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

Attendees:

Sunil Puria	Katharine Fernandez	
Radha Kalluri	Brandon Cox	
Ronna Hertzano	Yuri Agrawal	
Mike Bowl	Anna Lysakowski	
Kristin Johnson, Executive Office	Laura Reynolds, Executive Office	
Jesse Howard, Executive Office		

Apologies:

Avril Genene Holt		
Lisa Olson		

Minutes:

Role Clarification for Liaison to the Travel Awards Committee

Kate Fernandez inquired about her responsibilities as a liaison to the Travel Awards Committee. It was clarified that while she should not participate in voting, her role is to serve as a resource for the committee, contributing to discussions and providing support and advocacy as needed.

Clarification on External Relations Committee & Communications Committee Strategic Charges

The conversation shifted to discussing some questions Mike Bowl had as chair of the Communications Committee, which absorbed the External Relations Committee (ERC) this year. There were questions around the liaison and ambassador positions which both center on outreach efforts, particularly the importance of building relationships with organizations like the Society for Neuroscience and the American Hearing Research Foundation. Members proposed drafting letters to potential partners to explore collaborative opportunities, such as sponsoring travel awards, an ARO Scholar, or collaborating on joint initiatives. The focus was on fostering personal connections rather than relying on formal outreach methods, so the committee/liaison may rely less on a formal letter and more on a personalized approach to proactively establish connections with other groups. Hyperacusis Research, Tinnitus Hub, American Tinnitus Association, RNID, RAISN, Inner Ear Biology Workshop, and Hearing Loss Association of America were all mentioned as groups to reach out to. The Executive Office will put together a shared document for the Council to continue to work on the list of groups to contact as well as provide feedback on how to best combine the ERC and Communications Committee strategic charges.

2025 Budget Review & Vote to Approve

The budget was reviewed with few questions from the group. It was noted that the budget does include the requested 5% increase in the PMG management in the contract renewal memo to be discussed later in the meeting. The group voted to unanimously approve the proposed 2025 budget.

spARO Survey Clarifications

Confusion arose regarding a safety survey sent out by spARO, particularly concerning the inability to opt out of certain questions. The Executive Office noted that spARO had since updated the survey, but it was agreed that surveys submitted before the update should not be included in the data due to potential inaccuracies. It was also noted that the survey was sent out to the Council for input/approval prior to it being sent out to membership but that it may have been confused

with the Long Range Planning Survey review. It was decided that the Secretary or Communications Chair will review future surveys before distribution to ensure clarity and avoid these issue in the future.

2025 PMG Contract Renewal
The financial outlook remains positive, with increased sponsorships contributing to stability. The proposed 5% increase in management fees due to expansion in the scope of work was discussed, alongside the necessity of exploring additional revenue sources, such as expanded sponsorship packages and yearly satellite symposiums. The group did not vote to approve the renewal as proposed and instead requested that a multi-year contract be drafted instead of continuing with a year to year contract with PMG. Jesse Howard of the Executive Office will work on this draft and be in touch with the Council to discuss further. It was also noted that an updated scope of work would be drafted. This will guide future decision making processes to ensure a proactive approach to avoiding scope creep or, conversely, planning for expanded scope.

Waived Registration Request
A request for a waived registration promo code for a hardship situation was approved, allowing Clare Thibodeaux of Cures Within Reach to attend the MidWinter Meeting.

Hair Ball DJ
Laura of the Executive Office asking the Council what an acceptable decibel range is for the DJ to adhere to at the Hair Ball. It was agreed to maintain decibel levels between 90 and 95, balancing the need for a lively atmosphere with responsible noise management. It was noted that ear plugs will be available as well.

Task List
1. Kate Fernandez to serve as a resource for the Travel Awards Committee.
2. Mike Bowl to focus on recovery and take necessary time off.
3. Address hotel booking issues for the upcoming event.
4. Ensure a quorum is present for contract renewal discussions.
5. Draft letters to potential partner organizations for collaboration.
6. Track demographic information of event withdrawals for future reference.
7. Review and update survey processes to avoid confusion.
8. Explore additional revenue sources and sponsorship opportunities.
9. Finalize the 3-year contract renewal with Jesse Howard.
10. Monitor and manage decibel levels for the upcoming event DJ.

Next Meeting: [Insert Date and Time]
Location: [Insert Location/Platform]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.