



ASOR Executive Committee Meeting  
Sheraton New Orleans Hotel, January 27-28, 2018

Present: Richard Coffman (Chair); Susan Ackerman (President); Timothy Harrison (Past President); Sharon Herbert (Vice President); Heather McKee (Treasurer); Lynn Swartz Dodd (Secretary); Joe Seger; Eric Meyers; Ann-Marie Knoblauch, Edward Wright (Development Chair); Andrew Vaughn (Executive Director).

**BE IT RESOLVED:** The Agenda is approved by unanimous consent.

**BE IT RESOLVED:** The Minutes of the November 18, 2017 Executive Committee Meeting are approved as amended by unanimous consent (see attached amended Minutes).

1. Investment Report and Budget Update (Andy Vaughn, Heather McKee)

Andy Vaughn: Things are going well. ASOR now has \$1.9 million in its investment account. Heather McKee and Andy Vaughn are now managing and producing the Investment and Budget reports. They are consolidating ASOR's accounts in order to yield a bit more interest. They are managing the transition following the departure of Selma Omerefendic in December, 2017.

The Executive Committee discussed the deficit in the Nies Trust.

In view of the fact that we had to make a precipitous move, that we are supporting two offices at present and paying rent, which is a new situation for ASOR, Andy Vaughn stated that things are tight. He indicates that the office staff are keeping rent and moving expenses as low as possible. As ASOR considers new locations, ASOR will need develop new grants that provide additional support for indirect costs, or those who support ASOR can increase their generous annual fund contributions, or decisions can be taken to cut programs.

2. CHI Update (Susan Ackerman, Andy Vaughn)

ASOR's governance style is to have member-populated standing committees provide oversight for all domains of ASOR activity. For example, in November, the Board voted to bring ASOR's outreach newsletter under COP. A discussion ensued about establishing a reporting relationship through ASOR's Cultural Heritage committee, which is currently an ad hoc committee that was formed in May, 2014. That committee can be moved to Standing Committee status. Susan Ackerman indicated that she will present in April a Bylaws revision to the Board in order to assign that committee Standing Committee status. In this case, the CHI would report to the Cultural Heritage Committee, and be represented through the CCC to the Executive Committee and the Board of Trustees. A discussion of potential components of an expanded reporting relationship ensued. Among the options discussed are (1) written reports from the CHI to the Cultural Heritage Committee on some regular basis; (2) The CHI Academic director would meet with Cultural Heritage committee in person. Susan Ackerman indicated that, as President, she is going to undertake monthly meetings in person with the CHI director. She expressed her gratitude to Michael Danti who has indicated enthusiasm for CHI becoming better integrated into ASOR's governance structure.

The Executive Committee discussed variables surrounding the renewal of the Department of State Cooperative Agreement. Tim Harrison commented on the utility of finding a diversity of funding sources so that ASOR and CHI activities can be diverse. ASOR as international operator will need to find organizations that share aspects of ASOR's vision and strategic objectives. He advocated building relationships now. CHI staff and advisory board members will be traveling to Iraq and to the ICAANE meetings this year, and these are opportunities for the development of partnerships. Tim Harrison suggested that ASOR invite some of the academics and members of the Iraqi State Board of Antiquities and Heritage to ASOR meetings.

Ed Wright advocated that, as there are many experts in Iraq in and around Boston, as ASOR considers where and how to work in Iraq, we should bring in some advisors to educate us about delicate issues to consider.

**BE IT RESOLVED:** ASOR shall pursue a new cooperative agreement or a renewal of its cooperative agreement with the US Department of State effective April 1, 2018, and other new funding opportunities as alternative ways to address the cultural heritage tragedy unfolding in the countries of the Middle East. Unanimously approved.

3. Chairs Coordinating Council Report (Sharon Herbert)

The hardworking Programs Committee brought excellent plenary speaker candidates from the Middle East forward. Helen Sader was chosen and has accepted.

The CCC has been seeking to broaden membership on the various ASOR standing committees by placing ads in *News@ASOR* to encourage members to nominate themselves or others. The response has been excellent and people are offering to serve. This enables us to broaden ASOR governance.

CAP has a new chair, Steve Falconer. A CAP sub-committee was established in November in order to address issues of safety and harassment.

The Committee on Publications will need to appoint a new chair for a term beginning January 1, 2019. This is an exceptionally important role as this person will manage the transition of publications.

The Committee on Membership and Outreach (chair: Randy Younker) has been active in setting up symposia in Europe. CCC gave provisional approval for a symposium. Their plans should attract new members and offer programs that add to rather than replicate existing ones.

The Program Committee is receiving session proposals and the number is down somewhat from Boston, which is a location issue, as Denver is not such a travel attraction.

#### 4. ASOR's New Home and Related Matters

##### a. ASOR's New Home: ASOR ED

Susan Ackerman reported that Andy Vaughn has indicated that he is willing to move his family wherever ASOR moves, assuming some parameters. This is a very positive development. All ASOR staff need clarity about the future location and the move timeline. The move is planned for July 1, 2018, when the current rented space lease concludes.

##### b. ASOR's New Home and Office Staff (Andy Vaughn)

The Executive Committee discussed the current staff, their responsibilities and the nature of the impact that moving out of the Boston area would have on their future association with ASOR. The Executive Committee also discussed the 17 year long tenure of Selma Omerefendic and means of acknowledging this in some way.

The current situation of ASOR's space was explained by Susan Ackerman: 650 Beacon Street is a space rented through June 30<sup>th</sup> 2018. A second, smaller space at 665 Beacon St. houses ACOR and CAARI, and ASOR storage, and this space is available at least through the end of December 2018. There is a possibility that certain staff may be offered incentives to stay on through the end of December in Boston, even if the larger

office operations were moved earlier. This would enable continuity and overlap with future staff.

c. ASOR's New Home and ASOR's Archives (Susan Ackerman)

Susan Ackerman briefed the Executive Committee on materials from Nelson Glueck's excavations that are currently stored at the Harvard Semitic Museum, which were sent to G. Ernest Wright long ago. A discussion about the possible ways to address the future security and utility of this collection ensued.

**BE IT RESOLVED:** the Executive Committee gives its strong endorsement that ASOR deposit its archives at the Harvard Semitic Museum, which would include open and online access. Eric Meyers made the motion and Sharon Herbert seconded. Passed unanimously.

d. ASOR's New Home and an ASOR Publication Partner (Andy Vaughn)

The executive Committee had a full discussion of the possibility of outsourcing publication of ASOR journals. The space impact would be a savings of about 500 sf and there would be other possible advantages and disadvantages, which vary according to the vendor and the negotiated terms. COP has been consulted. It is critical that the journals look as good or better than they do now.

**BE IT RESOLVED:** The Executive Committee authorizes the Executive Director and President to move forward in investigating publication contractors in order to bring a recommendation for a publication contractor for Board approval at the Spring meeting. Ed Wright moved. Seconded by Sharon Herbert. Unanimously approved.

5. Development Issues related to ASOR's New Home (Ed Wright)

Due to the loss of its space at Boston University, ASOR must move its administrative offices by 1 July 2018. We are going from a rent-free space to a fee/ownership space. We will need to raise funds to purchase or rent office space.

The Capital Campaign begins with the "quiet phase," during which a large portion of the goal is raised before going public. Many people have been contacted thus far and roughly \$250,000 has been pledged. ASOR does not have a way to determine potential capacity for individuals in its donor base. Donors express concern if we are not clear about where we will be going. We will help our cause by making clear where we plan to move, why it matters to ASOR, and how donors can help us reach this goal. The Executive Committee discussed who should be approached.

There is a NEH matching program that appears to fit our effort. For every \$3 we raise, they will provide a \$1 match up to \$500,000 total.

Andy Vaughn reported on the cost of the needed space in various markets. Ed Wright reports that the last major campaign was \$1.7 million over 3 years. We were especially successful in raising funds for scholarships.

6. Location, Location, Location

The Executive Committee discussed a range of locations where ASOR might move and the varying costs that would be involved. Sharon Herbert counseled us to consider our mission and vision and how a move to any given location relates to these. Following an extended conversation, members of the Executive Committee agreed to adjourn and revisit the possibilities during the second day of the meeting. The new location should advance ASOR's access to student and post-doc researchers who can participate in its programs and support and engage with CHI. It should provide visibility and access to key strategic partners, including government, non-profits, and academic institutions. The location should enable access to rapid, easy transportation, including by air. It should be affordable, enabling initial rental and subsequent purchase of a space.

Susan Ackerman said that she would like a signed sale agreement by end of her term at end of 2019. She does not want to saddle the new ASOR President with this issue.

7. Board-appointed trustees.

A number of candidates were discussed. The President will approach the potential Board members about their nomination.

8. 2017 AM post mortem

Susan Ackerman reported that the Boston meeting was big, with 1150 attendees. There were nearly 700 presentations, 74 posters, and 110 sessions. Eric Meyers comments that the ASOR meeting has grown up and asked whether we should only consider major venues henceforth. Eric Meyers mentioned that the 2100 strong Association for Jewish Studies has its meeting in the same place but moves every 5<sup>th</sup> year and are very successful.

Andy Vaughn mentioned that the impact of a larger meeting is that ASOR membership increases. We grew to 1825. Heather McKee asked about the retention rate, to which Andy replied that 1400 people typically remain members and of the other 400, about 50% retain membership, when they go to annual meeting. The key issue with the suggestion by Eric Meyers, that ASOR stick to one location, is that ASOR would have to separate from SBL. We could achieve lower room rates if ASOR were not meeting with SBL because we can shop several cities on East Coast at the same time.

Susan Ackerman described the Task Force of which Gary Arbino is chair. They are aiming to set a lunch meeting time in Denver so that people can air their opinions about the possibility of not meeting in tandem with SBL. The SBL 2020 Annual Meeting is in Boston. By 2021 we have to have a new game plan in mind for San Antonio, because we will be blocked out of downtown San Antonio by AAR/SBL's size.

Andy Vaughn mentioned that SBL is going to compare our membership and attendee list with theirs in order to help us assess what impact there might be on members if a change were made. In San Antonio, only 125 people out of 900 paid for both conferences. Andy Vaughn said that he would check on the numbers for the Boston meeting.

Andy Vaughn is now a certified travel agent and this provides ASOR financial benefits.

Susan Ackerman summarized the survey results from the 10% of attendees who responded. The comments included: expensive rooms, packages, drinks at opening reception; isolated; nowhere easy to walk to for eating. The neighborhood has improved slightly since we were last there, but the critique is valid.

Andy Vaughn and others said that the meeting felt full and vibrant, and that the meeting was more successful because more people were staying at the hotel. Susan Ackerman mentioned that the one area where there was a lack of energy and vibrancy was in the exhibit hall.

The Executive Committee discussed the acceptance rate of papers at the ASOR Annual Meeting. Ann Marie Knoblauch mentioned that scholars who are undergoing tenure review may find that conferences in which all papers are accepted are not valued for promotion. A discussion ensued, including acknowledgment that the Programs Committee made a decision in 2017 to raise this issue with session chairs in 2018.

The meeting was adjourned for the day at 5pm.

## **SUNDAY, Day 2 of Executive Committee Meeting**

Richard Coffman called the meeting to order at 9am.

### **9. Location Redux**

Susan Ackerman summarized the discussion about ASOR making a change in its location. A discussion ensued. Richard Coffman summarized the additional discussions as Washington DC being the area on which ASOR wishes to focus.

Andy Vaughn summarized the need for resources. Heather McKee agrees that we do not want to depend on rainy day funds long-term. She volunteered to speak with ASOR's accountant in order to get a better sense of our whole operating structure so she can understand the cash flow situation, including the impact of a change in publications management.

Richard Coffman commented that he believes that this is a matter of stepping out on faith, and that it is a step worth taking, that is, for ASOR to move to Washington DC suburbs.

A discussion ensued about location and support for a purchase following a period of renting. It became clear that ASOR needs information about costs in the Washington DC area in order to inform conversations with those who would support ASOR financially to achieve this goal. Also, ASOR's leadership will work to develop a competitive NEH Challenge Grant application. Once details on these topics have been gathered, particularly about costs for available locations, then there will be a conference call of everyone on the EC, by early March.

**BE IT RESOLVED:** The Executive Committee modifies the Board resolution of November 2017 to state that ASOR shall move its offices, shall initially rent space, with a view towards purchasing office space in the location that best accords with ASOR's Strategic Plan. Unanimously approved.

Andy Vaughn commented on the schedule for the April Board meeting. April 20-22 is the ARCE meeting. Susan Ackerman explained that we are seeking to forge relationships with regional ORCs beyond those with whom we are currently affiliated. The Spring board meeting also will have an intellectual component as a nod to our shared intellectual interests and endeavors. Ed Wright is planning cultural events in Tucson, star gazing...etc. EC and Board meeting are scheduled on same day: Saturday.

The Chairman declared the meeting adjourned at 11AM.