2015
ANNUAL REPORT
OUR MISSION

The purpose of the Alberta College of Optometrists is to ensure the practice of the profession of optometry is conducted in the best interests of the public.

WE WILL

> We will carry out our activities and govern our Regulated Members in a manner that protects and serves the public interest.

> We will provide direction to and regulate the practice of optometry by our Regulated Members.

> We will establish, maintain and enforce appropriate registration requirements, a Continuing Competence Program and Standards of Practice for the profession of optometry.

> We will establish, maintain and enforce a Code of Ethics.

> We will carry on the activities of the college and perform all other duties and functions in accordance with the Health Professions Act.

WE VALUE

> We value the privilege of self-regulation granted to us by the Government and people of Alberta.

> We value honesty, fairness, reasonableness, transparency and effectiveness in our daily activities.

> We value improved patient outcomes supported by collegial and professional communication with other health care providers, technological innovation, evidence-based research and implementation of new and improved models of patient care.

> We value individual practitioner responsibility for always striving to do what is in the best interests of the patient and meeting generally accepted standards of care.

> We value the personal and professional commitment required of competent, compassionate and caring practitioners to ensure they maintain their level of competence throughout their careers.

> We value flexibility, transparency, honesty and reasonableness in discussions and joint endeavours with all external stakeholders.

> We value feedback from patients, the provincial government, other regulatory colleges and any other interested stakeholder on our activities and performance.
It has been a great pleasure serving as President of the Alberta College of Optometrists. I’m proud to report that 2015 has been a successful and historical time for optometry in Alberta. We have achieved many pivotal milestones and exceeded our mandate to provide excellent eye-care to the public. The profession of optometry in Alberta is strong and the envy of other jurisdictions across Canada. Following the announcement of scope expansion in April, 2014, the ACO Council, college administration and numerous volunteers have been working to ensure a smooth transition for the membership and the public.

In the efforts to maintain the highest standard of care for Albertans, the ACO promised to have rigorous recertification for the new scope of Optometry. Together with the Alberta Association of Optometrists, two successful Certification Courses were held in Red Deer and Calgary. I had the pleasure of attending the fall course in Red Deer where we celebrated the largest number of Alberta optometrists together in the history of the province! We had over 96% of Optometrists successfully certify to the new levels which means ready access for the new procedures will be assured across Alberta.

In 2014 a Standards of Practice Committee (SOP) was created to refine all of our Standards of Practice and Clinical Practice Guidelines to ensure they are based on the best available and most current optometric and medical clinical evidence and research. It remains an active part of the ongoing work of the College to ensure evolving, research supported Standards of Practice to protect the public. The Continuing Education credit system was reorganized and launched to include an online component for reporting. The Continuing Competence Program was also reviewed and updated with members certified in the new scope. The Optometrists Profession Regulation was rewritten, reviewed by stakeholders and approved by the Honorable Sarah Hoffman and the Alberta Cabinet in June. This was the final step in approval required to make the new scope a reality.

ACO enjoyed strong representation on the national front attending the Optometric Leader’s Forum (OLF) in Ottawa in January. Attendance includes members from the provincial Associations and Colleges, Universities of Montreal and
Waterloo Schools of Optometry, Optometric student representatives and the optical industry. The meetings were followed by the creation of the Federation of Optometric Regulatory Authority Canada (FORAC). This was a historical moment that signified the unification of provincial regulators across Canada which will ultimately lead to better collaboration and consistency among provinces. We also attended the CEO (Canadian Examiners in Optometry) AGM to ensure that Alberta’s voice was heard in an effort to ensure entrance to practice competencies were at a level acceptable to the new scope.

In February, the ACO held its annual Think Tank in the Mayan Riviera, Mexico. The meetings were extremely productive. Ongoing priorities for the College include furthering our work on a Communications Plan, research on patient care and ongoing collaboration with the current NDP government and Alberta Health to bring Optometry online with Netcare. It is essential for Optometrists to be able to access Netcare to order laboratory tests, to ensure better patient outcomes and to avoid unnecessary duplication of services.

A big thank you to Dr. Gordon Hensel (Registrar), Dr. Rob Eastwood (Complaints Director) and the rest of the staff at the College office for their dedication to ensuring the smooth operations of the office. To our public members Mrs. Louise Mosier and Dr. Jennifer Zwicker and to all our ACO Committee members, we are ever so grateful for your countless hours of volunteering to ensure the mandate of the College is achieved. And finally, at the ACO we are very proud of our membership for their continued commitment to improving the level of care of Optometry in Alberta as demonstrated by the record attendance at our certification courses. This will certainly lead to better access to care and better patient outcomes for Albertans.

Respectfully submitted
Dr. Kim Bugera.
President, ACO
The Alberta College of Optometrists (ACO) has two Public Members, as mandated by the Health Professions Act. Dr. Jennifer Zwicker is an Assistant Professor at the University of Calgary School of Public Policy and is in her first three-year term as Public Member on council. Louise Mosier is a retired Cardiology Technologist serving in her last term as a Public Member.

It is the Public Member’s role to represent the public's interest on the ACO Council in governing and carrying out its mandate in a manner that protects and serves the public's interests. As such, Public Members are active, voting members of council but are not optometrists. As volunteer Albertans appointed by the Government of Alberta, Public Members work with council to establish, maintain, and enforce a Code of Ethics, develop Standards of Practice, and a Continuing Competence Program along with many other duties.

The council and staff of the Alberta College of Optometrists consistently demonstrate their commitment to protect and serve the public interest of all Albertans. They act with integrity and transparency in a fiscally responsible manner. With increasing emphasis on effective governance of council and efficient decision-making that keeps the public interest at the forefront, we commend them for their professionalism. We are confident that the council will continue to fulfill its mandate to protect and serve the public by regulating and providing direction to the optometric profession. Moving forward we look forward to improving processes that encourage greater stakeholder consultation.

We are pleased at the cooperative collaboration between the Alberta Association of Optometrists’ council and the Alberta College of Optometrists council. This teamwork allows the optometrists’ of Alberta to maintain their standards of excellence in providing Albertans with safe and high-quality optometric health care.

Respectfully submitted,
Mrs. Louise Mosier & Dr. Jennifer Zwicker
Public Members, Alberta College of Optometrists
GOVERNANCE

The Alberta College of Optometrists (ACO) Council manages and conducts the activities of the college, exercises the rights, powers and privileges and carries out the duties of the college in the name of and on behalf of the college. The ACO Council is comprised of a non-voting Past-President and a voting President, President-Elect, Secretary-Treasurer, 3 members of council and 2 public representatives. The council is pleased to retain the services of a part-time Registrar who coordinates the regulatory activities of the college.

The ACO was very pleased to learn that our current Public Member, Mrs. Louise Mosier was reappointed by the Alberta Government for her 2nd 3-year term; and, that our new Public Member, Dr. Jennifer Zwicker, was appointed by the Alberta Government for her 1st 3-year term.

All college committees are governed by strict guidelines, terms of reference and operating policies as directed by the spirit and law of the Health Professions Act and the ACO Policy Governance Manual. These guidelines, terms of reference and operating policies are reviewed on a regular basis to ensure they continue to be reasonable, legally correct, effective and enforceable.

Standards of Practice and Code of Ethics

The ACO Council and ACO Standards of Practice Committee continue to review and revise the ACO Standards of Practice, Guidelines to the ACO Standards of Practice, ACO Code of Ethics and ACO Clinical Practice Guidelines on a regular basis. These revisions are necessary to ensure that all standards and guidelines are based on the best available and most current optometric and medical clinical evidence and research.

The Alberta College of Optometrists is perceived as a leader in Canada in the development of optometric Standards and Clinical Practice Guidelines.
In addition, the educational background of our members can be broken into the following categories:

- Canadian Trained - 334
- USA Trained - 337
- Internationally Trained - 25

As of July 1, 2015, the current membership breakdown was as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regulated Members</td>
<td>696</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>336</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canadian Trained</td>
<td>334</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA Trained</td>
<td>337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internationally Trained</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The total number of regulated members increased 6.6% from 2014 with the number of female members increasing 9.0% and the number of male members increasing 4.3%.

HISTORICAL REGISTRATION NUMBERS
Schools of Optometry
Currently, the University of Waterloo and the University of Montreal continue to house the only two Schools of Optometry in Canada. Students from both Canadian schools participate in clinical externship rotations throughout Alberta.

Western School of Optometry
As optometrists provide the vast majority of primary vision care services in our province, the development of a Faculty of Optometry at one of the renowned Alberta Universities would integrate and complement the short and long range plans of Alberta Health. It is interesting to note that more Canadian students are currently enrolled in U.S. Schools of Optometry than in both Canadian Schools of Optometry combined.

Certification Course
Following an update to the Optometrists Profession Regulation, all optometrists in Alberta were required to successfully complete a rigorous Certification Course and Final Exam before being allowed to perform the new legislated activities. No Regulated Member was grandfathered into certification. A total of 96% of members were able to successfully complete all requirements. The ACO Council is working with the remaining registrants to assist them in achieving this certification.

Canadian Licensure Exam
The Alberta College of Optometrists only accepts the Canadian Examiners in Optometry entry-to-practice examination called the Canadian Assessment of Competency in Optometry (CACO) for registration. The CACO exam is composed of 2 comprehensive written exams and 4 clinical assessment exams. The two written exams include the Ocular Therapeutics (120 multiple choice questions) and the Synthesis (248 multiple choice questions based on 62 different case scenarios). The 4 Clinical Skills Assessment exams are comprised of tests involving 29 different clinical skills and procedures on “live” standardized patients. All other Canadian provincial optometric regulatory boards also accept the CACO for licensure.
Labor Mobility

Due to labor mobility provisions in the Agreement on Internal Trade (AIT), our province is required to accept practitioners who are registered in good standing in any other Canadian province or territory. As the College of Optometrists of British Columbia continues to accept practitioners who are licensed (and in good standing) in any state in the USA, it is possible that a practitioner who passed the American Board exam (NBEO) can apply for licensure in British Columbia and “bypass” the Canadian board exam. This practitioner can then enter Alberta via AIT as a British Columbian licensed practitioner. Unfortunately, no equivalency study between the Canadian and American exams has ever been conducted. Further information on the CACO is available at www.ceo-eco.org and further information on the NBEO is available at www.optometry.org.

ACO Registration Committee

The ACO Registration Committee also develops and delivers the ACO Jurisprudence Exam, written by all applicants to our College. The results of this test are analyzed and selected questions are modified on a yearly basis based on changes to the Health Professions Act, Optometrists Profession Regulations and ACO Bylaws. In 2015, a total of 56 jurisprudence exams were written. All applicants passed the exam. The average mark was 82.8% and the range was 72% to 98%.

All registration applications received in 2015 were approved as all applicants met all ACO registration requirements. As such, no registration reviews were required.

The ACO does not have any members registered in the Courtesy Registration register.
CONTINUING COMPETENCE PROGRAM

PURPOSE
» To measure, assess and enhance the knowledge, skill and judgment of practicing optometrists
» To ensure that each Regulated Member meets the prevailing Standards of Practice required to provide appropriate vision care to each patient
» To set an expectation that each Regulated Member will practice according to the Alberta College of Optometrists Code of Ethics.

GOAL
» Maintain the competence, knowledge and skills he/she needs to provide service to the public,
» Continually enhance the quality and delivery of optometric services, and,
» Ensure his/her continuing educational development.

Participation by all Regulated Members is compulsory.

CRITERIA
» To be effective, valid, accurate, honest and fair
» To be reliable, accountable and measurable
» To be flexible and non-threatening
» To be educational and contemporary

MANDATORY MODALITIES
Competency skills are assessed using:
» On-Site Practice Visits
» Minimum time in active clinical practice
» Continuing Education

The Alberta College of Optometrists is one of a few regulatory colleges across Canada that utilizes on-site Practice Visits. All newly registered members are assessed within one year of their initial registration with the college; and, as all other Regulated Members, are assessed every 4-5 years thereafter.

In 2015, a total of 126 on-site Practice Visits were conducted. Of this total:
» 91 were deemed satisfactory
» 23 were deemed satisfactory with minor compliance
» 9 were deemed a fail with a follow-up Practice Visit scheduled in 90 days

Three practitioners were referred to the ACO Complaints Director for further action. The Competence Committee meets twice a year and determines as a whole the final outcome of each review.

The cost to operate this program is entirely funded by Alberta optometrists as part of their yearly dues. No funding comes from the provincial government or private industry.
The Complaints Director is responsible for reviewing all formal written, signed complaints against Regulated Members of the Alberta College of Optometrists (ACO). Following the review of a formal complaint, as per the Health Professions Act, a number of action steps can be taken by the Complaints Director. These action steps include:

» Dismissal of the complaint if the complaint is trivial or vexatious, or,
» Formal mediation of the complaint (attempting to solve the complaint via encouraging communication, etc., or,
» Conducting of an investigation into the complaint.

Following an investigation, a complaint can be dismissed, referred to a Hearing Tribunal (if sufficient evidence of unprofessional conduct exists against a Member), or, create a Member Undertaking Agreement between the investigated Member and the ACO. A Member Undertaking is a signed legal document which sets out requirements for the Member to execute in order to avoid a Hearing Tribunal.

If a complaint is dismissed by the ACO Complaints Director, the complainant has the option of submitting an appeal of the dismissal to the ACO Hearings Director, who will then assemble a Complaint Review Committee (CRC) to review all documentation relating to the complaint and its dismissal. Following the CRC review, the dismissal will either be upheld, investigated further or the complaint will be referred to a Hearing Tribunal.

The one investigation which was active at the time of the 2014 Annual Report has been concluded and the complaint was dismissed. No appeal of this dismissal was received.

Regarding the three (3) complaints that were forwarded by the ACO Continuing Competence Committee and were under review at the time of the 2014 Annual Report, one was dismissed immediately, one was dismissed following an investigation, and one resulted in a Member Undertaking which is currently in progress.

Regarding the Hearing Tribunal process which was not completed at the time of the 2014 Annual Report, the ACO lost jurisdiction of this complaint prior to the hearing taking place due to a procedural error which had occurred during the CRC process.

Two CRC reviews reported in the 2014 Annual Report which had resulted in the CRC upholding the complaint dismissals were appealed to the Alberta Ombudsman. The Ombudsman investigated these complaint dismissals and was satisfied that the findings and conclusions of the ACO were fair and reasonable. The only recommendations provided to the ACO related to internal administrative processes which have since been changed.

In 2015:

» Two (2) formal complaints against regulated members of the ACO were resolved through formal mediation.
» Three (3) complaints were investigated and dismissed.
» One (1) complaint was investigated and resulted in a Member Undertaking which has been completed.
» No member had to be dealt with under Section 118 of the Health Professions Act.

No appeals of any of these dismissals were received.

No new Hearing Tribunals or CRC reviews took place in 2015.

Dr. Rob Eastwood
ACO Complaints Director
The Alberta College of Optometrists continues to work with all other provincial optometric regulatory colleges across Canada and the Canadian Examiners in Optometry in the following areas:

- Development of a National Competency Profile.
- Development of a valid, culturally sensitive and evidence-based Evaluating Examination for internationally-trained practitioners.
- Formal incorporation of the current Federation of Regulatory Authorities of Canada.
- Discussions on possible national Standards of Practice and common registration requirements.
- Development of common protocols and standards to facilitate smooth transfer of practitioners between provinces under the AIT Labor Mobility.
- Discussions on the national CACO exam to ensure continued excellence when measuring entry-to-practice competencies.
To the Members of Alberta College of Optometrists:

We have audited the accompanying financial statements of Alberta College of Optometrists, which comprise the statement of financial position as at December 21, 2015, and the statement of changes in net assets, statement of operations and statements of cash flows for the year then ended, and a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information.

Management’s Responsibility for the Financial Statements
Management is responsible for the preparation of these 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.

Auditor’s Responsibility
Our responsibility is to express an opinion on the financial statements based on our audit. We conducted our audit in accordance with Canadian general accepted auditing standards. Those standards require that we comply with ethical requirements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosure in the financial statements. The procedures selected depend on the auditors’ judgement, including the assessment of the risk of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the entity’s preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements 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 entity’s internal control. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial statements.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

Opinion
In our opinion, these financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of Alberta College of Optometrists as at December 31, 2015, and its financial performance and its cash flows for the year ended in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations.

June 9, 2016
Edmonton, Alberta

Pisko & Miskiw LLP
CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS
# STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

## ASSETS

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<th>2015</th>
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<td><strong>Current Assets:</strong></td>
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<td>Cash</td>
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<td>Term Deposits</td>
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<td>Accounts receivable</td>
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<td>Prepaid expenses</td>
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<td>$1,806,577</td>
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<td><strong>Property and Equipment</strong></td>
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<td>$652,681</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total assets:</strong></td>
<td>$2,661,817</td>
<td>$2,459,258</td>
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## LIABILITIES

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<th>2014</th>
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<td><strong>Current Liabilities:</strong></td>
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<td>Accounts payable and accrued liabilities</td>
<td>$42,378</td>
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<td>Members’ due collected in advance</td>
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<td>$689,100</td>
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<td><strong>Total current liabilities:</strong></td>
<td>$851,928</td>
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## NET ASSETS

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<tr>
<td>Investment in Property and Equipment</td>
<td>$601,058</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unrestricted</td>
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<td><strong>Total Net Assets:</strong></td>
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## REVENUES

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Source of Revenue</th>
<th>2015</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Member Dues</td>
<td>709,000</td>
<td>666,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Application and Registration Fees</td>
<td>33,000</td>
<td>30,100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Professional Corporation Fees</td>
<td>31,750</td>
<td>37,800</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rental income</td>
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<td>9,849</td>
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<td>Occupational Health &amp; Safety Project</td>
<td>15,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interest Income</td>
<td>504</td>
<td>8,327</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fines and Cost Recoveries</td>
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<td>21,000</td>
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## EXPENDITURES

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2014</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administrative and Executive</td>
<td>321,643</td>
<td>288,956</td>
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<td>Amortization</td>
<td>62,794</td>
<td>62,194</td>
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<tr>
<td>College Committees and Meetings</td>
<td>183,835</td>
<td>176,132</td>
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<td>Computer and IT Costs</td>
<td>28,430</td>
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<tr>
<td>Council</td>
<td>74,939</td>
<td>55,243</td>
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<td>Legal Fees</td>
<td>43,998</td>
<td>78,012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office Building Costs</td>
<td>25,661</td>
<td>25,396</td>
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The Summary Financial Statement is derived from audited financial statements, prepared in accordance with Canadian accounting standards. The preparation of this Summary Financial Statement requires the ACO office staff to determine the information that needs to be reflected in them so that they are consistent in all material respects with, and represent a fair summary of the audited statement.

The audited financial statements of the Alberta College of Optometrists (ACO) are available upon request by contacting the ACO office.

The College initially measures its financial assets and liabilities at fair value adjusted by, in the case of a financial instrument that will not be measured subsequently at fair value, the amount of transaction costs directly attributable to the instrument. The college subsequently measures all its financial assets and liabilities at amortized cost, which includes cash, term deposits, accounts receivable, accounts payable and accrued liabilities.

All ACO Regulated Member fees (Practice Permit, Professional Corporation Permit, registration fee, etc.) are set by the ACO Council. Term Deposits are held for periods of up to four years with annual interest rates that fluctuate based on market conditions. The principal investment is guaranteed.

The College has a risk management framework to monitor, evaluate and manage the principal risks assumed with financial instruments. The risks that arise from transacting financial instruments include credit risk, liquidity risk and interest rate risk. There have been no changes in the college’s risk exposures from the prior year.