

## EXTERNAL MEETINGS REPORT

### December 2019 Report to Council

---

#### **Report:**

##### *CNAR-October 28-30/2019*

CNAR (Canadian Network of Agencies for Regulation) is an annual Canadian regulatory conference attended by health and non-health professional regulatory bodies.

Some interesting takeaways from this year's conference include:

- **Disruptive Technologies:** Agile policies and broadly designed standards of practice are key when it comes to regulating professions in the context of emerging 'disruptive technologies'. It's best not to be overly prescriptive because the technology is changing faster than regulators can change policies. It is important to consider the desire of patients that their health practitioner use new technologies and practitioners should be given guidance on how to do their due diligence to inform, educate and provide options their patients. Regulators may wish to consider collaborating with other regulators to understand the implications of new and emerging technologies.
- In BC, legislation was tabled to implement the UN Declarations on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). UNDRIP recognizes the basic human rights of Indigenous people along with their rights to self-determination. The declaration includes articles affirming the right of Indigenous people to create their own education systems, receive restitution for stolen lands, and participate in all decision-making that affects their interests. While not mandated to do so, regulators are beginning to consider how to incorporate the UNDRIP principles into their work.
- Internal and External reviews of the performance of regulators, and being a proactive regulator was a much-discussed topic. Some suggestions from regulators who have been through the process of external reviews are to measure, simplify and report on the work being done, engage with government to report on the actions being taken and examine risk when designing programs so that resources are allocated to the most important outcomes.

I would certainly endorse the College of Opticians continued attendance to CNAR in the future in order to benefit the wealth of information this event offered.

##### *NACOR Meeting October 31-November 1/2019*

#### Accreditation of Schools:

All schools have been informed that Accreditation Canada will be contracted by NACOR to take over the accreditation of opticianry teaching institutions. Most of the schools already deal with Accreditation Canada for their other programs.

NACOR is the client with Accreditation Canada however individual provinces can have their own contract with Accreditation Canada if there are any significant deviations from the national approach.

#### Updated Competency Profile:

Based on the adoption of the 4<sup>th</sup> Edition of the National Competencies, all accredited teaching institutions must have refraction embedded in their programs for the 2021 accreditation cycle at the academic level. Schools will then be expected to phase in over the next 2 to 3 years a simulation component. Schools will only be required to have an external clinical component once the individual province has a scope change allowing refraction.

#### Alberta Refraction Update:

Alberta updated the members of NACOR as to the status of their progress on expanding their scope beyond refraction, moving towards prescribing for eyewear. The newly elected government had mentioned this project as a campaign commitment and is now engaging with the Alberta College/Association to move this project forward.

#### Quebec has joined NACOR:

The province of Quebec has officially joined NACOR. Up until this point Quebec had been sending an observer for the past two years. Having Quebec's presence and participation at the table will certainly promote national collaboration.

#### Opticians Council of Canada (OCC):

The OCC is now currently comprised only of NACOR upon the departure of the national association (OAC) and the education group (CAOE). The OCC appointed Mr. Robert Grimmard as the independent facilitator and Chair. Legal counsel, Cathi Meithkiwicz was in attendance and presented the updated bylaws. There has been interest shown by separate associations and educational institutions re-joining the OCC and thus a resolution was passed allowing these groups to join the OCC and that for the current year there will be no seat fees collected. Aside from the maintenance of the 'Become an Optician' website, the OCC is not engaging in any further public education programs for this year.

#### *Seneca College Advisory Committee—November 14/2019*

Highlights of the meeting include:

- Seneca will be starting their program review in January to incorporate refraction. They are unable to add any new hours to the program.
- Part-time program update - 132 registrations
- Full-time program update - at max capacity with 130 - they are limited by the number of labs they can run.
- Seneca has been able to secure corporate sponsorship to obtain materials to facilitate student learning. Corporate sponsors have donated multifocal lenses, soft contact lenses and RGPs and

the students are fitting parents and friends to obtain peer-to-peer practice hours. Despite this, some students are still having trouble getting fits due to timing.

- The group made a resolution to review the communications requirement to determine whether amendments to the course are required to reflect the changing practice environment.
- Given the effort and commitment of student supervisors/mentors and to encourage opticians to continue in this role, the group has asked the College to re-assess the self-directed QA hours mentors are able to obtain by supervising students.
- Seneca advancement shared information about a program called Seneca Helix, which offers free services to budding Seneca entrepreneurs and intrapreneurs. There is one student optician who is working on a project under Helix. Helix received a grant from TD Bank to develop career recharge workshops which are being offered free of charge to students and community members.

*Georgian College Advisory Committee—November 21/2019*

Highlights of the meeting include:

- Georgian has created an Academic Ethics learning module that is mandatory for all first-year students that speaks to cheating and plagiarism
- Current intake of students: 40 in September, 38 in January
- About 140 students overall
- International applications have dropped. They are faced with mobility challenges and can't travel outside the school area for coop placements. The coop coordinator was talking about challenges with optical placements in general which is contrast to Seneca who has been reporting having more placements than students currently.
- A critical thinking course has been introduced and is a product of input from the advisory committee and industry
- There has been a program update of about 20% of current content. 4 refracting lanes have been added and the program now has 56 hours of refraction theory, 56 hours of practical refraction and 56 hours of low vision training being taught in semester 3 and 4.
- One industry member indicated that optometrists are buying edging equipment and looking for opticians who can edge, dispense and pre-test for them. The school corroborated the increase for student opticians by optometry