ARO Council Meeting
January 23, 2025

Date: January 23, 2025
Participants: Anna Lysakowski, Kristin Johnson, Avril Genene Holt, Kate Fernandez, Jesse Howard, Sunil Puria, Mike Bowl, Jeff Holt, Ronna Hertzano

Minutes:

1. Virtual Participation and AV Quotes
   - Summary: Discussions about the possibility of virtual participation and pre-recorded talks due to the communication freeze at NIH. Additional AV quotes were obtained, but the hybrid meeting option was deemed too expensive.
   - Decisions Made: Pre-recorded talks will be an option for impacted NIH/NIDCD attendees and moved to the end of sessions to accommodate potential changes in directives. This eliminates gaps in the sessions and allows for the session to end early if pre-recorded talks cannot be provided.
   - Action Items: Kristin to send out the plan via email and ensure pre-recorded talks are offered, and if allowed, scheduled at the end of sessions.

2. Impact of Communication and Travel Bans
   - Summary: Jesse Howard and others discussed the impact of the communication and travel bans on various conferences and meetings. There was uncertainty about the approval process for travel exceptions.
   - Decisions Made: None.
   - Action Items: None.

3. Plans for ARO MidWinter Meeting (MWM)
   - Summary: Discussions about the number of impacted presentations and posters, and the plans to accommodate pre-recorded talks and e-posters if the communication freeze is lifted before the MWM. For impacted attendees, in-person registrations to be converted to main session recording registrations allowing them access to e-posters and session recordings after the meeting. The Executive Office will also hang any posters that impacted presenters would like to ship to the venue hotel.
   - Decisions Made: Impacted presentations will be moved to the end of sessions as previously outlined. E-posters will be uploaded and accessible after the meeting. These options are pending the lift of the communication freeze.
   - Action Items: Executive Office to coordinate the upload of e-posters and manage the conversion of registrations to main session recording access.

4. Hotel and Travel Arrangements
   - Summary: Concerns about hotel reservations and the possibility of claiming force majeure due to the travel bans. Discussions about the cancellation policies and the potential impact on room blocks.
   - Decisions Made: Laura will follow up with the hotel regarding leniency on attrition and cancellation policies.
   - Action Items: Laura to communicate with the hotel and request leniency on attrition and cancellation policies.

5. R25 Grant Proposal
   - Summary: Avril Genene Holt provided an update on the R25 grant proposal for ARO Scholars. She discussed meetings with Ruth Litovsky and Monita Chatterjee for feedback and the need for additional team members to work on the proposal.
   - Decisions Made: A meeting will be scheduled at the MWM to discuss the proposal further. Kristin will arrange a room for this meeting.
   - Action Items:
     - Kristin and Laura to arrange a room for the meeting at ARO.

- Avril to send out an email to potential team members.

6. Membership Committee Proposal

- **Summary:** The Membership Committee proposed extending free student memberships for the first year to encourage membership from developing countries and smaller institutions.
- **Decisions Made:** The proposal will be considered further, with a suggestion to target specific areas or countries each year based on need using World Bank data as a determining factor.
- **Action Items:** Kristin to research the World Bank approach and gather more information on how other groups implement similar initiatives.

7. Travel Awards and Impact of Bans

- **Summary:** Discussions about the impact of travel bans on travel award recipients and the possibility of awarding certificates without the monetary award if recipients cannot attend the meeting.
- **Decisions Made:** Certificates will be awarded (mailed if needed), but the monetary award cannot be issued if the awardee cannot attend in person.
- **Action Items:** Kristin to ensure certificates are mailed to award recipients who cannot attend.