

spARO Report 39th Annual MidWinter Meeting San Diego February 2016

Although most of you probably know the student, postdoc and medical resident chapter of the Association for Research in Otolaryngology (spARO, pronounced 'sparrow') and have already attended at least one of our events, we briefly want to give you an overview of the society in general, and specifically the activities at the last MidWinter Meeting.

The community's main goal is to help every member to succeed in our professions in speech- and hearing-related sciences. Apart from connecting to like-minded peers in the ARO community and the concomitant positive social interaction that can lead to scientific collaborations as well as long-lasting friendships, we specifically try to guide the career development of young researchers by offering several events during the Annual MidWinter Meeting:

The spARO social focuses on having a good time with (approximately 200) fellow researchers. Free drinks as well as a small buffet are usually supplied by ARO and guarantee a successful evening. This year in San Diego, we again chose the Taste and Thirst, whose staff offered us excellent support in every aspect. At the social, we could collect email addresses of the attendees and cross-referenced them to the official ARO lists in order to update our newsletter recipients. Our newsletters generally contain important information regarding the society and potentially also grant applications or professional opportunities.

The Poster Blitz gave multiple young researchers the opportunity to present their posters in a rapid-pace (under 5 minutes) using PowerPoint slides. An esteemed panel of researchers and clinicians evaluated each pitch presenter on the basis of (1) the ability to convey the impact of their work, (2) the visual appeal of the slides, and (3) the overall presentation. The winners were recognized at the Award of Merit Ceremony: Jane Burton, Nicole Black, and Julia King. We also hosted our Young Investigator Lunch with Alan Cheng, who won the Young Investigator Award last year and shared valuable advice regarding a successful research career. Congratulations to Stephen David for winning the Young Investigator Award this year!

The Mentoring Program has represented a cornerstone of the spARO activities over the last several years. For this MidWinter Meeting, we offered 8 interactive sessions with experienced "role model" scientists. A wide variety of topics was covered, including "Building Mentoring Relationships", "Job Search and Independence", "Clinician/Scientist", "Careers in Industry", "Getting Grants", "Work-Life Balance", "Working in Administration" and "Publishing". The small group size usually allows attendees to specifically direct the discussion towards topics of interest for them and take the most out of it.

After presenting spARO's goals and its leadership team, 20 lucky attendees were chosen to receive Starbucks gift cards, sponsored by A-M Systems (<http://www.amsystems.com>).



The winner of the gift cards, pictured here, at the 2016 spARO Town Hall.

Our Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/spARO2012/?ref=ts&fref=ts>) is active and is used to report relevant information regarding our field of research. Feel free to post links that you deem important for the others. However, we are trying to keep the site spam-free, which is why we compare the users who want to join with the ARO associate members and the email addresses that we collected at the social. If somebody is not on any of these lists and still wants to join, please send us an email to the address below. We are also proud to announce two social media accounts that can help us stay connected and share with the world the importance of research in otolaryngology and allied fields. Our recently launched Instagram account (@spARO_news) and Twitter (@spARO_news) are aching to be filled with pictures, news, and stories of you. Follow us at @spARO_news on Instagram and Twitter. If you let us know you're a student, postdoc, or medical resident we will follow you back. You can also directly message us your post via Instagram or Twitter OR email us at spARO.ex.officio@gmail.com and share any #'s or @usernames to tag.

As a final remark, I want to thank the 2015/2016 steering committee, including Anna Diedesch, Ross Maddox, Nate Zuk, Will Hamlet, and Lukas Landegger, who did a great job and have made it easy for me to continue the excellent work of my predecessors. The list of new members for this year's steering committee can be found here: <http://www.aro.org/?page=spAROCCommittee>.

For feedback, suggestions, information, or if you want to become active in our organization, please email sparo.ex.officio@gmail.com. To help us more closely tailor spARO's programming with the needs of its members, please take less than 5 minutes to fill out the spARO post-conference survey. [Please click here to take the survey.](#) Please also submit spARO logo designs to sparo.ex.officio@gmail.com by Friday, April 29. The logo will be used on our website, Facebook page, and all official newsletters and notifications from our organization. It will be debuted in our fall newsletter along with reminders of the 2017 ARO abstract and travel award deadlines.

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