spARO August Meeting Minutes
Thursday, August 22, 2024

Minutes:

The executive office provided an update on the new student volunteer program for the MidWinter Meeting. This initiative aims to improve conference accessibility and attract younger members, such as first-time undergraduate students. Benefits for volunteers include a free 2025 student membership and a 50% discount on 2025 meeting registration. Although this program has not yet been approved by the ARO Council, the executive office will keep the committee informed on its progress. The committee agreed to review the applications if needed.

The executive office presented a demo of the new committee member portal. This portal, accessible only to active ARO committee members, provides key resources, including past minutes and other relevant materials.

George discussed the need for podium session moderators for the upcoming ARO MidWinter Meeting and requested interested candidates to contact him by November 1st. Moderators will be responsible for managing the session on the day but will not handle speaker coordination. The ARO is particularly interested in trainees and junior faculty, who will be paired with more senior faculty.

Updates from ARO committees included the following:

- **Membership Committee:** Working on initiatives to reduce membership fees for first-year students and attract younger members to ARO.
- **Education Committee:** Seeking suggested speakers for future seminar series and progressing with a new hearing science initiative set to start in March.
- **Accessibility Committee:** Planning to submit proposals for 2025 symposia and organizing a coffee hour in early 2025 to address poster accessibility.

The committee also discussed the scheduling of spARO Sessions for the MidWinter Meeting. Due to space constraints, most sessions will be virtual. However, key in-person events, such as the LGBTQ+ social and the spARO Town Hall, will be prioritized.