spARO Steering Committee Meeting

May 21, 2026, 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM EDT

1. Introductions and Expectations

Summary: Shelby Payne opened the inaugural meeting of the year by outlining the steering committee's role in developing programming and initiatives for trainees ahead of the 2027 meeting. The Executive Office confirmed that Kristin Johnson will serve as the primary committee liaison, with Allison currently shadowing to potentially transition into the role.
Decisions Made:

- Committee agreed to meet on a monthly basis.

***Action Items*:**

- None

2. Committee Updates

Summary: Representatives provided updates on their respective committees. The Travel Awards Committee reported a potential budget increase and encouraged members to broadly promote the awards to maximize applications. The Clinician Scientist Committee is planning a Midwinter Meeting networking event and preparing a special session proposal due June 22. The Communications Committee is developing a new outreach award expected this summer and discussed adding a dedicated section on the spARO webpage to highlight member research. DMAC noted progress on an ARO manuscript and celebrated that the ARO Scholars program secured a $20,000 grant. Then the group debated submitting a proposal for an in-person "Science Communication Workshop" as a special session or pre-meeting event for spARO Sessions.

Decisions Made:

- None

Action Items:

- Alyssa Price: Email Communications Committee meeting notes to Shelby Payne.

3. Strategic Initiatives and Trainee Support

Summary: The committee reviewed responses from a recent trainee survey of 33 respondents, which highlighted job market uncertainty, funding instability, and career direction as primary concerns. Approximately 75% of respondents requested enhanced job search support, interview workshops, and mentorship programming extending beyond

a single year. Addressing the ARO Council's strategic questions, the committee discussed barriers to in-person attendance.

Decisions Made:

- None.

Action Items:

- Shelby to submit the groups feedback regarding the Council strategic planning questions via the emailed form by the deadline of June 1st

4. Platform Optimization and Mentorship Transition

Summary: To streamline resources, the committee discussed reorganizing the spARO YouTube channel for improved searchability. The committee also discussed adding a dedicated button or link on the spARO website for job and funding opportunities. Additionally, the committee discussed transitioning the oversight of the mentorship program from spARO to the broader Membership Committee to ensure long-term stability and continuity for the program.

Decisions Made:

- Committee approved reorganizing the spARO YouTube channel for improved searchability.
- Committee approved adding a dedicated button or link on the spARO website for job and funding opportunities.
- Committee reaffirmed support for transitioning oversight of the mentorship program to the Membership Committee.

Action Items:

- Kristin Johnson / Executive Office: Add a link to the ARO Event Calendar and a dedicated button/link for job and funding opportunities to the spARO website.
- Kristin Johnson / Executive Office: Update the ARO Job Board to include a "Funding" category for better trainee filtering.
- Samantha, Shelby Payne, and Leslie Ann Hiroaki: Create a spreadsheet mapping current YouTube video links to new titles and playlists for the Executive Office. Note that titles have a 100-character limit.

Overall Meeting Summary

The spARO Steering Committee held its inaugural meeting of the year to define leadership roles, review committee assignments, and address strategic initiatives for ARO 2027. The

Executive Office confirmed liaison roles, and the committee established a monthly meeting cadence to maintain momentum. Subcommittee representatives provided comprehensive updates, highlighting progress on travel awards, networking events, and other committee initiatives.

Key focus areas during the session included optimizing resources for trainees by overhauling the YouTube channel's searchability and enhancing the spARO website with dedicated job and funding links. The committee reviewed a recent trainee survey, noting strong demands for expanded mentorship, job search support, and interview workshops. In alignment with ARO Council strategic planning, the committee discussed barriers to in-person attendance and reaffirmed support for transitioning the mentorship program oversight to the Membership Committee for improved long-term continuity.

Decisions Made (Consolidated)

- Committee agreed to meet on a monthly basis.
- Committee approved reorganizing the spARO YouTube channel for improved searchability.
- Committee approved adding a dedicated button or link on the spARO website for job and funding opportunities.
- Committee reaffirmed support for transitioning oversight of the mentorship program to the Membership Committee.

Action Items (Consolidated)

Kristin Johnson / Executive Office

- Add a link to the ARO Event Calendar and a dedicated button/link for job and funding opportunities to the spARO website.
- Update the ARO Job Board to include a "Funding" category for better trainee filtering.

Shelby Payne

- Email Kristin Johnson regarding the mentorship program transition to be included on the Membership Committee agenda.

Alyssa Price

- Email Communications Committee meeting notes to Shelby Payne.

Samantha, Shelby Payne, and Leslie Ann Hiroaki

- Create a spreadsheet mapping current YouTube video links to new titles and playlists for the Executive Office.