College of Opticians of Ontario

BRIEFING NOTE

TO: **Board of Directors**

FROM: **Fizza Asad, Manager, Finance and Human Resources**

DATE: **November 30, 2026**

SUBJECT: **Draft 2027 Budget**

☒ For Decision ☐ For Information ☐ Monitoring Report

Purpose:

To review and approve the College's proposed 2027 operating budget.

Background:

The College's operating budget forecasts revenues and expenditures for the upcoming fiscal year in an income statement format. Estimates for each account are based on the following information and assumptions:

- Projected revenue based historical growth modeling, expected investment and miscellaneous income.
- 2026 College statistics and demographics, including registrant renewal and attrition rates and student enrollment trends.
    - Projected expenditures through the end of the current fiscal year.
- Actual financial results as of October 31, including variances against the 2026 approved budget.
- Five-year historical averages and expenditure trends.

Review of the Strategic Plan as well as committee work plans to ensure adequate funding of projects and initiatives.

- Vendor quotes and work orders for planned and anticipated projects and initiatives.
- Fixed operating costs based on existing contracts and commitments.
- Anticipated Board and Committee meetings, activities and associated expenses.
- Contingency provisions for operational requirements, including IT, cybersecurity and equipment.

College of Opticians of Ontario

For Consideration:

The proposed 2027 operating budget supports the College's regulatory responsibilities, operational requirements and planned Strategic Initiatives. The sections below outline key changes from 2026, and the assumptions reflected in the proposed budget.

Revenue

- **Interest Income:** Higher GIC rates secured in 2026 are expected to increase interest income in 2027. Rates are in part, the result of the Bank of Canada raising interest rates in October 2026 due to inflation. Investments will mature and income will be realized in June and October 2027.
- **Miscellaneous Revenue:** The draft budget includes revenue and expenses for Continuing Education (CE) accreditation. Revenue is expected to increase with higher accreditation activity. The Board will discuss outsourcing accreditation at its December meeting. If outsourcing proceeds, the related revenue and expense line items will no longer apply. Revised budget figures reflecting that decision will be available at the meeting.
- **Registered Optician Revenue:** The proposed budget is based on the base renewal rate for 2026 registrants and a projected net growth rate of 2.5%. The growth rate is based on actual historical registration trends from 2023 to 2026 and accounts for both new registrants entering the profession and existing registrants leaving. This approach reflects the College's historical registration activity and provides a data-driven basis for projecting 2027 registration revenue.

Board and Committee Expenses

- **Board Honoraria:** This line item includes an additional half day meeting related to a pre-planning session that will drive data collection in the Fall as the administrative team prepares for its next 3-Year Strategic Planning cycle slated for the Spring of 2028. It also now consolidates Board dinner expenses previously allocated to other accounts, and the Board expense calculator has also been updated to reflect hotel rates that are higher than previous estimates.
- **ICR Committee:** Increased provisions for preparation time reflect the level of activity in 2026 and the growing complexity of matters under review, which require additional preparation and consideration.

Operating Expenses

- **General Consulting:** Funding is included to recruit a summer student to provide additional project support for new initiatives such as an extensive audit of registrant insurance policies as well as environmental scanning efforts to support the upcoming Strategic Planning cycle in 2028. Government Relations activities and engagement with government representatives and key stakeholders is also captured here.
- **Database:** Funding is allocated for two major development projects:

Enhancements to the Registration database to support the Currency Hours and Contact Lens Mentorship program.

Development of a Professional Conduct tracking system for ICRC and Discipline matters to better manage workflow and timelines.

- **Strategic Planning:** Funding is included for a patient experience survey to support the College's strategic planning process.
- **External Relations:** With the absence of the Ontario Opticians Association related events, funds previously allocated to these events have been redirected toward registrant engagement and outreach programs organized and facilitated by the College. This approach allows the College to maintain opportunities for registrant engagement through its own initiatives.
- **General Operational:** The increase in this account primarily reflects a refinement in the budgeting and reporting presentation of merchant processing fees. Due to the timing of revenue transactions near fiscal year-end, these fees have historically been managed through both the General Operational expense account and a separate account used for payment processing reconciliations. Both accounts have consistently been incorporated into the College's financial statements. For 2027, these amounts have been consolidated for budgeting and variance reporting purposes to provide a more comprehensive view of merchant processing expenses within a single account line. Accordingly, the increase reflects a change in presentation rather than a significant increase in actual operating costs.

Board Initiatives

The proposed 2027 operating budget includes funding for initiatives that directly support the College's strategic plan. The initiatives and their corresponding strategic plan objectives are outlined below. Where funding has been allocated under another operational expense account, the relevant account is identified.

- **Indigenous Cultural Safety and Humility Project** – Strategic Plan Objective 1.3.
- **Indigenous Community Engagement Programs** – Strategic Plan Objectives 1.5 and 3.5.
- **Unauthorized Practice Investigations** – Strategic Plan Objective 1.2.
- **National Awareness and Public Engagement Campaigns** – Initiatives to increase public awareness and engagement. Strategic Plan Objectives 1.1 and 3.4. *(Budgeted under Communications for public engagement activities.)*
- **Government Relations** – Engagement with government representatives, including activities at Queen's Park. Strategic Plan Objective 3.4. *(Budgeted under General Consulting.)*
- **Jurisprudence and Professional Development Modules** – Development of educational resources to support opticians' professional development, access to high-quality continuing education,

professionalism and critical thinking. Strategic Plan Objectives 2.1, 2.3 and 2.4. *(Budgeted under Consulting.)*

- **Professional Conduct Tracking Database** – Development of a database to support the tracking and management of Professional Conduct matters. Strategic Plan Objective 1.4. *(Budgeted under Database.)*
- **Contact Lens Mentorship Applications** – Development of applications to support the Contact Lens Mentorship program. Strategic Plan Objective 2.2. *(Budgeted under Database.)*

Public Interest Considerations:

The proposed 2027 operating budget has been developed with consideration for the College's public interest mandate and regulatory responsibilities. Funding has been allocated to support core regulatory functions, including registration, quality assurance, investigations and professional conduct, as well as the staffing, technology and operational infrastructure necessary to carry out these activities effectively.

The budget also includes provisions for strategic priorities and planned initiatives that support public protection, regulatory effectiveness and the College's continued ability to fulfill its mandate. These allocations reflect an emphasis on maintaining essential regulatory services while supporting organizational improvements and responsible financial stewardship.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Considerations:

Diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) considerations have been incorporated into the proposed 2027 operating budget through the allocation of resources toward education, training and strategic initiatives that support the integration of DEI principles into the College's regulatory and operational activities.

The budget includes funding for initiatives that promote equitable and inclusive practices, including the Indigenous Cultural Safety and Humility Project, public awareness activities and stakeholder engagement. These initiatives are intended to strengthen the College's internal policies and processes while supporting registrants in providing culturally safe and equitable care to the diverse communities they serve.

Risk Management Considerations:

Risk management considerations have been incorporated into the proposed 2027 operating budget to support the College's ability to respond to financial, operational and regulatory risks while maintaining continuity of its core functions.

The budget includes provisions for insurance coverage to mitigate potential financial exposure arising from litigation and other liabilities, as well as contingencies for unforeseen operational expenses, including technology, cybersecurity and equipment requirements. These allocations are intended to

provide flexibility in responding to unexpected circumstances without significantly affecting the delivery of essential regulatory services.

The budget has also been developed using historical financial trends, projected registration revenue, anticipated expenditures and existing contractual commitments to support reasonable and informed financial planning. Conservative revenue assumptions, including the provision for potential registration non-renewals, have been incorporated to mitigate the risk of revenue shortfalls.

Recommendations/Action Required:

To approve the College's proposed 2027 operating budget.

		Approved 2026 Budget	2026 Year End Projections	FINAL 2027 Budget	2027 Notes: 2027 Optician Fee: $ 1095 (based on new fee model) 2027 Student/Intern Fee: $ (Sept 20 - Aug 21) 200 $ (Sept 21 - Aug 22) 200
	Revenue				
	Interest & Investment Income	$ 164,726	$ 164,726	$ 221,871	Annual income expected based on investments that have been locked in at higher rates for maturity dates of June and October 2027
	Miscellaneous Revenue	$ 75,000	$ 100,000	$ 90,000	Miscellaneous revenue includes: CE Activity Accreditation requests Reg Com Review fees for reinstatements, Replacement certificate and ID badges Deficient QA portfolio fees Peer Assessment Fees, Application Fees, Status change fees, Discipline
	Rent Receivable	$ 39,185	$ 39,185	$ 39,495	Rent received for shared office space from the CRTO
	Registered Optician Revenue	$ 3,564,450	$ 3,830,000	$ 3,922,016	HISTORICAL 2023: 3170 2024: 3247, 2025: 3431, 2026: 3509 - assume 2.5% avg growth Budget 2027 3597
	Inactive Registered Optician Revenue	$ 84,668	$ 91,492	$ 87,220	2025: 257, 2026: 256 - Renewal at 95% based on other renewals
	Intern Revenue	$ 30,000	$ 35,000	$ 30,000	Intern Revenue
	TOTAL REVENUE	**$ 3,958,029**	**$ 4,260,403**	**$ 4,390,602**	
	Honorarium & Expenses for Board and Committee Members				
	Board	$ 96,523	$ 96,079	$ 120,678	2027 Prediction: 4 Virtual Days (Jan - 2 Day, Mar, Oct, DEI Training), 4 Full Day in Person (Jun & Dec), Board Dinners, reflects higher accomodation costs in Toronto
	Discipline	$ 11,419	$ 4,000	$ 5,325	2027 Prediction: 5 Hearing Days (5 person panel, full day virtual), 8 Decision Writing Days (1 member x 4 meetings), 6 Full Day Trainings
	Executive	$ 5,288	$ 4,000	$ 4,406	2027 Prediction: 6 Virtual Half Days, including review committee

	Fitness to Practice	$ -		$ -	
	Governance	$ 4,425	$ 3,000	$ 3,450	2027 Prediction: 5 Virtual Quarter Days
	Investigations, Complaints & Reports	$ 10,663	$ 15,000	$ 16,938	2027 Prediction: 2 Virtual Half Days, 12 Virtual Half Day Panels
	Screening Committee	$ 4,875	$ 3,000	$ 8,875	2027 Prediction : 4 Virtual Full Day panel meetings, 1 Virtual Quarter Day panel meeting, 2 Virtual Quarter Day Trainings, and Chair and VC elections, reflects increased number of meetings from 2026
	Patient Relations	$ 2,213	$ 2,263	$ 2,250	2027 Prediction: 3 Virtual Quarter Days
	Quality Assurance	$ 20,000	$ 25,000	$ 25,988	2027 Prediction: 6 Virtual Half Days, 1 Virtual Quarter Day - Accreditation Panel Training, 6 Virtual Quarter Days - Panel Meeting and Accreditation Panel Review of 190 Accreditation requests
	Registration Committee	$ 11,063	$ 8,500	$ 8,663	2027 Prediction: 4 Virtual Half Days and 6 Virtual Quarter Days
	Clinical Practice Committee	$ 4,425	$ 1,800	$ 1,950	2027 Prediction: 3 Virtual Quarter Days
	TOTAL HONORARIUM & EXPENSES	$ 170,892	$ 162,642	$ 198,521	
	Operations & Administration				
	Audit - Financial	$ 18,218	$ 17,965	$ 19,110	2027 Audit Fee
	Communications				
	Public Awareness Initiatives	$ 105,226	$ 95,000	$ 128,024	Social Media, Google Ad Campaigns, SEO, OCC Sponsorship, Videos, CAG Surveys, Engagement and Outreach
	COO Communications & Engagement Activities	$ 13,192	$ 12,000	$ 8,192	Annual Report, COO promotional products for Registrants, French Translations
	Consulting				
	General	$ 38,000	$ 25,000	$ 51,500	Board Facilitator, Governance Consulting (Registrar's Review Process & Screening Interviews), Recruitment Consulting

	Public Relations/ Government Relations	$ 43,000	$ 38,000	$ 42,200	Media Training Chair + VC Government Relations Consultants Counsel, Queens Park Event, Public Engagement
	Jurisprudence/Professional Growth CE Development	$ 24,000	$ 5,000	$ 17,000	Jurisprudence modules, Pre-Election Module, DEI CE
	IT Consulting	$ 100,167	$ 73,694	$ 86,567	Project Management
	Database	$ 100,271	$ 100,271	$ 160,186	(QA) - Dashboard Customization - customization and ongoing maintenance. (REG) - Online applications, Currency Hours, Contact Lens Mentorship, Contingency. (PC) - Tracker for ICRC and Discipline. (EXEC) - Elections and General Maintenance
	Board & Staff Education & Development	$ 52,990	$ 40,500	$ 51,420	Training: Facilitation Coaching, CNAR, DEI Training Sexual Abuse Training, Management Training, Staff Continuing Education, Right Touch Training HPRO Discipline training/ Governance Training, SOAR Contingency and Board expenses/ Board Mentorship Decision Writing Training, Cybersecurity Training for Board/Staff
	Strategic Planning	$ -		$ 37,000	Project Assistant to commence work in Q4 ,Strategic Planning Survey
	Expert Report (ICRC/Disc)	$ 1,000	$ -	$ 1,000	Estimate 3 reports
	External Relations	$ 21,579	$ 18,000	$ 17,400	Sponsorships, National meeting, AOE (in person), Student events
	General Operational	$ 209,915	$ 254,867	$ 238,204	Capital Expenses (Computer Hardware - replacement of older laptops and surface pros), Parking, Insurance, Storage, Office Supplies, Bank and ADP Fees, Credit Payment Processing Charges, Subscription Renewals (Zoom, QBO, Adobe, Doodle, Survey Monkey, etc.), Facilities, Misc
	IT Requirements				

	Computer Server/ Maintenance	$ 74,839	$ 67,649	$ 71,370	Beanfield, ITS, Envoke, Contingency 10%
	Database Hosting & User Licensing	$ 60,074	$ 60,047	$ 63,529	ASI Contract for Database
	Website Updates/ Maintenance	$ 15,000	$ 7,500	$ 9,000	Website maintenance, AI enhancement
	Investigator	$ 80,000	$ 80,000	$ 80,000	Based on current trends, 10 anticipated for 2026
	Legal	$ 120,000	$ 65,000	$ 80,000	External legal support for ICRC, Independent legal councel ILC and General Legal counsel
	Extraneous Discipline	$ 2,800	$ 1,500	$ 2,800	Court reporter for hearing days - 4 anticipated
	Office Equipment	$ 9,570	$ 8,000	$ 8,206	Copier rental costs + contingency, Quadient postage unit rental
	Postage	$ 8,500	$ 8,500	$ 8,500	Neopost, Registered Mail, Courier
	Printing	$ 12,000	$ 15,000	$ 14,000	Certificates, Registration Items - Certificates, badges and Decals
	Quality Assurance - Portfolio Hard Costs				
	Consulting Fees	$ 3,000	$ -	$ 3,000	
	Peer Assessors				
	Assessment Training	$ 1,500	$ 1,200	$ 1,500	10 assesors
	Assessment Costs	$ 12,000	$ 13,500	$ 15,000	Estimate 50
	Rent	$ 272,346	$ 264,228	$ 278,075	Monthly lease agreement includes base rent, operating costs, and storage. Contingency for increases effective Sept 2027.
	Salaries & Benefits	$ 1,954,331	$ 2,023,198	$ 2,009,142	Based on Salary Projection
	Benefits	$ 120,000	$ 117,859	$ 120,000	Based on Negotiated Costs - Higher number of staff - check invoice in november for quote
	CPP Employer	$ 84,450	77,774.65	$ 95,277	5.75% - CRA reporting lower 2027 rates
	EHT Expense	$ 33,147	26,700.65	$ 12,811	1.95% EHT
	EI Employer	$ 28,713	28,083.07	$ 27,009	1.63% EI
	Salaries	$ 1,588,827	1,686,103.2	$ 1,656,995	
	Pregnancy/Maternity leave contingent	$ 60,000	17,820.00	$ 60,000	Usage depends on staff needs for parental or maternity leave - Plan for 2

	Vision Care Plan	$ 4,200	2,500.00	$ 4,200	
	RRSP Contribution	$ 94,994	84,177.00	$ 92,850	
	Seat Fees	$ 27,300	27,798.00	$ 28,300	NACOR, CLEAR Membeship, LSO, CNAR,Staff Seat Fees,HPRO
	Board + Committee Payroll Expenses	$ 8,500	$ 8,500	$ 11,500	Employer contributions for board and appointed honoraria (EI & CPP)
	Board Initiatives	$ 90,000	$ 60,000	$ 80,000	Indigenous Cultural Safety and Humility Project, Public Education Resources, Indigenous Community Engagement Projects, UAP Practice, National awareness
	Staff Engagement	$ 8,500	$ 9,000	$ 11,750	Staff Engagement Budget , Department Team Building
	Telecommunications	$ 10,508	$ 10,500	$ 31,245	Office Phone Lines, Staff Phone Stipends (moved from general expenses), Contingency for Increases
	TOTAL OPERATIONS & ADMIN	$ 3,558,325	$ 3,334,726	$ 3,724,720	
	TOTAL EXPENDITURES	$ 3,729,216	$ 3,497,368	$ 3,923,241	
	SURPLUS (DEFICIT) FOR YEAR	$ 228,812	$ 763,035	$ 467,361	