Communications Committee Meeting

May 11, 2026, 10:00 AM EDT

Attendees: Mike Bowl, Nicolas Grillet, Alyssa Price, Kristin Johnson, Sujata Pandey, Barbara Vona, James Dias, Kelsey Anbuhl

1. Wikipedia Project Proposal Summary: The Committee reviewed a proposal to create Wikipedia pages for Association for Research in Otolaryngology (ARO) Award of Merit recipients to promote the field and improve public-facing resources. Members discussed the importance of establishing standards to prevent the publication of incomplete or outdated pages, which could reflect poorly on the society. The Committee proposed that this project could transition to the Awards Committee, as they compile the original nomination packets.

Decisions Made:

- The Committee agreed to defer the decision on the Wikipedia project to the next meeting to allow for further member input.

Action Items:

- Add the Wikipedia proposal to the next meeting agenda (Kristin Johnson / Executive Office)
- Send a reminder in the next meeting invite for members to review the Wikipedia proposal (Kristin Johnson / Executive Office)

2. Support for Early Career Scientists (ECRs)

Summary: Following an inquiry from the ARO Council regarding a decline in junior member attendance at the MidWinter Meeting, the Committee evaluated its support mechanisms for early career scientists. Current initiatives, including the mini-grant program and upcoming outreach awards, were determined to be effective foundational efforts. A new initiative was proposed to create a "Member Spotlight" page on the ARO website to feature ECR research that has received media attention, offering a low-cost method to boost visibility and engagement.

Decisions Made:

- The Committee reaffirmed the ongoing value of the mini-grant and outreach award programs.
- The Committee agreed that the spARO representatives should discuss the "Member Spotlight" initiative at their next steering committee meeting.

Action Items:

- Discuss the "Member Spotlight" idea with the spARO steering committee and report back (Alyssa Price / spARO Representatives)

3. International and Clinical Engagement

Summary: The Committee analyzed factors limiting the attendance of international members and clinician-scientists at the MidWinter Meeting. Primary barriers identified included high travel expenses associated with expensive host cities and political or immigration climates complicating visa acquisitions and university funding. Although moving the meeting to a non-seasonal location in the spring was suggested, members recognized it could disrupt the established global conference calendar.

Decisions Made:

- None

Action Items:

- None

4. Virtual Meeting Options

Summary: The Committee debated the value of virtual attendance enhancements versus the necessity of in-person networking. Discussions explored strategies to improve accessibility, including replacing certain podium presentations with live open-panel discussions featuring virtual Q&A components. Members also considered establishing specific Slack channels or QR codes for asynchronous discussion of talks, as well as hosting virtual satellite meetings focused on targeted scientific themes.

Decisions Made:

- None

Action Items:

- Summarize the meeting's discussion points on attendance barriers into a shared document for online editing by the Committee

Summary The Communications Committee convened on May 11, 2026, to discuss strategic alignment tasks requested by the ARO Council. The primary focus of the meeting involved addressing barriers to in-person attendance at the MidWinter Meeting, strategies for supporting early career scientists, and improving international and clinical engagement. The Committee reviewed a proposal to develop Wikipedia pages for ARO Award of Merit recipients, emphasizing the need for strict quality standards. Members also

evaluated existing support mechanisms for junior members and considered a new "Member Spotlight" website feature to highlight early career research. Additionally, the Committee discussed potential virtual meeting enhancements, including live Q&A integrations and dedicated digital communication channels, to increase accessibility for members facing travel or financial barriers.

Decisions Made (Consolidated)

- The Committee agreed to defer the decision on the Wikipedia project to the next meeting to allow for further member input.
- The Committee reaffirmed the ongoing value of the mini-grant and outreach award programs.
- The Committee agreed that the spARO representatives should discuss the "Member Spotlight" initiative at their next steering committee meeting.

Action Items (Consolidated)

Kristin Johnson / Executive Office

- Add the Wikipedia proposal to the next meeting agenda.
- Send a reminder in the next meeting invite for members to review the Wikipedia proposal.

Mike Bowl

- Summarize the meeting's discussion points on attendance barriers into a shared document for online editing by the Committee.

Alyssa Price / spARO Representatives

- Discuss the "Member Spotlight" idea with the spARO steering committee and report back.