ARO Communications Committee Meeting Minutes

Date: August 28, 2025
Attendees: Kristin Johnson, Mike Bowl, Francisco Barros, Barbara Vona, Hainan Lang, Farideh Moeinvaziri, Sujata Pandey, Ruben Stepanyan, Nicolas Grillet, James Dias

1. Educational Outreach Slide Development

Summary:
Francisco Barros presented a draft plan for the educational outreach initiative targeting second-grade students. The presentation focused on teaching basic concepts of sound, hearing mechanisms, and hearing protection. The team discussed slide content, interactive activities, and strategies to make the material engaging and memorable for young children. Suggestions included using relatable comparisons, incorporating a song, and ensuring simplicity in activities.

Decisions Made:

- Educational content will include basic sound concepts, hearing mechanisms, and hearing protection.
- Activities will include paper cup telephones, tuning forks, tone games, and trivia.
- A drawing activity featuring healthy vs. damaged hair cells will be included.
- A song may be developed to reinforce key messages.
- Comparisons between children's hearing and their grandparents' hearing will be added**.**

Action Items:

- Francisco to finalize slide content and activity list.
- Hainan Lang to design and print drawing sheets for the hair cell activity.
- Team to explore composing a simple educational song.
- Francisco to incorporate age-related hearing comparisons into the presentation.
- Kristin to assist with logistics and materials as needed.

2. Mini Grant Program Update

Summary:
Nicolas Grillet provided updates on the mini grant program, including feedback from past awardees and current application status. Two successful projects were highlighted: Agudemu's cochlear implant awareness website and Leslie Gonzalez's traveling outreach booth. The

committee discussed system issues affecting application tracking and tax implications for award recipients.

Decisions Made:

- Mini grant program is considered successful with current awardees.
- Website updates will include clearer expectations for applicants tied to existing programs.
- Tax implications for awardees will be reviewed with accounting.
- Promotion will be increased at the Midwinter Meeting.

Action Items:

- Kristin to consult ARO accounting lead regarding payment structures and tax thresholds.
- Nicolas to maintain an Excel tracker for all mini grant applications.
- Kristin to update website language to clarify expectations for applicants.
- Farideh Moeinvaziri to promote the mini grant program via departmental Slack channel.
- Kristin to include mini grant updates in the next newsletter and social media posts.
- Committee to brainstorm promotional materials for the Midwinter Meeting.

3. Communications for Midwinter Meeting

Summary:
Kristin Johnson led a discussion on communications strategy for the upcoming Midwinter Meeting, particularly addressing concerns from international members. The group emphasized the importance of neutrality and fact-based messaging while acknowledging the need for supportive resources. Suggestions included advising members to consult their university's international office and local embassies.

Decisions Made:

- ARO will remain neutral and fact-driven in communications.
- Travel guidance will include reminders to consult institutional international offices.
- Additional resources will be provided to help members navigate travel logistics.

Action Items:

- Kristin to update communications to include guidance for international attendees.

- Kristin to ensure travel FAQs and guides are accessible on the ARO website.

Summary

The meeting focused on three key areas: development of educational outreach materials for young students, updates and feedback on the mini grant program, and communications planning for the upcoming Midwinter Meeting. The committee emphasized clarity, accessibility, and member support across all initiatives.

Decisions Made (Consolidated)

- Educational outreach will include sound basics, hearing protection, and interactive activities.
- Drawing and song components will be added to enhance engagement.
- Mini grant program is successful and will remain open until funds are exhausted.
- Website updates will clarify expectations for mini grant applicants.
- Tax implications for mini grant awardees will be reviewed.

Action Items (Consolidated)

- Francisco Barros: Finalize outreach slides and activities; add age-related hearing comparisons.
- Hainan Lang: Design and print hair cell drawing sheets.
- Kristin Johnson: Coordinate logistics; consult accounting on mini grant payment structures; update website and communications.
- Nicolas Grillet: Maintain application tracker; provide updated mini grant language for website and application.
- Farideh Moeinvaziri: Share mini grant opportunity via Slack.
- Committee Members: Share travel resources and feedback; assist with outreach promotion.