ARO Council Meeting
Thursday, November 21, 2024, 2P-3P EST

Attendees:

Sunil Puria	Katharine Fernandez	
Radha Kalluri	Brandon Cox	
Ronna Hertzano	Avril Genene Holt	
Kristin Johnson, Executive Office	Anna Lysakowski	

Apologies:

Mike Bowl		
Yuri Agrawal		
Lisa Olson		

Minutes:

Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

The minutes from the previous meeting held in October were reviewed and unanimously approved. The group also noted that the minutes for the first meeting in November would be approved at the next session.

Processing Fees for Donations

Concerns were raised regarding the processing fees associated with ARO Scholars donations on the organization's website. The Executive Office will investigate any fees and if possible, remove them.

Executive Office Updates

The Executive Office shared that all Childcare Grants were accepted, the ARO Scholars awardees have been selected, and travel award notifications have been sent out. The group acknowledged the institutions from which awardees were selected and confirmed the number of applications received, along with a breakdown of awards.

Visa Notification for International Attendees

Dr. Sunil Puria suggested that visa letters be sent to international attendees as soon as they submit an abstract and register for the meeting. The committee acknowledged that one generic letter may not address specific visa requirements for some members based on their local policies. This will be revisited to see if timelines can be shifted to better accommodate our visa seeking members.

Survey Draft Presentation

Dr. Bonnie Lau presented a new survey draft from the Long Range Planning Committee. Concerns were raised about the inclusion of open-ended questions, and the importance of feedback from committee chairs was emphasized. The group agreed on the need for clarity in survey questions to yield actionable results. The committee agreed on the importance of tracking first-time attendees for understanding the conference's reach and potential impact on grant applications.

The discussion shifted to accessibility issues, particularly regarding acoustics and mobility challenges in the poster room. Suggestions were made to ensure that venues are equipped to accommodate attendees with mobility difficulties.

Dr. Lau discussed the current survey response rate, which hovers around 30%. The group considered various incentives for completing surveys, such as raffles or discounts, to increase participation. The importance of anonymizing responses to encourage honest feedback was also highlighted. This means that incentives cannot be given on an individual basis.

Dr. Lau will send the link to the draft to be provided to the Council. The Council will provide feedback on the survey.

Future Conference Planning

The possibility of hosting the conference in San Francisco in 2030 was discussed, with a favorable offer on the table. The group considered breaking away from the traditional East-West rotation for event locations and discussed clauses in the contract that allow for cancellation without penalty if service issues arise at the 2027 meeting.

Conclusion and Next Steps

The meeting concluded with a discussion on adding MidWinter Meeting obligations to everyone's calendar for clarity and organization. The Executive Office will be updating the Council members calendars when the schedule is solidified.

Task List

1. Investigate the possibility of removing processing fees for donations.
2. Council to provide feedback on the survey draft.
3. Explore incentives for increasing survey response rates.