the regulation of acupuncture under the Health Professions Act. Toward this end, the CAAA has focused on a number of key considerations including: the very important work of developing a Minimum Standards for Professional Acupuncture Education, and a review and revision of the Acupuncture Regulation. Other notable work was also completed with continued reviews and revisions of policies and procedures, along with the development of a very significant policy for the Standards of Practice for Protecting Patients from Sexual Abuse and Sexual Misconduct. The Council has demonstrated great commitment and dedication toward the advancement of acupuncture in the province. It is an honour and privilege to work with my fellow Councillors, and to continue my service as a Public Member for this profession.

Carmen Lawlor
Public Member

INTRODUCTION

The profession of acupuncturists has been regulated in Alberta since 1988 under the *Health Disciplines Act* (hereinafter, “Act”), and used to be governed by the Acupuncture Committee under the Health Disciplines Board established under the Act.

The College and Association of Acupuncturists of Alberta (the “CAAA”) was designated by the Minister of Health to regulate the profession of acupuncturists in the public interest, effective January 1, 2011. As the regulatory body, the CAAA is mandated to regulate the profession in the public interests by setting high standards of competency, practice, education, and ethical conduct.

Mission Statement

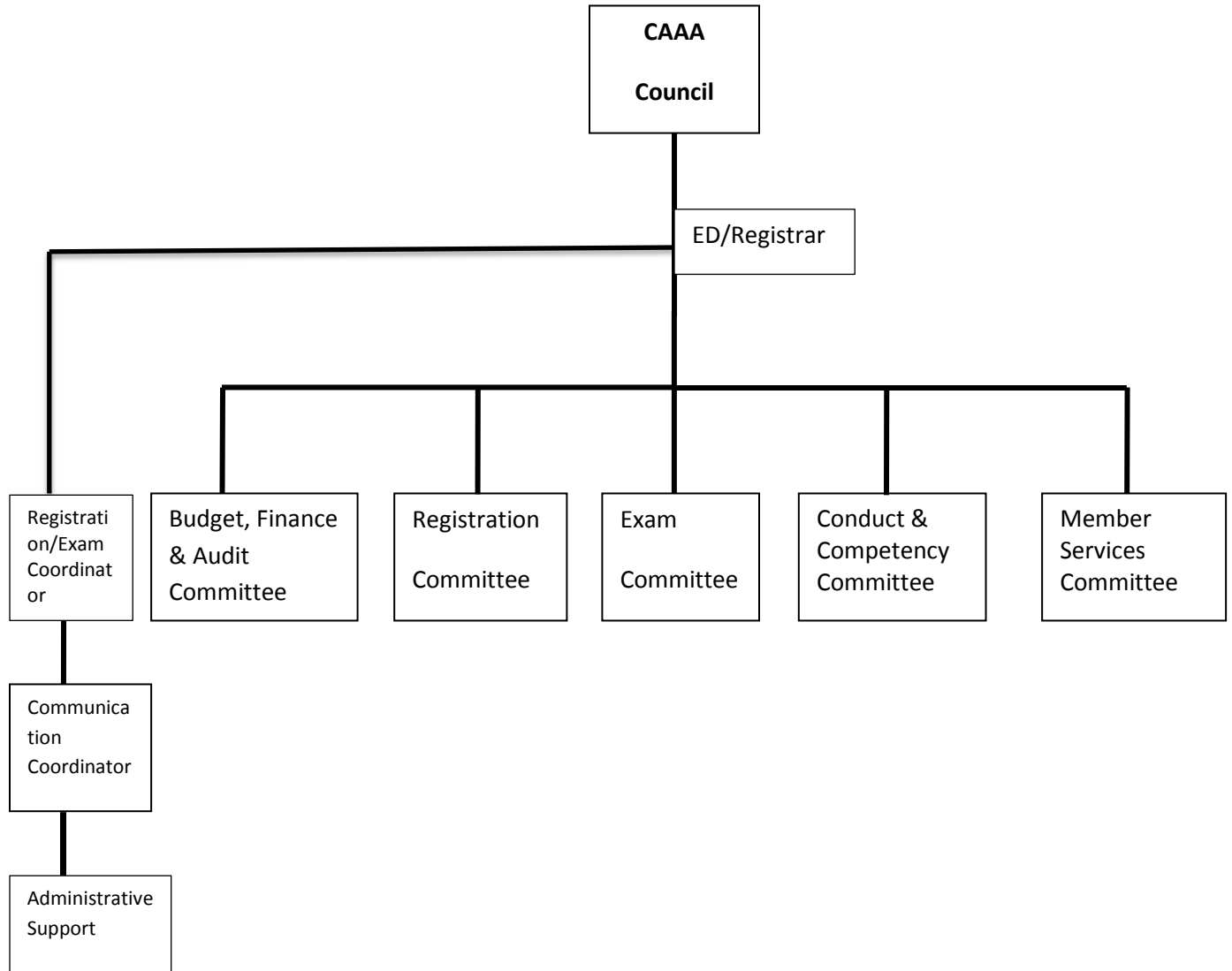
The CAAA serves the public interest and supports the acupuncture profession by setting high standards of practice, education, competence, and ethical conduct.

Vision

The CAAA is committed to excellence in the regulation and support of the Registered Acupuncturists of Alberta.

Organizational Structure

The organization structure of the CAAA is set out as below. The Council, Committees and positions are established in accordance with the *Health Disciplines Act* and the By-laws of the CAAA.



III. COUNCIL AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The Council is elected by the membership and is responsible for the governance and management of the regulatory and business affairs of the CAAA. Council members and committee members for the term 2018-2020 are as follows.

Council Members

Boxin Wanglin, President
Heather Thompson, Vice President
Yang Su, Treasurer
William Zhao, Director
Wenjun Dai, Director
Helen Anderson, Director
Carmen Lawlor, Public Member
Jessica Wyllie, Public Member

Registration and Program Review Committee (RPRC)

Jessica McDonald, Chair (chair)
Zoe (Ying) Zhao (resigned Jan 2019)
Heather Thompson
Michelle Phillips
Jessica Stankowski
Zhaocheng Han

Conduct and Competency Committee (CCC)

Marc Raedschelders, Chair
Michael McFarlane
Ann Zee
Gord Ariza
Brook Riad
Heather Thompson
Amanda Ballas (appointed Dec 2018)
Linda Wu (appointed Dec 2018)
Annie Wu (appointed Dec 2018)
Lisa Evren (Public Member)

Examination Committee (EC)

Lowell Ask, Co-chair
Wenjun Dai, Co-chair
Don Fan
Yucheng Chen

Jingzhao (Ricky) Wang
Rose Galikas

Budget, Finance and Audit Committee (BFAC)

Yang Su, Chair
William Zhao
Jingzhao (Ricky) Wang
Jay McCoy
Sarena Armsworthy

Member Services Committee (MSC)

Lindsay Babcock, Co-chair
Carol Xu, Co-chair
Margaret Kennedy
Lyla Yip
Sarah Martins
Kirsten Carson
Mujun Chen
Tonya Coutts Wirth

CAAA Office Staff

Paul Hu, Registrar/ Executive Director
Sheila Wang, Exam and Bookkeeping Coordinator
Jenney White, Registration Coordinator
Janelle Kulak, Communication coordinator

Office Location

Suite 201, 9612 – 51 Ave. NW,
Edmonton, AB T6E 5A6

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IV. GOVERNANCE

The mandate of the College and Association of Acupuncturists of Alberta (the CAAA) is to regulate the profession of acupuncturists in the public interests. Throughout 2018, the efforts of the CAAA have focused on: completion of the Minimum Standards for Professional Acupuncture Education; transition to the Health Professions Act; and improving communication with membership.

Minimum Standards for Professional Acupuncture Education

Education is the very foundation of a profession. Largely due to the short history of acupuncture in Canada, acupuncture has been considered as a treatment technique, not as a medical system. Therefore, the criteria previously used for acupuncture program approval were very general. In addition, a few concerns have been identified from site visits to approved acupuncture programs. As such, since 2013 the CAAA has been working to establish minimum standards for acupuncture education to ensure acupuncture programs meet the requirements specified in the Standards of Competency and Practice (Alberta) and the Entry-level Occupational Competencies for the Practice of Traditional Chinese Medicine and Acupuncture in Canada (Competency Profile), as well as address some identified concerns, such as, admission standards to ensure students have the aptitude to successfully complete an academically challenging program; standards for successful delivery of the curriculum; and standards related to supervised clinical practice.

A member with both teaching and program management experience was contracted to draft the minimum standards. The Registration and Program Review Committee reviewed the draft in detail and made significant improvements. After Council review, the proposed Minimum Standards for Professional Acupuncture Education was circulated to all members for consultation. Acupuncture programs were consulted as key stakeholders. Registration and Program Review Committee will consider the feedback from consultation and make changes as appropriate based on legal advice. The final version after Council's review will be presented to the Health Disciplines Board for approval.

A copy of the proposed Minimum Standards of Professional Acupuncture Education can be found at the link below:

<http://acupuncturealberta.ca/pdfs/events/MinimumStandards-Professional-Acupuncture-Education.pdf>

Transition to the Health Professions Act

Legislation provides a framework for the governance of a profession. Since 1988, the acupuncture profession has been governed under the *Health Disciplines Act* and the *Acupuncture Regulation*. The *Health Disciplines Act* is increasingly outdated legislation, and *Acupuncture Regulation*, without timely amendments, presents challenges for effective governance of the profession in the public interest. For example, the lack of information transparency provision in the *Health Disciplines Act* has direct adverse impact on public protection; the lack of alternative complaint resolution process impairs the ability to deal with complaints in a fair and efficient manner. Another recent example is related to Bill 21. Since the profession is still under the *Health Disciplines Act*, provisions in Bill 21 cannot be fully applied to this profession, although we have developed the Standards of Practice to implement Bill 21.

The CAAA has been working to complete the transition since 2013. The Health Disciplines Board and Alberta Health Department provided a few presentations about the governance differences between the *Health Disciplines Act* and the *Health Professions Act*, and the preparation required for the transition. In preparing for the transition, the CAAA retained James T. Casey, Q.C., of Field Law's professional regulatory group for legal assistance. Mr. Casey has helped many professions successfully make the transition to the *Health Professions Act*, and his expertise will contribute to a smooth transition.

To ensure that members have a fair understanding of the importance of the transition, the CAAA has offered three in-person information sessions to stakeholders: March 23, 2018 in Calgary; March 28, 2018 in Edmonton; and April 29, 2018 in Red Deer.

The Council appointed a HPA Transition Task Force to revise regulation policies based on legal advice. The proposed regulation policies were circulated to all registered acupuncturists for consultation between October 9, 2018 and November 19, 2018. To help members understand the proposed regulation policies, a document titled *Understanding the Proposed Regulation Policies* was posted on the website with detailed comparison between the current Regulation and the proposed Regulation. In addition, in-person consultations were offered November 2, 2018 in Edmonton and November 5, 2018 in Calgary. From the consultations, it was clear that an earlier transition to the *Health Professions Act* is a consented request from the profession.

An earlier completion of the transition serves the best interests of the public, Alberta government and the profession of acupuncturists.

Improved Communication with Membership

It is always the intention of the CAAA Council to keep members informed of the CAAA activities and to engage members' participation. Between the fall of 2014 and 2015, Member

Services Committee helped publish a few issues of the newsletters. However, it was unable to continue because of the increasing workload in the office and limited manpower.

Given the importance of communication, the Council approved to create a new position with focus on communication. A quarterly newsletter resurfaced in October 2018. To ensure transparency, enhance communication and encourage participation, normally the newsletter will include reports from the president, committee chairs and registrar/executive director; research and articles contributed by members; publication of disciplinary decisions as a public lesson for other members; news in the community nationally and internationally; as well as upcoming events. The newsletter is published on the CAAA website for easy access by members and the public.

V. REGISTRATION OF COLLEGE MEMBERS

Registration Categories	2018
Full registration	725
Temporary registration	1
Restricted registration	23
Inactive	21
Total Number of Registrants as of Dec. 31	770

VI. TRAINING PROGRAMS AND EXAMINATIONS

Currently, there are five acupuncture programs approved by the *Health Disciplines Board*, offered at:

- MacEwan University, Edmonton, since 1998
- Reeves College, Edmonton, since 2008; revised curriculum approved 2014
- Alberta College of Acupuncture & TCM, Calgary, since 2000
- Calgary College of TCM & Acupuncture, Calgary, since 2004
- Canadian Institute of TCM, Calgary, since 2004

In 2018, Registration and Program Review Committee conducted thorough site visits to approved acupuncture programs. The focus for this year's site visits was **Policies and Processes**, to verify they are in place and are being adhered to. This was a valuable process for schools to receive constructive feedback regarding pertinent areas of their acupuncture program. It also ensures that the CAAA has confidence in the information it receives and is better able to address any concerns expressed to the regulator.

The Alberta Acupuncturist Registration Examination consists of the following components:

- Pan-Canadian Written Examination for Acupuncturists (written format)
- Pan-Canadian Clinical Case-study Exam for Acupuncturists (written format)
- Safety and Jurisprudence Examination (written format)
- Safety Exam: Modalities (hands-on, practical)
- Safety Exam: Acupuncture Points (hands-on, practical)

The table below is a summary of candidate performance at the Alberta Acupuncture Registration Examination with a comparison between graduates from approved acupuncture programs in Alberta, candidates of Alberta including out-of-province and international graduates, as well as all the candidates in Canada:

Components	Exam Date	AB Graduates	Alberta total	Canada total
Written	Oct 13, 2018	50/59(85%)	54/69(78%)	272/359 (76%)
Case-study	Jan 19, 2019	35/70(50%)	38/75(51%)	216/328(66%)
Safety & Juris	Oct 13, 2018	43/47 (91%)	45/50(90%)	
Modalities	Oct 13 & 14, 2018	35/47 (74%)	38/54(70%)	
Acu Points	Oct 13 & 14, 2018	38/53 (72%)	44/63(70%)	

VII. CONTINUING EDUCATION PROGRAM

In accordance with the *Alberta Acupuncture Regulation*, section 4, a registered acupuncturist must have completed 50 hours of educational programs within the 2 last years to renew their registration. The CAAA made efforts to help members maintain/improve their competency by organizing continuing education events in addition to approving CEU applications.

The following CEU events were organized/approved by the CAAA in 2018:

Date/Place	Topic	Provider/Speaker
Feb 9 (Calgary)	Acupoint Injection (for information only)	CITCM (M. Phillips)
Apr 20-22 (Calgary)	Heat Sensitive Moxibustion	ACATCM (Rixin Chen)
April 29 (Red Deer)	Transition to the Health Professions Act (doctor title)	CAAA (Colton Oswald)
June 21 (Calgary)	TCM Strategies for Chronic Diseases	CAAA (William Zhao)
June 24 (Calgary)	Heat Sensitive Moxibustion	ACATCM (Dennis Lee)
July 7 (Edmonton)	Principles of Fuhui Dong's Acupuncture Theory	CAAA (Fuhui Dong)
Sep 8 (Edmonton)	Heat Sensitive Moxibustion	CAAA (Dennis Lee)
Nov 27 (Calgary)	Medicinal Cannabis	CAAA (Ann Zee)
Nov 28 (Edmonton)	Medicinal Cannabis	CAAA (Ann Zee)
Online	Balance System of Acupuncture	Sonia Tan

VIII. COMPLAINTS AND DISCIPLINES

It is an important aspect of governance to deal with complaints in a fair, efficient and timely manner. Internally, the goal of the CAAA is to complete the preliminary investigation after receipt of a complaint within two (2) months; provide update to the complainant and the investigated person every two (2) months; and conclude the complaint within six (6) months.

In 2018, the CAAA office received three formal complaints:

- One is about unauthorized practice of acupuncture and unauthorized use of the title of acupuncturist. The CAAA, with the assistance of legal counsel, successfully applied to the Court of Queen's Bench of Alberta for an injunction against this individual.
- Another one is related to informed consent to treatment. The complainant expressed concerns that acupuncture and massage treatment were provided to her without her consent. The investigation was completed in 2018. A consent order discussion was successfully completed. A hearing is pending.
- A third one is a complaint from an insurance company about claims for self-treatment and concerns about patient records. Investigation is pending.

In 2018, the CAAA also processed three complaints from previous years.

- The first one is related to professional misconduct and patient records. Disciplinary decision after hearing includes a reprimand letter by the CAAA against the member; one month suspension from practice; 25 additional hours of continuing education with respect to informed consent; and payment of hearing cost of \$1,000.
- The second one is related to informed consent, patient records and unskilled practice. Disciplinary decision after hearing includes a reprimand letter by the CAAA against the member; additional 10 hours of continuing education with respect to informed consent and medical record; an announced practice inspection within six (6) of the consent order; and payment of hearing cost of \$1,000.
- The third is related to informed consent, patient records and improper termination of treatment. A consent order has been agreed to with legal assistance. As requested by the investigated member, a hearing was postponed.

It was noticed that most complaints were related to informed consent and patient records. Part of the reason could be members joined the profession at different times with different educational background, and the CAAA has not established standards for patient records until 2018. As such, the CAAA has decided to offer free continuing education opportunities for members to upgrade their knowledge and competency.

IX. FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Financial policies are always strictly followed, and financial prudence exercised. The CAAA retained a professional accounting firm for bookkeeping, and the CAAA office has developed very detailed and organized procedures to keep financial records.

In 2018, more legal fees were incurred because of the preparatory work for the transition to the Health Professions Act and the hearing costs to deal with complaints. Expenses related to participating in the Pan-Canadian Exam activities also increased in 2018. Overall, the CAAA continued to fulfill all statutory obligations while maintaining a sound financial position.

An audited 2018 Financial Statements will be presented at the 2019 Annual General Meeting and be posted on the CAAA website for review. A copy of 2018 Financial Statements is enclosed.

X. OTHER PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

- Collaboration with other Canadian counterparts

Presently, the profession of acupuncturists and traditional Chinese medicine practitioners is regulated in five provinces in Canada: Alberta (1988), Quebec (1995), British Columbia (1996), Newfoundland & Labrador (2012), and Ontario (2013). In 2012, the regulatory bodies for the profession in five provinces incorporated Canadian Alliance of Regulatory Bodies for Traditional Chinese Medicine Practitioners and Acupuncturists (CARB). CARB members have worked together to develop the Entry-level Occupational Competencies for the Practice of Acupuncture and Traditional Chinese Medicine in Canada (Competency Profile), and Pan-Canadian Examinations to facilitate labour mobility.

In 2018, CARB members approved the updated Competency Profile following a national survey, revised the Performance Indicators for Occupational Competencies. Based on the updated Competency Profile and revised Performance Indicators, CARB members also revised the blueprints for Pan-Canadian Examinations.

To further improve Pan-Canadian Examinations, at its 2018 Annual General Meeting, CARB members agreed to merge the blueprints for Pan-Canadian Written Exam and Pan-Canadian Case-study Exam, combine Pan-Canadian Written Exam and Pan-Canadian Case-study Exam, and offer the combined Pan-Canadian Exam on computer twice a year from October 2020. CARB members also agreed to explore the opportunity of a practical assessment component for Pan-Canadian Examination.

At its December 2018 meeting, CARB members agreed to develop the national Standards of Practice as its next priority.

- Standards of Practice to Implement Bill 21

To create additional measures to protect patients from sexual abuse/misconduct and to create enhanced transparency, the Minister of Health introduced Bill 21 – An Act to Protect Patients in the legislature on October 30, 2018. Bill 21 – An Act to Protect Patients received Royal Assent on November 19, 2018. As part of the implementation plan, all health regulatory colleges under the *Health Professions Act* are required to develop standards of practice.

Although the acupuncturist profession remains under the *Health Disciplines Act*, protecting patients from sexual abuse or sexual misconduct is equally important. The CAAA also developed its Standards of Practice to implement Bill 21 with a focus on appropriate boundaries with patients and appropriate practitioner/patient interactions. The proposed Standards of Practice would fully apply after the CAAA comes under the *Health Professions Act*.

- Inter-professional Launch at U of A

In September 2018, the CAAA was invited by the Health Sciences and Research Commons (HSERC) to participate in the Inter-professional Learning Pathway Launch at the University of Alberta. The purpose of this event was to prepare the next generation of various health force workers with inter-professional (IP) skills, enabling them to work together to supply the public with safe, quality care. Member Services Committee of the CAAA participated in the event, and introduced to different groups of students the foundational principles of acupuncture and the benefits of collaborative practice for the public.

XI. CONCLUSION

In 2018, the CAAA had a new council. Since the majority of council members continued from their last term, it is good to ensure continuity of the endeavours of the CAAA. In addition to continued support to all committees and an efficient operation of the office, the focus of efforts in 2018 has been: transition to the *Health Professions Act*; completion of the Minimum Standards for Professional Acupuncture Education; and communication with the public and stakeholders.

The CAAA has made all the necessary preparation for the transition. The Health Disciplines Board and the Department of Health have provided strong support through this process, and are supportive of the profession moving under the *Health Professions Act* at this time. Given the amount of preparatory work completed by the CAAA, it is hoped that the transition could be completed as soon as possible.

Through establishment of Minimum Standards for Professional Acupuncture Education, we hope to lay a solid foundation for the profession. It will serve the best interests of students, the profession and the public.

We achieved great progress and also experienced some challenges. Learning from both our accomplishments and challenges, we as a profession are more confident in how to better regulate the professions in the public interests by engaging our membership.