



From the Desk of the Registrar

November 2022

Dear Regulated Members,

Those of you who are familiar with Marvel Comics or the Marvel Cinematic Universe are probably familiar with Spiderman. He is very down-to-earth as far as superheroes go; he rarely expects any accolades, and he always looks out for welfare of the folks in his community. He's also credited with popularizing the adage "With great power comes great responsibility" because he recognizes that his superhero powers cannot simply be enjoyed for the privileges they bring, rather, they make him morally responsible both for what he chooses to do with them and for what he does not do with them.



Although ACSLPA certainly is not a superhero, like Spiderman we do have a few exceptional powers. As the regulator for the professions of speech-language pathology and audiology we have the power to set and enforce standards for admission, competence, and professional practice. Setting the standard means deciding what is required, what must be demonstrated, or what must be met. Enforcing the standard means deciding who gets to practice in their field, who does not, and under what conditions. And like Spiderman, we recognize that our powers come with great responsibility! How does ACSLPA demonstrate that it takes its responsibility to heart?

Engagement

When ACSLPA creates a new standard of practice or guideline, or updates a standard, guideline, or the code of ethics, we seek your feedback. That feedback takes the form of participation by committees or working groups who provide input into the development of the document right from the outset. It also takes the form of feedback surveys that we send out to every regulated member, seeking your input and thoughts on what might work and what might not work so well. In some cases where we know there are greater concerns or the stakes are higher, we will also invite you to participate in feedback sessions. And the College does take all the feedback it receives to heart! In addition to supporting decision-making by staff, it is also relayed to the ACSLPA Council (which is made up of regulated SLPs and audiologists along with representatives from the public) who ultimately approve the new requirement or send it back for rework.

More engagement

ACSLPA staff have some authority when it comes to decisions that affect licensure, but the big decisions about who gets to practice and who does not are generally made by groups that are either made up entirely of SLPs and audiologists (your peers) or a combination of regulated members working alongside representatives of the public.

So let's say ...

- you are an internationally trained applicant seeking registration with ACSLPA after arriving in Alberta for the first time; the Registration Committee, made up of SLPs and audiologists, is the decision-maker or,
- you have just completed your continuing competence program (CCP) submission; the Competence Committee, made up of SLPs and audiologists, is the decision-maker, finally,
- you are the subject of a complaint of unprofessional conduct that proceeds to a hearing; the Hearing Tribunal, made up of either SLPs or audiologists (depending on your profession) plus members of the public, is the decision-maker.

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Recourse

In each of the scenarios listed above, a regulated member who is unsatisfied with the outcome of their process may have an option to appeal or have the decision reviewed by ACSLPA's Council (again, SLPs and audiologists plus public members). Each of these groups; staff, committees, tribunals, and Council, aims to provide decisions that are fair, appropriate to the circumstances, and in the best interest of the public, often with support from independent legal counsel. Additionally, ACSLPA is accountable for its actions to a host of officials and organizations who each have a role to play making sure ACSLPA uses its powers responsibly. These include the Minister of Health, the Courts, the Alberta Ombudsman, the Privacy Commissioner, the Fairness for Newcomers Office, and the Minister of Jobs and Employment.

In closing, ACSLPA's mandate is to regulate and direct the practice of SLPs and audiologists in a manner that serves and protects the public interest. To that end, the College has some broad powers over who gets to practice and on what terms that practice can occur, but we also respect that our powers come with responsibility. The next time you engage with ACSLPA, whether it is for renewal, reinstatement, CCP, or a professional conduct matter, you can keep in mind that we're accountable for decisions that affect you and that you should expect us to use our powers responsibly.



Michael Neth,
Registrar & CEO