



## ARO Travel Awards Committee Meeting Minutes

Date: Tuesday, June 18, 2024

Time: 12:00-1:00 PM ET

**Attendance:** Cata Velez (Chair), Dave Raible, George Burwood, Vibhuti Agrahari, Kevin Booth, Francisco Barros (spARO Rep), James Dewey, Hongbo Zhao, Isabelle Schrauwen, Choongheon Lee, Jing Zheng, Nima Maftoon, Souroush Sadeghi, Tim Balmer, Zoe Mann

**Minutes:** The committee convened for its first 2025 MidWinter meeting cycle meeting. New and returning committee members were introduced, and the agenda for the year was detailed, focusing on abstract reviews and preparations for the ARO Travel Award Luncheon. The application process for travel awards was explained, with a submission deadline of September 10th.

Changes to the travel award policy were discussed, stressing fairness in applications. It was noted that undergraduate students are now eligible to apply, though current budget constraints mean they are judged alongside graduate students and not eligible for a Don Henderson award. Based on how many undergraduates apply this year, the ARO Council may reconsider the budget for the 2025 MidWinter Meeting. The committee discussed conflict of interest definitions and the application review process, including instructions for reviewers.

The committee discussed managing reviews on the ARO Conference website, detailing the reviewer dashboard and conflict of interest checks. New this year: all members will be asked to review their assigned applications for potential conflicts of interest the first week of the reviewing window. The committee outlined the application review steps, including document attachments and scoring rationale. They addressed fund distribution across categories and proposed features to streamline application categorization.

If a second round of review is needed (for tiebreakers), the following members volunteered to help: Cata Velez, Souroush Sadeghi, Kevin Booth, George Burwood, and Choongheon Lee. The expectation is to provide the second round of reviews within a week.

The committee concluded the meeting by inviting questions and thanking participants for their contributions.

### Next Steps:

- A call will go out to committee members in August to nominate luncheon speakers, and members will vote for a speaker in September.
- The Executive Office will email committee members on or before September 16<sup>th</sup> to begin application reviews with detailed instructions on how to do so.