**ARO Finance and Investment Committee Meeting**

May 19, 2026, 11:00 AM EDT

Attendees: Kevin Booth, Amanda Lauer, Warren Bakay, Meghan Drummond, Kristin Johnson, Inna Belyantseva, Mathias Dietz, Jane Mondul

**1. 2026 Fiscal Status and 2027 Budget Outlook**

**Summary:** The Executive Office reported that the reconciliation for the 2026 meeting is nearly complete. The reconciliation currently shows a $56,000 loss, but that will reduce the deficit to approximately $40,000, pending finalized journal reimbursements. The Committee reviewed the 2027 San Francisco meeting budget, noting that non-negotiable union property rates, particularly for services such as WiFi, will cause a substantial increase in overhead. Additionally, the ARO Scholars Program successfully secured a $20,000 grant, which may alleviate its impact on the general budget for the upcoming year.

Decisions Made:

- None.

Action Items:

- Review April financials currently available in the portal (All Committee Members).

2. **Registration Fee Restructuring**

**Summary:** The Committee evaluated the current registration fee structure to address the projected budget deficit for the 2027 meeting. Members discussed closing the gap between ARO's rates and those of comparable organizations. A proposal was introduced to create an "Industry" registration category to generate revenue from corporate participants while preserving lower rates for trainees and junior industry professionals.

**Decisions Made:**

- The Committee agreed to implement a tiered registration fee increase (5% for students and seniors, 10% for regular members) for the 2027 budget draft.
- The Committee approved the addition of a specific "Industry" registration category with a higher price point.

**Action Items:**

- Create a registration fee comparison table demonstrating the proposed 5% and 10% increases across membership tiers (Kristin Johnson/Executive Office).
- Analyze raw registration data from the previous year to identify and categorize industry-affiliated attendees (Megan).

3. **Sponsorship, Fundraising, and Logistics**

**Summary:** Strategies to offset high meeting expenses were discussed, including seeking sponsorship for coffee breaks and lunches. The Committee noted a shift in Council/membership culture toward

accepting industry-sponsored events, provided that scientific integrity is maintained. The Executive Office is working with new sponsorship liaisons to increase external fundraising.

**Decisions Made:**

- None.

Action Items:

- Schedule a 30-minute follow-up meeting for mid-to-late June to discuss fundraising, Young Investigator support, and endowments (Kristin Johnson/Executive Office).

4. **Council Strategic Planning**

**Summary:** The Committee reviewed the upcoming June 1 deadline to submit feedback for the Council Strategic Planning form. Due to meeting time constraints, members determined that the questions would be addressed asynchronously.

**Decisions Made:**

- The Committee agreed to handle the Council Strategic Planning questions via email to meet the June 1 deadline.

**Action Items:**

- Send an email to the Committee to gather input for the Council Strategic Planning form (Meghan).

**Meeting Summary:**

The ARO Finance Committee convened to review the final financial projections for the 2026 meeting and discuss the draft budget for the 2027 MidWinter Meeting in San Francisco. The 2026 meeting reconciliation is nearing completion with a projected $40,000 loss, an improvement over initial forecasts. However, the 2027 meeting presents significant financial challenges due to high, non-negotiable union property costs in San Francisco.

To proactively mitigate a projected budget deficit for 2027, the Committee reached a consensus to restructure registration rates. This includes a tiered increase for existing member categories and the creation of a higher-tier "Industry" registration class. Furthermore, the Committee explored expanding industry-sponsored events and external fundraising to offset meeting expenses. The Committee will finalize strategic planning feedback asynchronously and reconvene in June to further discuss long-term fundraising strategies.

**Decisions Made (Consolidated)**

- The Committee agreed to propose a tiered registration fee increase (5% for students and seniors, 10% for regular members) for the 2027 budget draft.
- The Committee approved the addition of a specific "Industry" registration category with a higher price point to the proposal
- Amanda Lauer will present the proposal to the Council at the meeting the next day.

- The Committee agreed to handle the Council Strategic Planning questions via email to meet the June 1 deadline.

**Action Items (Consolidated)**

**Kristin Johnson/Executive Office**

- Create a registration fee table showing 5% and 10% increases for various tiers.
- Schedule a 30-minute follow-up meeting for mid-to-late June to discuss fundraising, Young Investigator support, and endowments.

**Amanda**

- Introduce new rgistration fee proposal to Council at the meeting the next day.

**Meghan**

- Analyze raw registration data from last year to identify and categorize industry-affiliated attendees.
- Send an email to the committee to gather input for the Council Strategic Planning form.

**All Committee Members**

- Review April financials currently available in the portal.