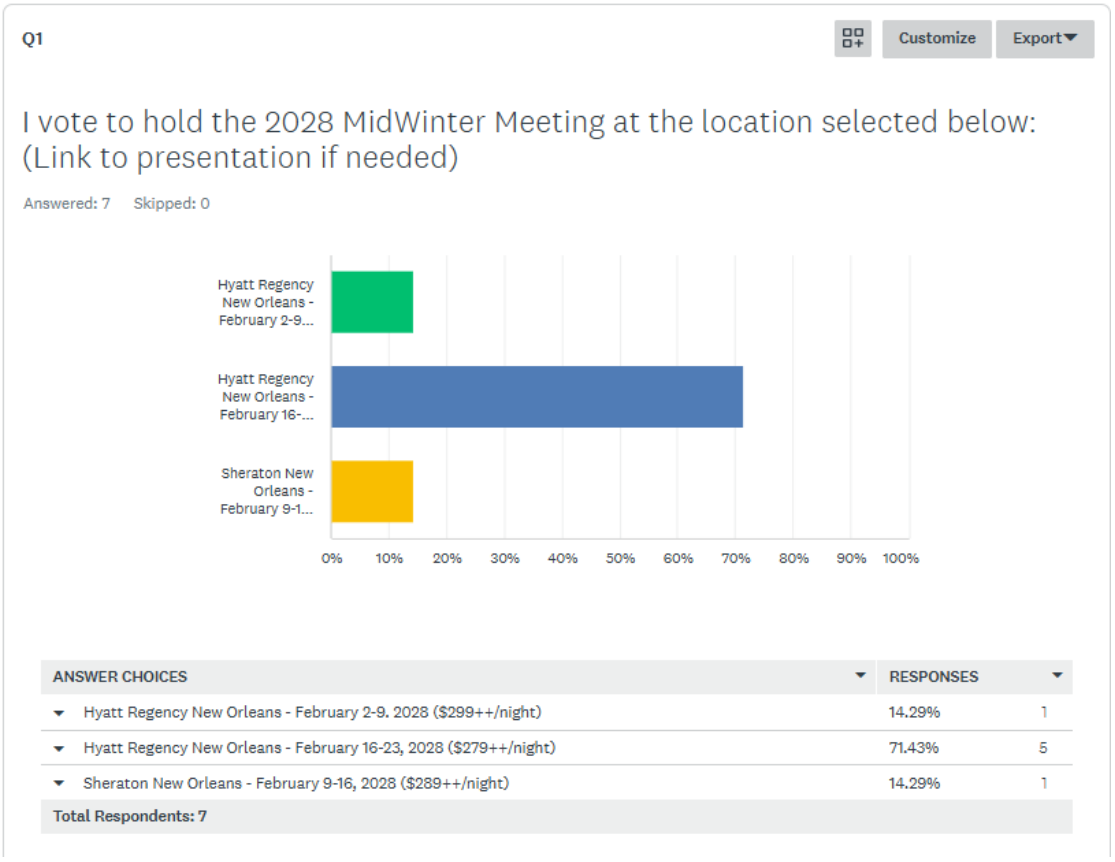
ARO Council Meeting Minutes

Date: August 29, 2025
Time: 2:00 PM
Location: Virtual
Attendees: Kristin Johnson, Ronna Hertzano, Yuri Agrawal, Mike Bowl, Jeffrey Holt, Anna Lysakowski, Radha Kalluri, Lisa Cunningham, Katharine Fernandez, Avril Genene Holt

1. 2028 Meeting Venue Confirmation

Summary:

Kristin Johnson confirmed that the Hyatt Regency New Orleans was selected as the venue for the 2028 ARO meeting. The decision was based on favorable pricing, a large government room block, and affordable student accommodations. The vote was carried out virtually with an anonymous ballot on SurveyMonkey.



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Hyatt Regency New Orleans - February 2-9, 2028 ($299++/night)	14.29%	1
Hyatt Regency New Orleans - February 16-23, 2028 ($279++/night)	71.43%	5
Sheraton New Orleans - February 9-16, 2028 ($289++/night)	14.29%	1
Total Respondents: 7		

Decisions Made:

- Hyatt Regency New Orleans confirmed as the 2028 meeting venue.

- Venue dates set for June 16–23, 2028.

Action Items:

- Kristin to coordinate next steps with venue representatives.
- Laura Reynolds to finalize room block arrangements.

2. Award of Merit Talks Planning

Summary:
The Council discussed logistics for the Award of Merit presentations. Alfred Nuttall will provide a pre-recorded talk due to his inability to attend in person. Paul Fuchs, last year's recipient who could not present last year due to illness, will be given the in-person Award Ceremony slot this year. Multiple options were considered for scheduling, including placing Fuchs' talk at the end of the late-breaking news session. Dr. Nuttall's talk will be advertised widely leading up to and during the meeting and will be the first Award of Merit talk enshrined on the website to begin the tradition of archiving these talks for future generations. Dr. Nuttall's nominators will still receive a slot to introduce Dr. Nuttall and share where his talk can be found online. The slot will be the same as usual – up to 5 minutes and up to 3 slides.

Decisions Made:

- Alfred Nuttall's talk will be pre-recorded and made available online.
- Paul Fuchs will present in person during the Award Ceremony.
- Ronna Hertzano will record an introduction for Nuttall's talk, to be edited into the beginning of the recorded talk.
- Archive of Award of Merit talks to be maintained on the website.

Action Items:

- Executive Office to splice Ronna's intro into Nuttall's recording.
- Executive Office to ensure visibility of the recording on the website and meeting app.
- Executive Office to begin archiving Award of Merit talks from 2020 onward.

3. Midwinter Meeting Passport Initiative

Summary:
Kristin proposed reinstating the Midwinter Meeting Passport to encourage engagement with

exhibitors and key sessions. Attendees would collect stamps or scan QR codes for a digital passport as they leave required sessions and visit booths, with completed passports eligible for prizes. Everyone that submits a completed passport receives a drink ticket for the Hair Ball. Other prizes to be determined.

Decisions Made:

- Passport program to be reinstated.
- Attendees must attend at least two of three key sessions (Business Meeting, Award of Merit, Presidential Symposium) to qualify.
- Prizes may include drink tickets, free registration, or donated items.

Action Items:

- Executive Office to explore digital and analog passport options.
- Executive Office to coordinate with exhibitors for stamp/QR code logistics.
- Executive Office to ensure non-alcoholic options are available for drink tickets.
- Executive Office to investigate custom ARO-themed drink accessories (e.g., ear stirrers).

4. Business Meeting Content Updates

Summary:
The Council reviewed proposed changes to the Business Meeting to improve engagement. Updates include longer time for the NIDCD Director's talk, a spARO committee update, and more formal recognition of Presidential Citation recipients.

Decisions Made:

- Extend NIDCD Director's talk to 12–15 minutes.
- Include spARO Chair update.
- Introduce formal certificate presentation for Presidential Citations.
- Remove "passing of the gavel" from Business Meeting; move to Award of Merit ceremony.
- Financial report to be modernized with QR codes and optional printed copies.

Action Items:

- Executive Office to draft new Business Meeting schedule.

- Executive Office to coordinate with spARO Chair and NIDCD Director as well as other speakers.
- Executive Office to prepare certificates and manage presentation logistics.
- Executive Office to provide QR codes and printed financial summaries.

5. Bylaws Review

Summary:
The Council reviewed several proposed updates to the ARO Bylaws for clarity and modernization. Topics included membership eligibility, voting rights, committee structure, and term dates.

Decisions Made:

- Remove requirement for new members to be sponsored by existing members.
- Maintain current policy: senior members do not vote.
- Add language to include ARO Scholars PI in documented Council seats.
- Standardize term end dates to March 1 for reporting consistency.
- Update the Nominating Committee structure to include at least five regular members, with two elected and two appointed.

Action Items:

- Executive Office to draft slate to be included with the election in November.

6. Clinical Content and Attendance Strategy

Summary:
Ronna Hertzano updated the Council on efforts to increase clinician engagement. An effort will be made to schedule more clinical content over the opening weekend of the meeting. A second plenary session was proposed but deferred to 2027 due to logistical constraints. Concerns about attendance prompted discussion of proactive communication strategies.

Decisions Made:

- Effort will be made to shift clinical content to Saturday and Sunday.
- Second plenary session proposal deferred to 2027.
- Council to draft a letter promoting meeting highlights to boost attendance.

Action Items:

- Program Committee to accommodate shifting clinical content to the beginning of the meeting as much as is possible and reasonable.
- Ronna and Lisa to draft promotional letter for membership.
- Kristin to monitor attendance trends and finalize budget scenarios.

Summary

The meeting addressed key planning items for the upcoming ARO events, including venue confirmation, Award of Merit logistics, engagement initiatives like the passport program, updates to the Business Meeting, and a comprehensive bylaws review. The council also discussed strategies to enhance clinician participation and manage attendance concerns.

Decisions Made (Consolidated)

- Alfred Nuttall's talk to be pre-recorded and archived online.
- Paul Fuchs to present in person.
- Reinstate Midwinter Meeting Passport with session attendance requirements.
- Extend NIDCD Director's talk to 12-15 minutes and include a few minutes for an update from the spARO Chair in the Business Meeting agenda.
- Formalize Presidential Citations with certificates in the Business Meeting.
- Remove "passing of the gavel" from Business Meeting and add to Award Ceremony.
- Modernize financial reporting in Business Meeting with QR codes and optional printouts.
- Draft slate of proposed changes to the Bylaws to be included in the election ballot in November.
- Attempt to shift clinical content early in the meeting.
- Defer second plenary session to 2027.
- Draft promotional letter to encourage attendance.

Action Items (Consolidated)

- Executive Office to manage Award of Merit recording and archiving.
- Executive Office to implement passport program logistics and explore digital options.
- Executive Office to prepare updated Business Meeting schedule and materials.
- Executive Office to monitor attendance markers and finalize budget scenarios.
- Ronna Hertzano and Lisa Cunningham to draft promotional letter.

- Program Committee to adjust clinical content scheduling.