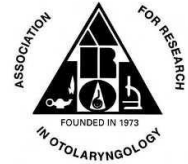


# ARO COMMITTEE UPDATES

Committee Name: Travel Awards



## 1. Our committee is currently working on the following:

- Updating the application review procedure so that the expertise of individual TA committee members is more specifically matched to the applications under review.
- Increasing the value of the travel award. Should we offer one specifically for international attendees? This may encourage international applicants? spARO have been very helpful advertising the scheme this year, and we hope to build on this moving forward into 2022.
- Format of the Henderson awards. One award per category, or is it better to have multiple smaller awards?

## 2. Our top five action items for the previous year were:

- Increase value of the travel award from \$500.
- Transition to the new Parthenon system.
- Improve collection of demographic data from applicants.
- Simplify the application procedure by remove recommendation letters.

## 3. Outcomes for 2020

- Advertised the virtual TA program for 2021, successfully reviewed applicants and made awards.
- Transitioned to new Parthenon system for reviewing and scoring applications. This has allowed us to collect more fine-grained applicant demographics.

### CHAIR:

Jonathan Bird, PhD

### MEMBERS:

Basil Tarchini, PhD

Sriram Boothalingam

Xin Luo, PhD

A Catalina Velez-Ortega

Melanie Barzik

Claus-Pieter Richer, Prof

Marcel Van Der Heijden, PhD

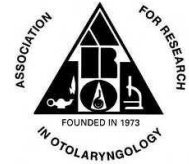
Joe Santos-Sacchi, PhD

Melissa Caras, PhD

Tianying Ren, MD

Helen Cohen, Prof

Greg Basura, MD, PhD



Anthony Peng, PhD  
 Ruben Stepanyan  
 Aziz El-Amraoui  
 Alberto-Rivera Rentas NIDCD ex-officio  
 Council Liaison: John Oghalai, MD  
 spARO Representative: Cathy Sung,

**Summary:**

This year’s 2021 Travel Award (TA) program saw significant disruption due to the transition to a virtual meeting format. With no travel to the annual meeting, the Travel Award program was repurposed to provide peer-review of submitted abstracts and to recognize trainee accomplishment. TA winners this year are invited to a virtual luncheon with Dr. Lisa Cunningham as keynote speaker. TA winners are also being provided with \$50 home-delivery food vouchers (thank you Council for funding this!). The highest scoring applicants have additionally been recognized with Don Henderson Awards.

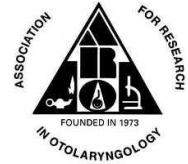
In total, the TA committee reviewed 120 applications (down from 237 in 2020). This was beyond our expectations given the year’s events. Credit must go to Ally Jevens and Dawn Keglор (Parthenon), as well as to Cathy Sung and Kirupa Suthakar (spARO) for advertising the TA program so effectively amongst the ARO trainees.

**Applicants and success rates**

	Number of applications		Minority		Number of awards made		Success rate	
	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021
<b>Graduate student</b>	127	<b>63</b>	25	<b>9</b>	57 (+1)	<b>31</b>	45%	<b>49%</b>
<b>Post-Doc</b>	74	<b>36</b>			32 (+1)	<b>19</b>	43%	<b>53%</b>
<b>Medical/Resident</b>	25	<b>14</b>			13 (+1)	<b>7</b>	52%	<b>50%</b>
<b>Audiologist</b>	11	<b>7</b>			5	<b>4</b>	45%	<b>57%</b>
<i>Total</i>	<i>237</i>	<i><b>120</b></i>	<i>25</i>	<i><b>9</b></i>	<i>107+3*</i>	<i><b>61 (52%)</b></i>		

\*(in brackets) are the number of supplemental awards made by the Minority Affairs committee.

As there were no financial constraints this year, the TA committee agreed upon a target 50% payline to be comparable with previous years. The payline is separate for each application category.



- Minority applications:
  - There were **9 applicants** who identified as ‘minority/disability’. This was reduced from 25 reported in 2020.
  - Of these applicants – **8 were awarded (88%)** directly by the TA committee
  - A secondary review is pending by the Minority Affairs committee, to determine any supplemental awards.

- Geographic data:

	<u>Of total applications</u>	<u>Of total awards</u>
- Graduate:	34/63 from US (54%)	15/31 from US (48%)
- Post-doc:	32/36 from US (89%)	17/19 from US (89%)
- Med / Resident:	12/14 from US (86%)	7/7 from US (100%)
- Audiologist:	6/7 from US (86%)	3/4 from US (75%)
- Combined:	84/120 from US (70%)	42/61 (69%)

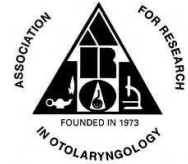
- By gender:

As part of the new Parthenon application site, applicants are asked to gender self-identify. We have not been able to collect this data in previous years, but will continue to do so in future years.

- Of total applications
  - 61 Female (51%)
  - 56 Male (47%)
  - 2 Prefer to self-describe (2%)
  - 1 Non-binary (<1%)
- Of total awards
  - 33 Female (54%)
  - 27 Male (44%)
  - 1 Prefer to self-describe (2%)
  - 0 Non-binary (0%)

### Henderson awards

Terri Henderson reaffirmed her family’s ongoing support and contribution to this award. Whereas 2020 saw a \$1000 Henderson award given to the top scoring candidate(s) in each award category (4 x \$1000 awards in total), this year’s awards were reduced to \$250 each. Six awards were made this year (2 x graduate students, 2 x postdocs, 1 x medical student / resident



and 1 x audiologist). Fewer awards were given to the medical student / resident and audiologist categories as the application pools were significantly smaller.

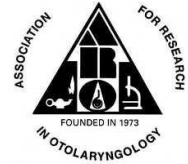
There was a tie for the top scoring audiology candidate, and a secondary review by three TA committee members was used to determine the award winner.

Terri Henderson is writing to the award winners to congratulate them.

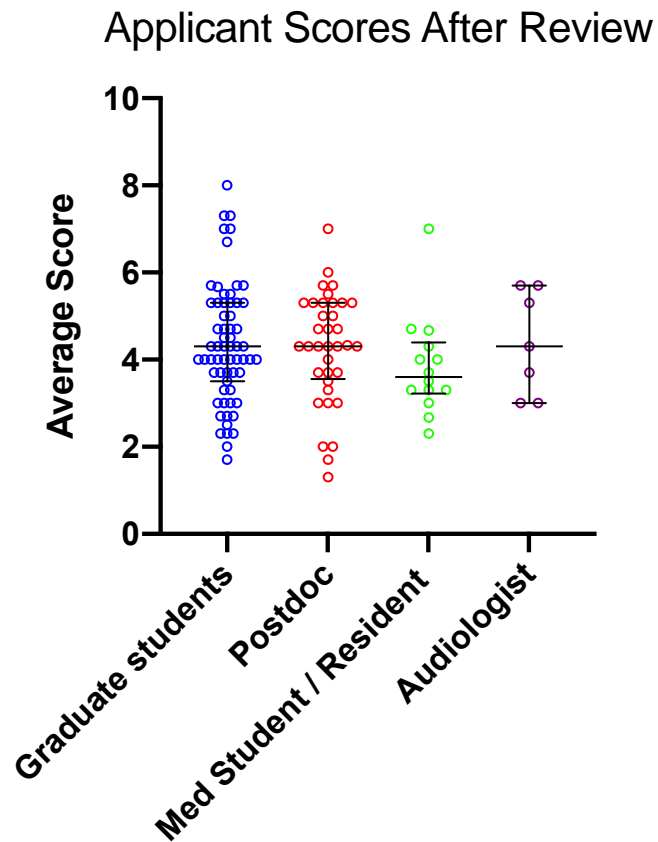
### **Application review process:**

- Each application was reviewed by three reviewers.
- Reviewers with declared conflicts of interest are reassigned to alternate applications.
  
- Scoring rubric:
  - Scores range from 1 to 10, with 1 being the highest score. The following description is used to help guide reviewer scoring.
    - 1-3, Excellent application, must be funded.
    - 4-6, Good application, should be funded.
    - 7-9, Reasonable application, no urgency in funding - if funds are not available.
    - 10, Do not fund this year.
    - Reviewers were instructed to assign 33% of applications into each group (1-3, 4-6, 7-9).
  - Under-represented minorities: score by scientific merit. Minority committee will separately score taking their criteria into consideration.
  
- In 'normal' years, additional criteria are used to ensure fairness in the application process. These were suspended for 2021, but will be re-instated for the 2022 annual meeting.
  - No funding for applicants in the host city.
  - Maximum score for a TA awardee from previous years is a 4. For the (hopefully in person) annual meeting in 2022, travel awards given in 2021 will not be counted as a previous award.
  - Limiting multiple awards from one laboratory. In the case of multiple awards from the same laboratory – find 'others' and rank. Potentially contact PI to assist in ranking their trainees.

### **Overall quality of applications as scored by the reviewers**



Applicant scores for each application category are shown. For each applicant (circle), the average of 3 review scores is shown, along with mean and interquartile range. Overall, the current scoring rubric does appear to differentiate well between applicants.



#### Award luncheon

This year a virtual award luncheon will be hosted on the Friday before the ARO meeting starts. The TA committee discussed at length different options for how to structure this. Dr. Lisa Cunningham has agreed to give a keynote address, and this will be followed by breakout rooms to allow trainees to meet each other. Each Travel award winner will be provided with a \$50 food voucher (e.g. Uber-Eats et al), to help cover food for the luncheon and meeting.