

Name: Lavinia Sheets, PhD

Location: St. Louis, MO, USA

Title: Associate Professor, Washington University in St. Louis

Prior and Current Service to ARO:

2018-2021	Member, External Relations Committee
2020-2024	Faculty Mentor, spARO
2025-	Member, Program Committee

Research Interests: My research group is interested in understanding the mechanisms of damage to hair-cell organs overexposed to mechanical trauma or ototoxic chemotherapy drugs, and discovering cellular processes that drive repair following damage. We use zebrafish as a model for human hearing and balance. You can learn more about us here: <https://sheetslab.net/>

Personal interests: I enjoy hiking, karaoke, road trips, and petting cats.

Statement of Goals: I have been a member of ARO for over 15 years, beginning as a postdoctoral trainee. Trained as a neuroscientist and cell biologist, my first exposure to the auditory research community came through the ARO midwinter meeting. What drew me in—and ultimately cemented my commitment to work as an otolaryngology researcher in the hearing and balance space—was the community's enthusiasm for diverse scientific approaches (including my use of larval zebrafish to understand sensory organs in the human ear) combined with the genuine support and approachability of both clinicians and scientists.

As a member of ARO, I have previously contributed to two initiatives I value: communicating our research effectively to the public through my work on the External Relations Committee, and supporting our talented trainees as the faculty representative for the student, postdoc, resident, and fellow chapter of ARO (spARO). In these current times of uncertainty for scientific research, I believe that continued support of trainees and junior faculty, alongside effective public communication about the importance of our work, are critical components of our mission. Additionally, I am committed to strengthening initiatives that demonstrate our organization's dedication to supporting scientists and clinicians from diverse identities and backgrounds to ensure everyone in our research community thrives and succeeds. Finally, as a current member of the Program Committee, I am deeply committed to maintaining the high quality and scientific rigor of our Midwinter

meeting, ensuring it remains the vibrant hub of scientific exchange and collaboration that first drew me to this field.