Meeting Name: ARO Accessibility and Accommodations Committee Meeting
Date: July 16, 2025
Attendees: Julia Huyck (chair), Sammi Stiepan, Patricia Aguiar, Cunningham Christopher L., Ram Ramachandran, Aravind Chenrayan Govindaraju, Brandon Paul, Rhiannon McNeely (executive office)

1. Welcome and Introductions
Summary:
The committee began with introductions and a warm welcome to the first meeting of the 2025–2026 academic year. An overview of the committee's work was provided, which includes making recommendations to ARO regarding accessibility, reviewing attendee feedback, and ensuring the availability of both human and AI-generated captioning. Also highlighted was the committee's ongoing focus on supporting individuals with hearing and visual impairments and emphasized the importance of incorporating universal design principles in all planning efforts.

Decisions Made:

- Continue focusing on hearing and visual impairments.
- Emphasize universal design principles.

Action Items:

- None specified.

2. Impressions of the 2025 MidWinter Meeting
Summary:
The committee discussed their experiences at the 2025 MidWinter Meeting. It was noted that some poster sessions had low attendance, and the star system used for evaluating posters did not appear to engage participants effectively. While some attendees appreciated receiving feedback, others were discouraged by ratings of fewer than three stars. A suggestion was made to provide more specific, constructive feedback to help participants improve their presentations.

Decisions Made:

- Consider providing more specific feedback instead of just star ratings next year.
- Consider utilizing a Google form for evaluations next year.

Action Items:

- Committee to brainstorm ways to provide more specific feedback at the 2026 MidWinter Meeting.

3. Setting Priorities for the Coming Year

Summary:

The committee discussed priorities for the upcoming year, including refining the poster evaluation process and exploring the possibility of hosting a dedicated session at ARO in 2027. Members also suggested identifying local accessibility experts to connect with during the 2027 meeting in California. Additionally, the committee considered offering office hours ahead of the conference to provide feedback on posters in advance.

Decisions Made:

- Identify local experts in accessibility for the 2027 MidWinter Meeting.
- Consider hosting office hours for poster feedback for the 2026 MidWinter Meeting.

Action Items:

- Committee members to identify potential local experts in accessibility.
- Committee members to host office hours for poster feedback.

Next Committee Meeting

Wednesday, August 20, 2025, 3:00-4:00 PM EST