ARO Council Meeting
Wednesday, November 6, 2024, 12P-1P EST

Attendees:

Sunil Puria	Katharine Fernandez	
Radha Kalluri	Brandon Cox	
Mike Bowl	Avril Genene Holt	
Lisa Olson	Kristin Johnson, Executive Office	

Apologies:

Anna Lysakowski		
Ronna Hertzano		
Yuri Agrawal		

Minutes:

Updates on ARO Initiatives

The group discussed several updates, including the preparation of election materials, the closure of applications for childcare grants and the ARO Scholars program, and the record number of poster abstracts received this year. Additionally, there is an initiative underway to organize a short course on artificial intelligence, featuring four speakers. This is being organized by the Program Committee co-chairs, Dr. Brandon Cox and Dr. Jeff Holt.

Dr. Puria's Visit to NIDCD

Dr. Sunil Puria shared insights from his recent visit to the NIDCD campus, where he met with Dr. Deb Tucci. They discussed the importance of supporting clinician scientists and enhancing participation from minority groups in the field which aligns with the ARO Scholar program. The conversation also highlighted the necessity of negotiating government rates for hotel bookings to benefit participants. The Executive Office noted that government rate rooms are part of our negotiating process, and they will prioritize this moving forward.

Site Visit to San Francisco

The site visit to San Francisco for the 2027 MidWinter Meeting was reported positively, with a focus on safety, food availability, and nearby attractions, including the Museum of Modern Art. The ambassador program in downtown San Francisco was praised for enhancing both the experience and safety of tourists.

The group reviewed the food and beverage expenditure for the 2027 contract, noting a food & beverage minimum of $150,000 for 2027. It was emphasized that individual member spending is not included in the contracted minimum. Suggestions were made to educate members on how location choices impact ARO financials.

Council confirmed the selection of the San Francisco Marriott Marquis for the 2027 meeting via majority vote.

Funding Requests and Political Concerns

A discussion was continued regarding the funding aspect of the spARO proposal to work with Planned Parenthood and Equality Florida, with a proposal for $10,000 for donations and booths. The booths were discussed at the last meeting and ruled out. Concerns were raised about the potential politicization of the organization and the appropriateness of using

member funds for political causes or statements. The group agreed to not use association funds for political donations but allowed for individual contributions through the existing Social Offset campaign.

Symposium Funding Approval

Dr. Puria requested funding for his Presidential Symposium on hearing aids, which was approved by the group, acknowledging an oversight in the new funding policy that must be corrected so that funds are set aside for the Presidential Symposium in the future. The symposium will feature various speakers, with funding estimates for domestic and international speakers set between $5000-$7000.

Abstract Publication and JARO Booth Approval

The group discussed the publication of abstracts, deciding to publish only titles and authors again this year due to cost concerns. ARO's publisher Springer has agreed to increase the number of complimentary pages to 80 if only titles and authors are published. Additionally, approval was granted for JARO to have a booth at the upcoming meeting with ARO covering the cost of a branded tablecloth. The Executive Office noted that a quote has already been obtained for the tablecloth at $500.00.

ARO Scholars Program and Grant Application

The ARO Scholars Program aims to support individuals from diverse backgrounds. The council approved the submission of a grant application for the NIDCD R25 program by February 5th, with discussions on securing long-term support for the program and the potential inclusion of international students in the future. Dr. Avril Genene Holt has volunteered to oversee the grant application as the PI. She will begin working closely with the Diversity & Minority Affairs Committee ARO Scholars task group to prepare the application. Council was supportive of this assignment. It was noted the Dr. Deb Tucci is supportive of this grant application.

Meeting Rescheduling

The next two meetings will be rescheduled due to holidays. Both the November and December meetings will be moved up one week. to accommodate the holiday season.

Task List:

1. Finalize and distribute election materials.
2. Organize the artificial intelligence short course.
3. Prepare for the symposium on hearing aids.
4. Submit the NIDCD R25 grant application by February 5th.