

spARO Annual Report 40th Annual MidWinter Meeting Baltimore February 2017

Thank you in advance for reading through the first spARO newsletter of 2017! Our newsletters generally contain important information regarding the society and potentially also grant applications and professional opportunities. For those of you who are less familiar with spARO (pronounced ‘sparrow’), we are the student, postdoc and medical resident chapter of the Association for Research in Otolaryngology. If you are a student, postdoc, or medical resident, you are automatically a member of spARO! You may have attended at least one of our events last month at ARO, but we briefly want to give you an overview of the society in general, and specifically the activities at the last MidWinter Meeting.

The community’s main goal is to help every member to succeed in our professions in speech- and hearing-related sciences. Apart from connecting to like-minded peers in the ARO community and the concomitant positive social interaction that can lead to scientific collaborations as well as long-lasting friendships, we specifically try to guide the career development of young researchers by offering several events during the Annual MidWinter Meeting.

The spARO social focuses on having a good time with (approximately 200+) fellow researchers. Free drinks as well as a small buffet are usually supplied by ARO and guarantee a successful evening. This year in Baltimore, we again chose the Heavy Seas Alehouse, whose staff offered us excellent support in every aspect. Saturday evening during the conference, we rented out the entire bar and had an amazing turnout of students and postdocs.

The Poster Blitz gave multiple young researchers the opportunity to present their posters in a rapid-pace (under 5 minutes) using PowerPoint slides. An esteemed panel of researchers and clinicians evaluated each pitch presenter on the basis of (1) the ability to convey the impact of their work, (2) the visual appeal of the slides, and (3) the overall presentation. The winners were recognized at the Award of Merit Ceremony. We also hosted our Young Investigator Lunch with Stephen David, who won the Young Investigator Award last year and shared valuable advice regarding a successful research career.

The Mentoring Program has represented a cornerstone of the spARO activities. Similar to last year, we offered eight interactive sessions with experienced “role model” scientists this MidWinter Meeting. A wide variety of topics was covered, including “Building Mentoring Relationships”, “Job Search and Independence”, “Clinician/Scientist”, “Careers in Industry”, “Getting Grants”, “Work-Life Balance”, “Working in Administration” and “Publishing”. The small group size in the form of an open circle discussion allowed for attendees to specifically direct the discussion towards topics of interest for them and take the most out of the hour to hour and half long sessions.

At the town hall, we presented spARO’s leadership team and goals for the following year. Afterwards, 20 lucky attendees were chosen to receive Starbucks gift cards, sponsored by A-M Systems (<http://www.amsystems.com>).



The winner of the gift cards, pictured here, at the 2017 spARO Town Hall.

Our Facebook page (www.facebook.com/groups/spARO2012/?ref=ts&fref=ts) is active and is used to report relevant information regarding our field of research. Feel free to post links that you deem important for the others. However, we are trying to keep the site spam-free, which is why we compare the users who want to join with the spARO members' list. If somebody is not on any of these lists and still wants to join, please send us an email to the address below. We also started two social media accounts last year that can help us stay connected and share with the world the importance of research in otolaryngology and allied fields. Our recently launched Instagram account (@spARO_news) and Twitter (@spARO_news) are aching to be filled with pictures, news, and stories of you. Follow us at @spARO_news on Instagram and Twitter. If you let us know you're a student, postdoc, or medical resident we will follow you back. You can also directly message us your post via Instagram or Twitter OR email us at spARO.ex.officio@gmail.com and share any #'s or @usernames to tag.

We are also extremely excited to announce the launch of the first ARO-spARO mentorship program! To apply, please send your CV (up to 2 pages) and a letter of motivation (250-300 words) to sparo.ex.officio@gmail.com by Friday April 21, 2017. In your letter of motivation, please explain in more detail the type of guidance you would be looking for in a mentor through this program. Some examples of mentorship topics include: work-life balance, finding a

postdoctoral position, balancing a clinician-scientist career, non-US careers and funding, faculty job searches, non-academic careers (policy, publishing, industry, pharma), funding opportunities and grant writing, etc. We will match spARO members with senior ARO members based on the areas of interest for which you wish to be active as a mentee.

Looking ahead to next year's conference, please take less than 5 minutes to fill out the spARO post-conference survey in order to help us more closely tailor spARO's programming with the needs of its members. [Please click here to take the survey.](#)

As a final remark, I want to thank the 2016/2017 steering committee, including Lukas Landegger, Phil Uribe, Shae DiNino, Nate Zuk, Rich McWalter, Brian Nuyen, and Richard Penninger who have all done an amazing job and have made it easy for me to continue the excellent work of my predecessors over this past year. For feedback, suggestions, or more information, please email sparo.ex.officio@gmail.com. Also, if you are interested in becoming more active in our organization, feel free to email us and attach a short CV and letter of interest. Once this year's steering committee is selected, the list of new members will be posted here: <http://www.aro.org/?page=spAROCCommittee>.

Zahra Sayyid
Exiting Chair, spARO