ARO Council Meeting
Thursday, September 26, 2024, 2P-3P EST

Attendees:

Sunil Puria	Katharine Fernandez	
Anna Lysakowski	Brandon Cox	
Mike Bowl	Kristin Johnson, Executive Office	
Ronna Hertzano		
Yuri Agrawal		
Radha Kalluri		
Lisa Olson		
Avril Genene Holt		

Apologies:

Minutes:

San Francisco 2027 Site Considerations

The conversation shifted to the upcoming Association for Research in Otolaryngology (ARO) conference, with San Francisco being considered as a potential site. Concerns regarding crime in the area were raised, although the hotel representatives assured that improvements had been made. The importance of conducting site visits before signing contracts was emphasized, drawing on past experiences where such diligence proved beneficial. A decision was made to proceed with a site visit in October, pending contract confirmation, with a vote taken and agreed upon by all members present.

Budget Review and Financial Planning

The meeting then transitioned to a review of the budget for the upcoming year. Key expenses, including audiovisual (AV) costs and food and beverage allocations, were discussed. The group reflected on past budget overages and the potential use of reserve funds if necessary. A conservative approach to budgeting was agreed upon, especially in light of uncertainties affecting income projections due to returning to Florida and election unease. The Executive Office will monitor registration stats as they come in and compare to previous years. Given the increased number of poster submissions this year, both will be used to update the budget. Council will vote on the budget at the December meeting.

Travel Award Policy Changes

The Travel Award Committee announced a policy change stating that graduate students who receive a travel award will not be eligible for another until they reach the postdoctoral stage. A survey was sent to individuals who did not reapply for travel awards to understand their reasons. The committee noted an increase in applicants compared to available awards, indicating a need for careful consideration of applications, particularly from underrepresented communities.

Conference Registration and Program Book Sales

The number of submitted posters for the conference has surpassed last year's figures, indicating strong interest. A marketing campaign will be launched to encourage registration, particularly for those hesitant to attend in person. Program books will be sold for $15 each, with pre-paid commitments required for orders.

Lunch Options and Event Planning

Concerns were raised regarding lunch options for attendees at the upcoming event in Florida. The upgraded dining options at the hotel, including a grab-and-go market, were discussed, alongside previous experiences with box lunches. The need to ensure that lunch options do not incur additional costs or penalties was highlighted. A decision was made to charge $10 for Young Investigators' Luncheon tickets to mitigate waste from no-shows.

spARO Proposal

A proposal from spARO to partner with Planned Parenthood and Equality Florida with funds allocated for donations to both as well as complimentary booths included in the exhibitor area. However, concerns were raised about the potential politicization of the meeting and the discomfort it may cause among members. The group debated the appropriateness of having booths for these organizations at the meeting, ultimately deciding that voluntary donations via the existing Social Offset campaign would suffice without making the event overtly political.

Task List

1. Schedule site visit to San Francisco in October
2. Review and finalize the budget for the upcoming year
3. Continue working with Florida hotel to ensure food options are planned to accommodate attendees