

ARO 49th MidWinter Meeting

PUERTO RICO CONVENTION CENTER
FEBRUARY 7-11, 2026

Program Book



**SAN JUAN,
PUERTO RICO**

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HERTZANO**
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(2025-2026)*



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*Communications
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DABDOUB**
*Council Member
(2025-2028)*

WELCOME, FROM THE ARO PRESIDENT



Welcome to the 2026 Association for Research in Otolaryngology (ARO) MidWinter Meeting! We are thrilled to welcome you to San Juan, Puerto Rico!

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to the 49th Association for Research in Otolaryngology (ARO) MidWinter Meeting (MWM), held for the first time on the beautiful island of Puerto Rico.

The ARO MWM is the largest international scientific meeting dedicated to hearing and balance, bringing together both clinicians and scientists. While the meeting has traditionally included a modest clinical component, a review of this year's program highlights multiple sessions, particularly during the first and second days, in which the bench truly meets the bedside. These sessions showcase work that has progressed from the laboratory to the clinic and, in many cases, is now advancing through various stages of clinical trials. As a member of this society for over 25 years, it is truly remarkable to witness how far our field has come, from gene identification, to the development of mouse models to molecular, central and peripheral physiological analyses, to successful gene therapy in animals, and now successful implementation in humans.

At a time marked by significant changes in the research funding environment, our society has never been stronger. This year's meeting reflects record engagement, with over 1,100 abstract submissions, resulting in over 200 oral presentations and nearly 900 poster presentations. The program is a testament to the resilience, creativity, and scientific rigor of our members. It also reflects the spirit of friendship and collaboration that defines ARO—collaboration being the central theme of this year's Presidential Symposium.

The Presidential Symposium, entitled *The Power of Collaboration*, celebrates the impact of breaking boundaries and sharing expertise and is divided into two parts. Part I, *Let's Atlas Ear*, begins with a keynote address by Mike Hawrylycz (Allen Institute), highlighting the achievements of the BICCN [BRAIN Initiative Cell Census Network] and the BICAN [BRAIN Initiative® Cell Atlas Network] consortia and their transformative contributions to our understanding of the brain. This is followed by a panel of speakers from our field who will illustrate collaborative efforts to map, characterize, and interpret the complexity of the inner ear. Part II, *From Genetic Testing to Patient Registries*, opens with a keynote address by James Beck (Parkinson's Foundation), who launched PD GENERation: Mapping the Future of Parkinson's Disease. This session is followed by a panel highlighting global collaborative initiatives aimed at overcoming bottlenecks in genetic testing, improving patient identification, and expanding access to personalized interventions for hearing and balance disorders.

I would also like to draw your attention to several key events throughout the meeting: the Welcome Reception on Saturday in the poster hall; the General Assembly on Sunday, where we will learn about the society and its journal, honor Presidential Citation awardees, and hear an address from

WELCOME, FROM THE ARO PRESIDENT



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Dr. Deb Tucci, Director of the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders (NIDCD) at the National Institutes of Health (NIH); and the ARO Awards Ceremony on Monday, during which we will honor recipients of the ARO Award of Merit, Young Investigator Award, Pioneer Award in Basic Science, wonderful opportunity to reflect on the history and future of our field. Importantly, this year we will also hold two **Memorial Symposia** in honor of Bertrand Delgutte, and A. James Hudspeth as well as two **Honorary Symposia** to highlight the work of Donald Caspary and John C. Middlebrooks. Finally, do not miss the Hair Ball on Tuesday night—this year with special surprises in store.

ARO is much more than an annual meeting. It is a vibrant organization supported by 12 committees and 262 dedicated members who work year-round on a broad range of initiatives, including communication, long range planning, travel awards, education, and program development, to name a few. This year's program committee, led by Jeff Holt, Brandon Cox, and Sonja Pyott, worked tirelessly to build the podium and poster sessions that form the heart and soul of the meeting. They deserve a round of applause.

For many of us, ARO is also part of who we are—a society we deeply care about, where we honed our leadership skills, served on committees, met future mentors, and, for some, presented internationally for the very first time. For our young members, spARO (students and postdocs ARO) is an excellent way to get involved. spARO has representatives in all of the ARO working committees, providing our trainees an opportunity for both valuable input as well as leadership experience.

Finally, I would like to thank my colleagues on Council, as well as our past and future presidents, Sunil Puria and Lisa Cunningham, for their partnership and leadership throughout this year. A special thank-you goes to Executive Director Kristin Johnson from the Parthenon Management Group and her outstanding team, Member Services Manager Rhiannon McNeely, Content Manager Kayla Hill, and Meeting Manager Bri Garza, who work year-round at “ARO Headquarters” to bring this meeting to life.

It has been a special honor to serve you this year. I invite you to immerse yourself in a rich scientific experience, to bask in the light of knowledge, and to enjoy the warmth of friendship at our annual meeting in beautiful San Juan, Puerto Rico.

Sincerely,

Ronna

ARO President 2025-2026

About ARO

OUR HISTORY

The association was founded in 1973. It is under the direction of the ARO Council that consists of a President, a Past President, a President-Elect, a Secretary-Treasurer, a Communications Officer, a Program Committee chair, a Nomination Committee chair, and three Council Members At-Large, all of whom are elected from and by the membership. The functions of the organization are established through bylaws carried out with the help of committees and counsel from past presidents.

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

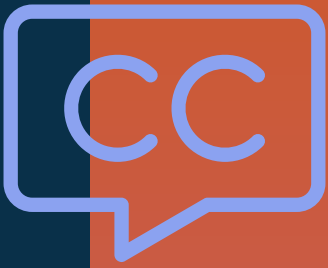
The mission of the Association shall be to encourage and promote basic and clinical research in the broad fields of Otolaryngology, hearing and balance science, and related areas. To achieve these objectives, and to foster collegial assembly and stimulate scientific collaboration among its members, the Association shall encourage year-round scientific engagement through meetings and other activities.

OUR VISION

Our vision is to pioneer inventive excellence in pure and applied science by nurturing researchers to perform the most rigorous and exciting science in the study of hearing and balance and related otolaryngological fields. We seek to use our collective knowledge to make fundamental discoveries and develop ground-breaking treatments that improve quality of life.

OUR CORE VALUES

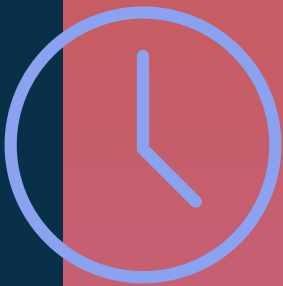
- **Science:** We promote rigorous original (same as mission) basic science and clinical research that moves forward our understanding of hearing and balance sciences and related fields. We strive to provide a forum for dissemination and meaningful discussion of results.
- **Diversity:** We acknowledge and honor the fundamental value and dignity of all individuals. We are committed to maintaining an inclusive environment that removes barriers and respects diverse people, approaches, and ideas.
- **Integrity:** We maintain the highest ethical standards in the collection, sharing and dissemination of research and champion best practices in both basic and clinical experimentation.
- **Collaboration:** We believe in listening and evolving together by embracing the exchange of ideas through initiatives including, but not limited to, interdisciplinary research, education, mentorship, and professional networking.
- **Education:** We support and empower our community by providing multi-faceted educational and mentorship opportunities relevant to early career professionals and throughout the career-span.



ARO is providing **Captioning** in all sessions and recordings.

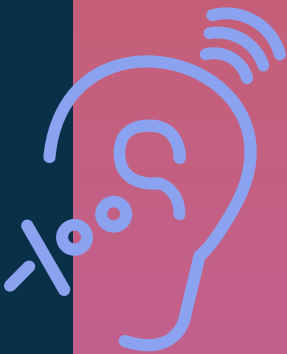


Recording Policy: ARO does not permit audio or photographic recording of any research data presented at the meeting—expect for individuals who may have difficulty understanding the speaker during their initial presentation.



Main Session Recordings

The Symposia and Podium sessions are being recorded and will be made available to all attendees after the meeting.



ARO has **Assisted Listening Devices** available. If you need assistance, please see ARO staff at the Registration Desk.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

View the online schedule for the most up-to-date times, room assignments, and speaker times. By expanding the speaker list you can see when each speaker is slotted to present.

You can add the sessions you don't want to miss to your personal calendar and view the 2026 MWM abstracts in the schedule too! Visit the online schedule and select 'Abstract/Session info' for any session to see all that was submitted!


For a full guide on the tools available to you in the schedule, [please see here.](#)

[View the Schedule](#)

8^{AM}

ARO Council Meeting (Invitation Only)


Fri 8 AM - 1 PM • Meeting Room 204, Floor 2

 add to calendar

12^{PM}

ARO Registration


Fri 12 PM - 6 PM • Floor 2 Foyer

 add to calendar

1^{PM}

PIHL Satellite Symposium


Fri 1 PM - 5 PM • Meeting Room 208ABC, Floor 2

 add to calendar

6:30^{PM}

ARO Council Dinner (Invitation Only)

Fri 6:30 PM - 8:30 PM

 add to calendar

7^{PM}

gEAR Session: Beginner Workshop - Introduction to gEAR

This introductory workshop provides a hands-on tour of the Gene Expression Analysis Resource (gEAR). Participants will learn how to create an account, navigate the user dashboard, and search across gEAR's growing library of datasets. We'll cover the basics of finding and viewing gene expression profiles, organizing results into lists, and exploring curated dataset collections.

Shifting then to more advanced applications, we will focus on tools like the single-cell workbench, spatial displays, and epigenomic browser and

Download the ARO Mobile App

Download the app to view the agenda, chat with fellow attendees, view posters, and more!

Search "ARO 2026"

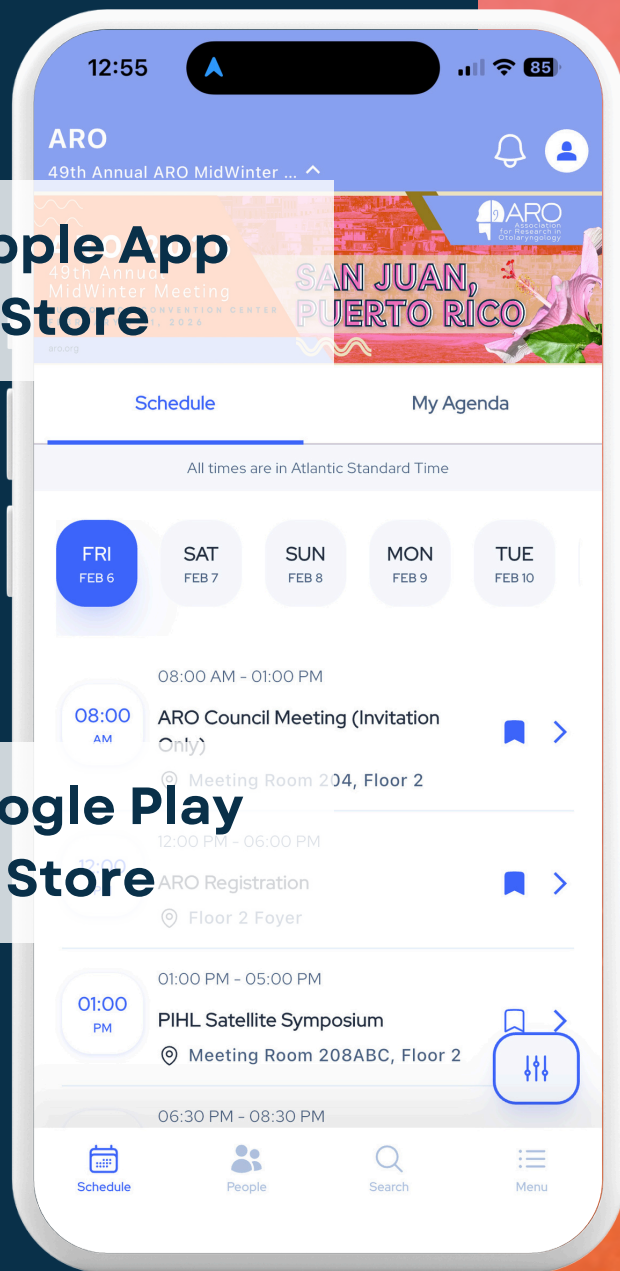


Apple App Store

Scan here!



Google Play Store



THE 2026 MIDWINTER MEETING LOCATION IS THE PUERTO RICAN CONVENTION CENTER!

ARO will take place at the Puerto Rico Convention Center on levels 2 and 3.

Located in the heart of San Juan, attendees will enjoy a modern, spacious facility with state-of-the-art technology, easy access to hotels, dining, and transportation, all designed to support productive sessions and meaningful connections.

Beyond the MidWinter Meeting walls, the Convention Center places attendees just minutes from Old San Juan, vibrant nightlife, beautiful beaches, and rich cultural experiences. With warm Caribbean weather, renowned cuisine, and a welcoming atmosphere, Puerto Rico offers the perfect blend of professional engagement and memorable destination appeal.

ADDRESS: 100 Convention Boulevard, San Juan, Puerto Rico USA

AVAILABLE ACCESSIBILITY & ACCOMMODATIONS

ARO has Assisted Listening Devices available at the registration desk should they be desired. Please come to the registration desk and speak with an ARO Staff member (wearing green) for assistance. Each meeting room has an assigned receiver for you to use for each session in that room.



Need to Check-In, Ask A Question, or Get Assistance? Find us at the ARO Registration Desk on Floor 2 of the Puerto Rico Convention Center during these hours:

- **Friday, February 6**, 12:00 PM - 6:00 PM
- **Saturday, February 7**, 7:00 AM - 7:00 PM
- **Sunday, February 8**, 7:00 AM - 6:00 PM,
- **Monday, February 9**, 7:00 AM - 5:30 PM
- **Tuesday, February 10**, 7:30 AM - 6:00 PM
- **Wednesday, February 11**, 7:30 AM - 12:00 PM

Outside of registration hours, email headquarters@aro.org.

JOIN THE CONVERSATION

ARO has gone social and we invite you to join the online conversation. Please be sure to follow/like the following ARO social media accounts:

[@ARO.official.news](https://www.instagram.com/ARO_official_news)

[@AROMWM](https://www.facebook.com/AROMWM)



Don't forget to use the hashtag #2026MWM if you post pictures or comments about the 2026 Meeting.

NURSING PARENTS

If you are in need of using the private nursing room, please ask a member of the ARO staff at the Registration Desk (wearing green).

POSTER PRESENTATION DETAILS

Posters are scheduled to remain on display for a duration of 23 hours. Outside of the designated presentation times, you are free to return to your poster at your convenience.

The Poster Hall will be open to attendees between the hours of 7AM – 11PM, with a 1- hour break every day between 11AM and 12 PM (Noon) to facilitate setup for the next poster session.

Schedule for assigned poster presentation sessions:

- Saturday, February 7– 1:00 pm to 2:30 pm
- Sunday, February 8 – 1:30 pm to 3:00 pm
- Monday, February 9 – 1:30 pm to 3:00 pm
- Tuesday, February 10 – 1:30 pm to 3:00pm

You will mount your poster on the fiberboard with push pins (thumbtacks), which will be provided. Since your display will be held on the fiberboard with push pins, DO NOT mount your presentation materials on a heavy board because doing so may make it difficult to keep the material in position.

E-POSTER DETAILS

Attendees will be able to view e-Posters online before, during, and after the meeting. Poster presenters are to have their poster, transcript, and audio uploaded by February 4 2026. **[CLICK HERE](#)** for a guide on how to navigate the Poster Gallery. You must be logged in and registered for the meeting to view the posters.

- All poster presenters will have an e-Poster.
- Attendees may leave comments and questions on a poster at any time. Presenters can then answer these questions online and/or in-person if you visit their poster.

[Access the e-Poster Gallery!](#)

NAME BADGES

Below are descriptions of the items you can add to your name badge.
Take any that you desire!



- **Rainbow/Ally Sticker** - This sticker aims to support LGBTQ+ inclusion and equality in the meeting place. An Ally aims to raise knowledge, create understanding, and equip people not part of the LGBTQ+ community to be an ally for colleagues who are identifying as LGBTQ+.



- **Name Badge Ribbons** - Badge ribbons are a way to recognize & identify the roles of some attendees during the conference! Add those that apply to you!

Onsite meeting attendees will be able to indicate if they have an open position or if they are interested in learning about job opportunities by wearing a cyan or yellow round sticker on their name badge.



Cyan Dot - I am interested in learning about job opportunities!



Yellow Dot - Ask me about job opportunities!

JOB BOARD

ARO has a job board where interested parties can post their open positions and those open to new opportunities can share their resumes. Linked below is access to this job board. You must be logged in and registered for the meeting to view the job board.

[Access the job board!](#)

2025-2026 Program Committee

Program Committee Chair

Jeffrey R. Holt, Ph.D.

Incoming Program Chair

Sonja Pyott, Ph.D.

Outgoing Program Chair

Brandon Cox, Ph.D.

Committee Members

Victoria Bajo, M.D., Ph.D.

Karen Banai, Ph.D.

Divya Chari, M.D.

Michael Deans, Ph.D.

Angelika Doetzelhofer, Ph.D.

Aziz El-Amraoui, Ph.D.

Steven Eliades, M.D., Ph.D.

Katharine Fernandez, Ph.D., Au.D.

Artur Indzhykulian, M.D., Ph.D.

Tejbeer Kaur, Ph.D.

Zsuzsanna Kocsis, Ph.D.

Jennifer Krizman, Ph.D.

Dhasakumar Navaratnam, M.D., Ph.D.

Suhrud Rajguru, Ph.D.

Claus-Peter Richter, Prof. Dr.

Soroush Sadeghi, Ph.D.

Regie Lyn Santos-Cortez, M.D., Ph.D.

Lavinia Sheets, Ph.D.

Daniel Sun, M.D.

Ruili Xie, Ph.D.

Presidential Symposia

The Power of Collaboration

Part I: Let's Atlas Ear

Chair:

Ronna Hetzano, M.D., Ph.D.

National Institutes of Health

Presenters:

Mike Hawrylycz, Ph.D.

Allen Institute for Brain Science

A Community Standard Cell Type Atlas of the Brain: The Brain Initiative Cell Atlas Network

Lisa Goodrich, Ph.D.

Harvard Medical School

Gearing up for Regeneration

Rachel Honeyghan-Williams, Ph.D.

University College London

Towards a High-Resolution Spatiotemporal Transcriptomic Atlas of the Vestibular Utricle

Heiko Locher, M.D.

Leiden University Medical Center

HIEDRA: A Human Inner Ear Development Single-Nucleus RNA Atlas

Matthew Kelley, Ph.D.

NIH/NIDCD

Comap – a Single Cell “omic” Atlas of the Cochlea across the Life Span

Amy Poremba, Ph.D.

NIH-NIDCD

NIDCD's Human Temporal Bone Resources

Presidential Symposia

The Power of Collaboration *Part II: From Genetic Testing to Patient Registries*

Chair:

Ronna Hetzano, M.D., Ph.D.

National Institutes of Health

Presenters:

James Beck, Ph.D.

Parkinson's Foundation

Preparing for Precision Medicine: The PD GENERation Experience

Hela Azaiez, D.Phil.

Indiana University

Lessons Learned From Genetic Testing for Hearing Loss in the USA

Huijun Yuan, Prof.

West China Hospital

Genetic Architecture of Deafness in Mainland China Revealed from a Nationwide Genetic Cohort Study Involving 22,125 Cases

Elinette Albino

Advancing Genetic Testing for Hearing Loss in Puerto Rico: Addressing Systemic Barriers and Building a Path toward Equitable Genomic-Based Care

Isabelle Roux, D.Sc.

NIDCD/NIH

Introducing HearGene Connect, a Nationwide Registry and Natural History Protocol to Correlate Genetic Variants with Phenotypic Outcomes and Therapeutic Eligibility

2026

AWARD OF MERIT

Alfred (Fred) Lee Nuttall, Ph.D. *

*Professor Emeritus of Otolaryngology,
University of Michigan & Oregon Health &
Science University*



Alfred (Fred) Lee Nuttall is Professor Emeritus of Otolaryngology at both the University of Michigan and Oregon Health & Science University (OHSU). He earned his B.S. in Electrical Engineering from Lowell Technological Institute in 1965 and

completed his doctorate in Bioengineering at the University of Michigan in 1972, focusing on middle ear biomechanics. Following postdoctoral studies at the Kresge Hearing Research Institute, he joined the faculty there, beginning a lifelong exploration of cochlear physiology. His early work included groundbreaking studies of basilar membrane vibration, intracellular responses of inner hair cells, and the development of new methods to measure cochlear blood flow—lines of investigation that became the foundation of his career.

In 1996, Fred moved west to OHSU in Portland, Oregon, where he became Director of the Oregon Hearing Research Center and Vice Chair for Research in the Department of Otolaryngology. As the Jack Vernon Endowed Professor, he spent nearly three decades recruiting and mentoring a vibrant community of faculty, visiting scientists, and trainees. Many of these trainees went on to lead laboratories worldwide. Through his gift for collaboration, Fred also forged lasting partnerships with national and international colleagues, strengthening the global auditory research community.

Fred's experimental contributions fall broadly into two areas: cochlear microvascular physiology and mechanics of the organ of Corti. He is perhaps the foremost contributor to our understanding of cochlear blood flow in vivo, developing and applying innovative techniques such as laser Doppler flowmetry and optical coherence tomography (OCT). His studies revealed how flow is

altered by sound, vasoactive agents, hypoxia, and hair cell dysfunction, deepening knowledge of cochlear vascular homeostasis. This body of work enjoyed uninterrupted NIDCD funding for 42 years.

With the conclusion of his vascular research program, Fred intensified his focus on cochlear mechanics. He pioneered the use of laser interferometry to measure cochlear motion, catalyzing an explosion of similar studies in laboratories worldwide. Later, he adapted OCT from ophthalmology for imaging and measuring tissue motion in the cochlea. This innovation enabled structural mapping of organ of Corti motion, demonstrating, for example, that the reticular lamina moves with different magnitude and phase compared with the basilar membrane—an insight that reshaped the field. His work in cochlear mechanics is now in its 47th year of continuous NIDCD R01 funding.

Fred's contributions extend well beyond his research. As Director, he elevated the Oregon Hearing Research Center to international prominence through strategic recruitment and support of faculty. As a mentor, he trained students and fellows from across Asia, Europe, and North America, many of whom now hold leadership positions in auditory science. He has served extensively on NIDCD study sections, received the Claude Pepper Award from NIDCD, and organized the Mechanics of Hearing Workshop in 2005.

Over his career, Fred has authored 246 peer-reviewed publications and presented 495 abstracts, including 290 at meetings of the Association for Research in Otolaryngology (ARO)



AWARD OF MERIT PAST RECIPIENTS

1978 Harold Schuknecht, M.D. *
1979 Merle Lawrence, Ph.D. *
1980 Juergen Tonndorf, M.D. *
1981 Catherine Smith, Ph.D. *
1982 Hallowell Davis, M.D. *
1983 Ernest Glen Wever, Ph.D. *
1984 Teruzo Konishi, M.D. *
1985 Joseph Hawkins, Ph.D. *
1986 Raphel Lorente de No, M.D. *
1987 Jerzy E. Rose, M.D. *
1988 Jozef Zwislocki, Sc.D.*
1989 Ake Flock, Ph.D.*
1990 Robert Kimura, Ph.D.*
1991 William D. Neff, Ph.D.*
1992 Jan Wersall, Ph.D.*
1993 David Lim, M.D.*
1994 Peter Dallos, Ph.D.
1995 Kirsten Osen, M.D.
1996 Drs. Ruediger Thalmann, M.D.*
& Isolde Thalmann, Ph.D.
1997 Jay Goldberg, Ph.D.*
1998 Robert Galambos, M.D., Ph.D.*
1999 Murray B. Sachs, Ph.D.*
2000 David M. Green, Ph.D. *

* Deceased

2001 William S. Rhode, Ph.D.
2002 A. James Hudspeth, M.D.,
Ph.D.
2003 Dr. David Kemp
2004 Donata Oertel, Ph.D. *
2005 Edwin W Rubel, Ph.D.
2006 Robert Fettiplace, Ph.D.
2007 Eric D. Young, Ph.D. *
2008 Brian C.J. Moore, Ph.D.
2009 M. Charles Liberman, Ph.D.
2010 Ian J. Russell
2011 Robert V. Shannon, Ph.D.
2012 David P. Corey, Ph.D.
2013 Karen P. Steel, Ph.D.
2014 H. Steven Colburn, Ph.D.
2015 Thomas B. Friedman, Ph.D.
2016 Geoffrey A. Manley, Ph.D.
2017 Alan Palmer, Ph.D.
2018 Christine Petit, Ph.D.
2019 Peter M. Narins, Ph.D.
2020 Lynne A. Werner, Ph.D.
2021 Tom Yin, Ph.D.
2022 Christoph Schreiner, M.D.,
Ph.D.
2023 Doris Wu, Ph.D.
2024 Judy Dubno, Ph.D.
2025 Paul Albert Fuchs, Ph.D.

2026 GERALDINE DIETZ FOX YOUNG INVESTIGATOR AWARD



Ksenia Gnedeva, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor

*Caruso Department of Otolaryngology -
Head and Neck Surgery*

*Department of Stem Cell Biology and
Regenerative Medicine*

Keck School of Medicine of USC

Dr. Ksenia Gnedeva is an Assistant Professor in the Caruso Department of Otolaryngology - Head and Neck Surgery and the Department of Stem Cell Biology and Regenerative Medicine at the Keck School of Medicine of USC. Her laboratory investigates the molecular mechanisms governing sensory organ development, with a focus on understanding how programs of self-renewal and differentiation can be reactivated to promote sensory tissue regeneration after damage.

Notably, her work identified the Hippo signaling cascade as a major negative regulator of mitotic hair cell regeneration in mammals. As part of this research, she developed the first of its kind inhibitor of this pathway, which is now widely used in the fields of stem cell biology and regenerative medicine. More recently, her studies uncovered the epigenetic basis of competence for hair cell differentiation and demonstrated that it is rapidly established during embryogenesis but lost postnatally, likely preventing regeneration.

The high impact of her work has been consistently recognized through her publications (including five in PNAS, one in Nature Communications, two in eLife, and two in Cell Stem Cell) and through her funding record (including NIDCD R21 and R01 awards and the Department of Defense award). She is a member of the Hearing Restoration Project funded by the Hearing Health Foundation and a recipient of the Joseph Gordon-Levitt Award for Excellence in Academic Medicine. Her work has also been featured in several news and media outlets, most notably on National Public Radio's flagship news program All Things Considered.

2026

PIONEER AWARD IN BASIC SCIENCE

Ana Belén Elgoyhen, Ph.D.

*Instituto de Investigaciones en Ingeniería
Genética y Biología Molecular,
CONICET,
Buenos Aires, Argentina*



Dr. Ana Belén Elgoyhen Obtained her Ph.D. in Pharmacology from the University of Buenos Aires and performed her postdoctoral training in Molecular Neurobiology at the Salk Institute, California, under the supervision of Steve Heinemann. Head of the Laboratory of Genetics and Physiology of Hearing, INGEBI-CONICET, Buenos Aires, Argentina since 1997. Best known for elucidating the molecular entity of the receptors that mediate synaptic transmission between efferent olivocochlear fibers and cochlear hair cells. Her interests include the physiology of olivocochlear efferents at the systems and synaptic level, the mechanisms underlying noise-induced hearing loss and the underlying pathophysiological mechanisms leading to tinnitus. Recipient of several awards including: John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellow (2003, USA), TWAS prize in Biology (2011), Howard Hughes Medical Institute International Scholar (1997-2011), Latin American Laureate of the L'Oréal-UNESCO Awards for Women in Science (2008), Scientist of the Argentine Nation nominated by the President (2012), Fondation Pour L'Audition Grand Prix (2018). She is a member of the World Academy of Science, the Latin American Academy of Science and the Argentine Academy of Science.

2026

INNOVATOR AWARD IN CLINICAL SCIENCE



Anil K. Lalwani, M.D.

Columbia University Vagelos College of Physicians and Surgeons

Professor of Otolaryngology-HNS and Mechanical Engineering with Tenure

Vice Chair for Research

Co-Director, Columbia Cochlear Implant Program

Department of Otolaryngology-Head & Neck Surgery

Columbia University Vagelos College of Physicians and Surgeons

Medical Director of Perioperative Services

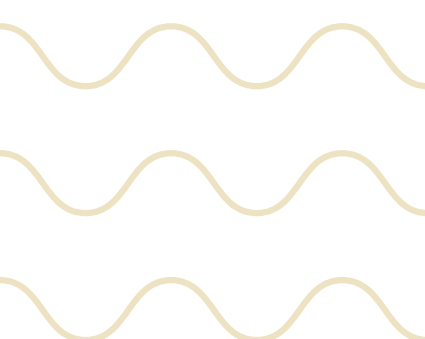
New York Presbyterian—Columbia University Irving Medical Center

Anil K. Lalwani, MD, is Associate Dean for Student Research, tenured Professor of Otolaryngology and Mechanical Engineering, Vice Chair for Research, and Co-Director of Columbia Cochlear Implant Program in the Department of Otolaryngology at Columbia University Vagelos College of Physicians and Surgeons.

Dr. Lalwani earned his M.D. from the University of Michigan Medical School in 1985 and subsequently completed his internship in General and Thoracic Surgery at Duke University Medical Center and his residency in Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery at UCSF. Following subspecialty training in Neurotology and Skull base surgery, he served as Senior Staff Fellow at the NIDCD, NIH. In 1994, he joined the faculty at UCSF as an assistant professor and rose to the rank of Professor in 2002. In April 2003, Dr. Lalwani was recruited to NYU to serve as Mendik Foundation Professor and Chairman of the Department of Otolaryngology – a position he held until December 2009.

Doctor Lalwani's basic research has focused on two key areas: identifying genes that are critical for hearing through the use of molecular genetic and molecular biologic methods and developing and investigating gene transfer technology for the treatment of hearing disorders. More recently, his NIH funded research has focused on the development of microneedle technology for inner ear delivery.

He is the author of 284 peer-reviewed articles, and numerous books and book chapters; his h-index is 74. He has served as the President of American Neurotology Society (2014-2015), American Auditory Society (2017-2018), New York Otological Society (2023) and Otosclerosis Study Group (2024-2025).



2026 TRAVEL AWARD RECIPIENTS

*Don Henderson Award Recipient

Sevda Abdavinejad

Fien Aben

Fernando Aguilera de Alba

Jan Frederik Ahrend

Shagun Ajmera

Pedro Andres Alba Diaz

Larisa Antonellis

Megan Arnold

Selina Baeza-Loya

James Baldassano

Nicholas Barad*

Sushobhan Biswas*

Kira Boyce

Karen Castaño González

Minzi Chang

Ahsan Cheema

Yunru Chen

Feifan Chen

Tracy Cheng

Daniela Chequer Charan

Conner Corbett

Jason Cote

Eric Cunningham

Claire Dorey

Audrey Drotos

Kimia Feiz

Celia

Fernandez Brillet

Kiran Ganga

Franz Gareza

Zahra Ghasemahmad

Francesco Gianoli

Zixu Guo

Jusung Ham

Robert Hart

Maya Hatley

Charles Hem

Isabel Herb

Rachel Honeyghan-Williams

Md Fahad Hossain

Cory Howard

Yao-Hsin Huang

Ella Jackert

Namitha Jain

Ashwin Jhaver

Rosemary Kabahuma

Anna Kamau

Lore Kerkhofs

Hee So Kim

Justin Kim

Megan Kirchgessner

Conner Kojima

Carolyn Kroger

Seulgi Lee

Yulin Li

Yige Li

2026 TRAVEL AWARD RECIPIENTS CONT.

*Don Henderson Award Recipient

Matheus Macedo-Lima

Alexis MacIntyre

Kiran Marla

Charles P. Murphey

Khai Nguyen*

Satyabrata Parida

Jeffrey Parra-Munevar

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VIRTUAL SPARO SESSIONS PRE-MIDWINTER MEETING

The following sessions happened virtually prior to the MWM

Mentoring Session: Communicating Your Science Workshop

Tuesday, January 13, 2026

12:30 PM -1:30 PM ET

This session will provide advice and opportunities for scientists interested in learning how to better communicate their science to a non-scientific audience. The session will have a short presentation followed by the opportunity for questions and discussions.

Speakers:

Dr. Allison Coffin

Associate Professor of Biomedical Sciences,
Creighton University

Dr. Audrey Drotos

Postdoctoral Research Fellow,
University of Pennsylvania

Dr. Kelsey Anbuhl

Assistant Professor of Biomedical Sciences,
Creighton University

VIRTUAL SPARO SESSIONS PRE-MIDWINTER MEETING

The following sessions happened virtually prior to the MWM

Mentoring Session: Science Advocacy Training, Workshop

Tuesday, January 13, 2026

3:30 PM -4:30 PM ET

This training, led by the Society for Neuroscience's advocacy team, will detail the importance of advocacy and key issues SfN follows, a brief overview of the budget and appropriations process, how to conduct a meeting with your congressional offices/other advocacy best practices, and how to stay involved. Following the presentation, there will be an opportunity for questions.

Speakers:

The Society for Neuroscience Advocacy Team

VIRTUAL SPARO SESSIONS PRE-MIDWINTER MEETING

The following sessions happened virtually prior to the MWM

Mentoring Session: NIDCD Research Training & Career Development, Workshop

Wednesday, January 14, 2026

10:00 AM -11:00 AM ET

Funding from the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders (NIDCD) advances scientific and clinical discovery. NIDCD staff will provide an overview of fellowship, career development, and loan repayment funding opportunities. The session will also cover advice for successful applications. This session is aimed at Ph.D. students and post-doctoral fellows.

Speakers:

Dr. Jaclyn Schurman

NIDCD Research Training Officer

Dr. Cendrine Robinson

NIDCD Director of Workforce Development and Community Health,
Loan Repayment Program

VIRTUAL SPARO SESSIONS PRE-MIDWINTER MEETING

The following sessions happened virtually prior to the MWM

Mentoring Session: Navigating ARO 2026 MidWinter Meeting Successfully: Special Sessions, Updates, and Much More

Wednesday, January 14, 2026

12:00 PM -1:00 PM ET

We invite you to join us in this informational session where we highlight many of the exciting sessions taking place during 2026 Mid-Winter Meeting (MWM), excluding the podium and poster sessions. Session organizers will join us to share details of their session and what you can expect from attending. With a new location and the meeting taking place in a convention center setting, there will be some changes! We will also take a few minutes to go over these. Don't miss this opportunity to find out how you can make the most out of your MWM experience without scrolling through the lengthy program pages and FAQs!

Speakers:

Joshua Orvis - gEAR sessions

Ronna Hertzano - Presidential Symposium, ARO General Assembly, ARO Award Ceremony and Reception

Speakers (Continued):

Charles Della Santina - Restoring Sixth Sense Through Vestibular Implantation

Julie Arenberg - Honorary Symposium for John C. Middlebrooks

Kelly King - Navigating NIDCD Funding for Early Career and New Investigators

Trinh T. Ly - NIDCD Extramural Clinical Trial Workshop

Janet Cyr - Changes at the NIH for Established Investigators

Melissa Polonenko - Harnessing Human Subcortical and Peripheral Responses to Natural Speech for Translational and Basic Science

Regie Lyn Santos-Cortez - Special Symposium - COMMeND

Ruth Anne Eatock - Memorial Symposium for Jim Hudspeth

Kristin Johnson - Updates on ARO 2026 MWM

VIRTUAL SPARO SESSIONS PRE-MIDWINTER MEETING

The following sessions happened virtually prior to the MWM

Mentoring Session: Transitioning to Industry, Panel

Thursday, January 15, 2026

10:30 AM -11:30 AM ET

This session will describe pathways from academia to industry through the perspectives of two scientists. The panelists will discuss how they prepared to change jobs, how industry differs from academic jobs, contextualizing your skills, and what they wish they'd known before starting.

Speakers:

Dr. Christi Miller

Meta

Dr. Sean Anderson

Cochlear

VIRTUAL SPARO SESSIONS PRE-MIDWINTER MEETING

The following sessions happened virtually prior to the MWM

Mentoring Session: How to Become a Postdoc, Panel

Thursday, January 15, 2026

3:30 PM -4:30 PM ET

This session will provide insight into the next step of academia after graduate school; how to find a post-doctoral position. The session will be an interactive forum for questions and discussion.

Speakers:

Dr. Michele Insanally

Professor of Otolaryngology, Neurobiology and Bioengineering,
University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine

Dr. Ruth Litovsky

Professor of Communication Sciences and Disorders,
University of Wisconsin-Madison

Dr. Dan Sanes

Professor of Neural Science and Biology
New York University



SPARO EVENTS AT THE MIDWINTER MEETING

The following sessions will happen during the MWM

spARO Reception

Saturday, February 7
9:00 PM - 10:30 PM
Meeting Room 203

spARO Mentorship Meet and Greet

Sunday, February 8
7:30 PM - 8:30 PM
Meeting Room 203

spARO LGBTQIA+ Social

Sunday, February 8
8:30 PM - 10:30 PM
Meeting Room 204

spARO Town Hall

Tuesday, February 9
6:15 PM - 7:15 PM
Meeting Room 202ABC

ARO DEVELOPMENT, MENTORSHIP, AND ADVANCEMENT COMMITTEE SPECIAL SESSION

Auditory Periphery to Cortex: Research Advances and Career Journeys

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 9 • 10:30 AM - 12:30 PM

Chair: Elinette Albino

This special session showcases cutting-edge research from Hispanic and Latin scientists across the complete auditory pathway, from peripheral mechanotransduction to cortical processing. The session will highlight the scientific achievements and career trajectories of Hispanic and Latin researchers in otolaryngology, with a focus on increasing visibility and fostering community among underrepresented groups. With local representation from Puerto Rico, this session addresses the critical need for diversity in otolaryngology, where Hispanic and Latino scientists remain significantly underrepresented at all career stages, with only 4.1% Latino full professors (Watkins et al., 2024; Solis & Valdez et al 2023). The session will feature scientists from different career stages spanning postdoc to senior faculty, presenting research that spans from the auditory periphery to cortex. Topics will include auditory hair cell biology and mechanotransduction, genetics of hearing loss, auditory midbrain neuromodulation, cortical neural processing, and health disparities in Hispanic and Latin populations. Each speaker will present their research and reflect on their unique career paths, challenges, and opportunities as Hispanic and Latin scientists. The session concludes with a moderated panel on scientific trajectories and collaborations, designed to catalyze trainee engagement across geographic boundaries and career stages.

Michele Insanally, Ph.D.

University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine

Celebrating Hispanic and Latin Scientists: Research Advances and Career Journeys

ARO DEVELOPMENT, MENTORSHIP, AND ADVANCEMENT COMMITTEE SPECIAL SESSION

Auditory Periphery to Cortex: Research Advances and Career Journeys

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 9 • 10:30 AM - 12:30 PM

Presenters:

Marina Silveira, Ph.D.

University of Texas at San Antonio

Mechanisms of Serotonergic Signaling in the Auditory Midbrain

Jaime Garcia-Annoversos, Prof.

Northwestern University Institute for Neurosciences

*Targeted Cell Interconversions Reveal Inner Hair Cell Control of Organ of Corti
Cytoarchitecture*

Santiago Jaramillo, Ph.D.

University of Oregon

Dynamics of Auditory Cortical Neural Activity in Response to Natural Sounds

Elinette Albino

Genetic and Audiological Profiles of Hearing Loss in Puerto Rico

A. Catalina Vele-Ortega, Ph.D.

University of Kentucky

*Impact of Resting Mechanotransduction Current on Stereocilia Actin Dynamics in
Mammalian Auditory Hair Cells*

Lubriel Sambolin-Escobales, Ph.D.

The Jackson Kaboratory

*GPSM2-Dependent Regulation of Actin Dynamics and Stereocilia Integrity in Mature
Hair Cells*

OTHER WORKSHOPS AT THE MIDWINTER MEETING

gEAR Workshop – Introduction to gEAR

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 6 • 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM MEETING ROOM 208ABC

NIDCD Workshop - Navigating NIDCD Funding for Early Stage and New Investigators

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 7 • 7:00 PM - 8:30 PM MEETING ROOM 209ABC

NIDCD Workshop - NIDCD Extramural Clinical Trial Workshop

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 7 • 7:00 PM - 8:30 PM BALLROOM B

gEAR Session: Advanced Workshop

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 8 • 4:15 PM - 5:15 PM MEETING ROOM 209ABC

NIDCD Workshop - Changes at the NIH for Established Investigators

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 8 • 6:30 PM - 8:00 PM MEETING ROOM 209C

SEED.NIH.GOV Helping Innovators Turn Discovery into Health

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 8 • 6:30 PM - 8:00 PM BALLROOM B

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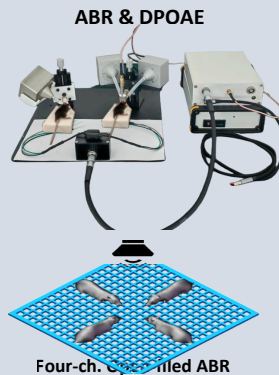
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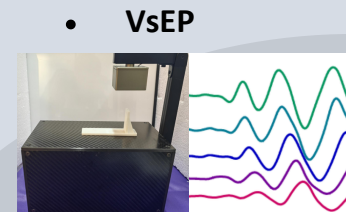
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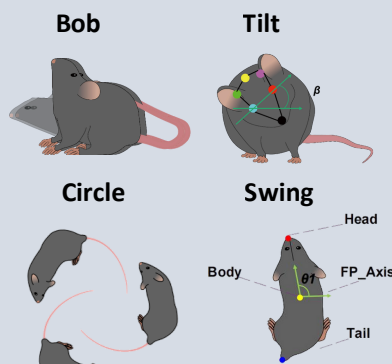


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Vestibular-related Behavior



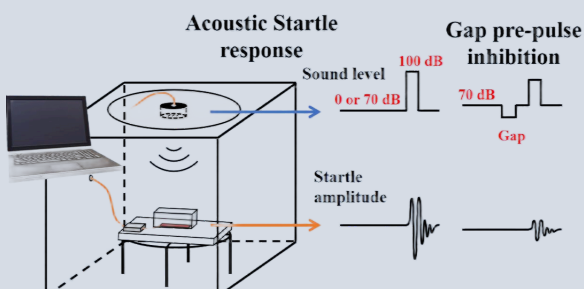
AI-based behavior quantification

aVOR & OVAR

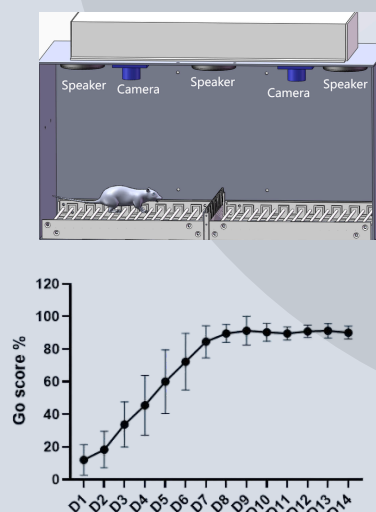


Tinnitus Detection Systems

- **Gap detection** (Acoustic Startle Response)
- **Sound-based avoidance detection (SBAD)**



SBAD





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