

Synopsis of previous discussions of the current strategic plan

Breakout sessions at the November 2024 Board meeting

Emily's Group

- ASOR and the situation in West Africa (colleagues in Sudan).
- Mission creep: ASOR in Africa.
- Increasing local engagement wherever ASOR works.
- Scholarly vs. humanitarian mission
- Cultural Heritage as a part of outreach and engagement: attracting new members and audiences
- Membership is rapidly changing—want to see more social activism—how do we continue to move it forward?

Lynn's group:

- How are we using the talent of our Board?
- If we have a Strategic Plan, are we going to take it seriously by measuring what we do?
- Employment landscape: resources for members, professional development, workforce development
- How we might do better at communicating the way we acquire knowledge?
- Institutional membership: one page for university administrations
- CAP affiliations and how might to brand those opportunities
- Mission creep: there is real value in CH—and it is not separate from fieldwork.

Kate's Group:

- CHI work and its connection to the mission statement
- DEI
 - Good: public outreach at the annual meeting
 - Not working as well: heavy workload of session assistants from Hansbury Society
- Digital challenges (AI, ethics, increased access) and how they fit in the plan
- Pedagogy and broadening our understanding of professional expertise
- Structure of committees and the Board.

Jane's Group:

- Where does ASOR fit in the upcoming political landscape
- Improving communications with the membership
- Geographical range of ASOR: what we are doing and why we are doing it, how do we expand? What does expansion look like?
- Strategic Plan process and the need for a task force

EC half day discussion at February 2025 retreat

Each of the six SP areas were assessed on the following bases:

1. Stronger Overhaul?
2. Did we exceed expectations? What areas?
3. Fall short?
4. If so, must they carry forward?
5. Are items still a priority?
6. New aspirational goals?
7. Grade/assess ourselves

Scores:

AM 8.25

CH 8.5

DEI 9.38

PUB 6.75

OUT 6.75

Members 9

Brief overviews of each:

Area 1: The Annual Meeting (Kiersten)

Kiersten emphasized goals of producing the highest quality content, increasing attendance and revenue, and working toward a carbon neutral footprint.

She provided this updated list:

1. How to positively manage growth of meeting? More competitive, yet maintain participation. Is the meeting too large? If we increase is it through numbers of attendees and/or geography?
2. Retaining and revising DEI language and goals
3. Hybrid model: how it affects revenue & carbon-neutral goals

Area 2: Cultural Heritage (Eric)

Eric offered summary remarks on this goal, which included the observation that we have a large footprint for our CH work. Protection and Preservation actions (item 2A) are successful.

Discussion around promotion, documentation, and presentation began with the observation that the AM session on ASOR CHI was not well attended. Eric raised the issue the State Department funding situation is unlikely to improve.

There was further discussion on the need for us to make more visible what we *have* accomplished in the area of CHI (Moroccan initiatives, Jewish groups, Christian charities).

Jane pointed out that CH is prevalent in almost every AM session. Kiersten observed there has been excitement for the geographic diversity of the AM.

Andy reported that we are stronger overall in CH, and that investment/grant applications are moving forward, particularly in the private sector.

Area 3: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (Kate)

Kate reported that the goal to increase membership from BIPOC communities has been very successful, and attendance at meetings has been more diverse. We need to increase our efforts to seek stronger relationships with other organizations.

There was discussion about other organizations changing their DEI language, and national policy/legal implications. Kiersten asked about discussion on this topic from CCC. Chuck replied there is state policy that could endanger some members. Sharon responded that the DEI Committee is seeking guidance from EC.

The general sentiment is that ASOR's work is rooted in diversity, and we should continue our efforts. Andy reported that we need not be concerned with lawsuits as funding for our scholarships is from private donors.

There was discussion about how to make our accomplishments in collaboration with diverse communities and increasing work on intangible heritage forward facing without drawing negative attention.

Important points on the need to think long term and not in the moment led EC to conclude that we need to keep doing the work we do regardless of any vocabulary we might adjust. We need to be sustainable, and not reactionary.

Area 4: Publications (Chuck)

Chuck reported that overall we are doing a good job. Monographs are more regular.

On goal #4B (new frontiers, digital publications) Chuck reported that there is good but slow progress. Discussion of continual evolution of best practices and how to proceed.

On goal #4C (wider audience) Chuck reported this seems to be working.

Chuck reported and Sharon confirmed the *BASOR* and *JCS* backlogs have gone away.

Chuck reported that the goal to increase diversity of Editorial Boards and contributors has been successful. Sharon remarked on the international background of editors and Lynn pointed out this is part of the effort to engage international members.

Discussion on outsourcing monographs for a number of reasons: better quality, better open access, and better alignment with DEI initiatives. Andy responded there is opportunity and funds for this.

The EC agreed that the SP must be revised on this goal – to improve publications and digital access, and make them more readily available to membership, perhaps at AM.

Area 5: Public Outreach (Lynn)

Lynn addressed the goal of publicly engaged scholarship. How public-reaching are *ANE Today* and *NEA* really? SP must address this more directly. Webinars are helping with this – need them to do more. What online content can be circulated? The Strange Center can serve as a physical site to do more public outreach. What kind of programming can we develop? Ideas suggested included CAP affiliation, wider-reaching field schools, look at AIA models for local chapters, and bringing more members of the public to the AM, including donors. We need to be better storytellers, and Rachel can help in this work.

SP will need more goals here. Eric asked for more specific ideas for Strange Center. Lynn asked about potential events. Kiersten offered comparison to ISAC events and groups.

- Language programs for local learners
- Interactive courses, workshops, cooking classes.
- Can all be tax benefit.
- Partnering with local organizations – Smithsonian, Sackler.
- How to support the potential new idea of 'Friends' or 'Presidential Council' to do more?

Lynn concluded we need to update SP in greater capacity. Perhaps through more open access and online resources that is front facing and perhaps even ad-supported. There was discussion about podcasts and livestreaming the AM plenary. Do we need a study to see where we are missing opportunities?

Area 6: Supporting the Work of Our Members (Emily)

Emily asked what are the benefits for membership in terms of publication? Also, what can be done to get institutional membership to increase? Andy suggested the online library (3000 presentations) is one benefit we must advertise

On #6B (field work finding) Andy reported we've awarded 50 scholarships of \$2,000 each; also growing excavation grants and research fellowships. Emily agrees these have helped a great deal, and also suggested there is need for more mid-career support.

Andy reported on annual grant and fellowship goals. Right now we are at \$250K and eventually we will get to \$500k.

Emily remarked that the smaller endowments grow and eventually provide large benefits. Andy continued to say that these successes can be better publicized. Jane suggested more publicity around the scholarships. Andy suggested some ECS benefits might be linked to institutional membership.

Discussion of #6D (fellowships in support of BIPOC and underserved communities) noted that the endowment is the place for such funds.

Discussion of #6E (in-house resources in support of Archaeological Fieldwork) resulted in observation that this is very much a work in progress. Emily pointed out that this needs to be linked to membership benefits.