

**NAME:** Lisa Cunningham

**Location:** NIDCD Bethesda, MD, USA

**Title:** Senior Investigator and Scientific Director

**Education/Training:**

MA, Audiology, University of TN

Ph.D., Neuroscience, University of Virginia

Post-Doctoral Fellowship, Auditory Neuroscience, University of Washington

**Prior service to ARO:**

2013: Symposium Organizer

2019-2022: ARO Council member

2019-2022: ARO Council Liaison to Diversity and Minority Affairs  
Committee

2020-2022: Chair, ARO Working Group on Diversity Fellowships

2020: ARO/spARO Virtual Learning Initiative Working Group

2017-present: Mentor, ARO-spARO Mentorship Program

**Research Interests:** My lab conducts basic, translational, and clinical studies on sensory hair cell degeneration and hearing loss in the mature inner ear and develops therapeutic strategies to prevent hearing loss. Our basic science studies examine the cellular and molecular mechanisms that underlie sensory hair cell death and survival, and our translational studies use this mechanistic knowledge to guide the rational design of therapies aimed at preventing hearing loss in humans. Clinical studies in our lab test the efficacy of these potential therapeutic strategies. Of particular interest is the development of treatments aimed at protecting the hearing of patients receiving therapeutic drugs with ototoxic side effects.

**Clinical Interests:** We have always had both clinicians and basic scientists in the lab. We are currently conducting a multi-site randomized controlled trial that is designed to determine whether the cholesterol-lowering drug atorvastatin reduces cisplatin-induced hearing loss in adults with head and neck cancer. This trial is in collaboration with Dr. Nikki Schmitt (head and neck surgeon at Emory) and Dr. Kate Fernandez (audiology clinician-scientist at NIDCD). This 10-year collaboration has been one of the greatest joys of my career.

**Personal interests:**

My husband Mike and I like to travel in our RV with our dog Chaco.

**Statement of Goals:**

This is my 25<sup>th</sup> ARO MidWinter meeting. I come away from every ARO meeting feeling energized by the interactions with my colleagues, many of whom are also friends. This

professional organization has shaped the work in my lab and nurtured my career both as a scientist and as a leader. I am deeply committed to ensuring that ARO can attract highly qualified trainees, scientists, and clinicians with diverse backgrounds and experiences to work in our mission areas. If elected, I would have four main areas of focus:

- the strength of the scientific and clinical opportunities both at the MidWinter meeting and throughout the year
- opportunities for trainees and young investigators
- opportunities for our international members
- opportunities to strengthen our diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility efforts