

## Treasurer's Report

### *Stable financial position and expanding services:*

The ongoing generosity of ASOR donors and the careful management of the Schwab endowments ASOR continue to be important in securing ASOR's financial stability. At the same time we must acknowledge that the uncertainty surrounding federal grant money and the current instability of the financial markets present challenges to the organization's ability to continue to grow at the pace it has in recent years, circumstances reflected in the budget and budget notes documents. As our Form 990 (<https://www.asor.org/about-asor/financial-documents/>) indicates ASOR total assets reached \$9 million dollars as of June 30, 2024 and net assets were up by more than \$1.8 million over the prior year. I want to repeat the statement we made last year that while we can remove names from the documents we post, those names must be included on filings with the federal government, and so in the end still discoverable should anyone wish to do so.

The notes to the budget provide additional information about the line items in the Budget to Forecast for 2025 and proposed budget for 2026, but this report will highlight certain key elements.

- ASOR already has realized benefits from the establishment of two new endowments, the Shepard Endowment for Emergency Action Grants and the M.E. Strange Endowment for Diaspora Heritage Program Educational Programming.
- The Annual Meeting, conducted in FY 25 as both in person and virtual, had financial results that were net unfavorable by about \$60,000 so an improvement over FY 24. Registrations were up by nearly \$21,000. Audio-visual support continues to be a significant expense, but the new procedures that involve loading slide presentations in advance of the annual meeting and the provision of virtual participation have greatly enhanced the quality of the experience of the sessions and their accessibility.
- Although as observed in Exhibit B educational events no longer include webinars as an income source (although they are an expense) the transition to designated gifts for supporting the FOA Webinar program has been very successful. Both the number of attendees and the dollars raised have increased which indicates that the move to free webinars with donations to support the program has had a positive effect. We had projected \$10,000 in revenue from the FOA Webinars and as of 13 March 2025 we were at \$9,032.65. Rachel and Regan have promoted the webinars with other societies and organizations no doubt contributing to the increases noted. Proposed tours are discussed in Exhibit B.
- Individual membership numbers have held steady and are at about the same level now as they were in FY 2024. We are hopeful that individual memberships will rise again stimulated in part by the impending celebration of ASOR's 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Institutional memberships remain unchanged, and the current

environment and financial uncertainties may lead to a continuation of the steady decline of the recent past.

- The ambitious ASOR 2025 campaign already has realized \$4,634,000 in pledges and contributions reinforcing our sense that ASOR will continue to grow, and that this year's financial shortfalls will be reversed in the future.

In addition to the balances presented ASOR Net Investments to March 31, 2025 (Exhibit C) and in the summary table found in Exhibit C, I call your attention to the following market balances (not accrual based) of the following Accounts (as of March 31, 2025):

- Cash Accounts = \$1,614,591.74
  - Truist Checking = \$128,117.39
  - Schwab General Fund (quasi-checking) 30= \$798,267.13
  - Schwab Temporarily Restricted = \$686,308.00
  - Truist Temporarily Restricted (Fed. Grants) = \$1,899.22
- Board-designated Accounts = \$803,106.57
  - Opportunity Fund for Publications (Board-designated) = \$147,591.28
  - Building Fund = \$466,904.01
  - Kershaw Fund = \$188,711.28
- General Endowment for Operations = \$1,541,016.58
- Accounts with donor restrictions (other than General Endowment) = \$3,703,977.58
  - Harris Endowment = \$171,193.62
  - Platt Endowment = \$287,743.75
  - G. E. Wright / Shirlee Meyers Endowment = \$144,917.93
  - MacAllister Endowment = \$183,641.29
  - Strange / Midkiff Endowment = \$249,161.30
  - Carol and Eric Meyers Endowment = \$291,127.28
  - Seger Endowment = \$103,691.69
  - Dana 1 Scholarships Endowment = \$389,058.65
  - Geraty Endowment = \$171,763.52
  - Mason Endowment = \$58,632.36
  - BIPOC Endowment = \$280,689.16
  - Dana 2 Scholarships Endowment = \$451,978.88
  - Dana 3 Excavation Endowment = \$496,375.48
  - Thomas/Bishop = \$59,019.55
  - E. Strange Endowment = \$468,967.16
  - Shepard Endowment = \$103,622.88

The increase in the value of the endowment accounts overall can be attributed in large part to the generous contributions to existing accounts and the creation of new accounts. We also had

been fortunate to enjoy significant increases from the improvements in the investment world with a percentage increase for individual accounts, and even with the recent turbulence in the markets still have enjoyed a rate of return through 31 March 2025 of about 4.3%. ASOR continues to benefit from the generosity of those who support the institution's mission.

We want to remind you that ASOR continues to allocate assets as provided in our Investment Policy. While our policy provides for a semi-annual rebalancing to maintain the allocations set forth below, our practice has been to do such rebalancing on a quarterly basis. The handout presents our investment performance. This steady approach should serve us well in these turbulent markets.

Large Cap = 45%  
 Small Cap = 15%  
 International = 20%  
 Fixed = 15%  
 Cash = 5%

### *Challenges*

In the face of the good news from both the ASOR 2025 campaign and the growth of our endowments, ASOR nevertheless confronts the same issues that everyone in higher education does and the challenges that we have reported on in the past remain.

\*The dissemination of research and excavation results remains an important part of our mission but contributes only modestly to our financial health. Subscriptions are down about 5% for University of Chicago Press, and the acceleration of adopting open access modes of sharing information that situation is unlikely to change. We cannot expect to get more than our guaranteed minimums from UCP and may face a request to lower that minimum. Book sales also remain down, and the path forward is not clear. The publications committee has started to explore other options with book (e.g., other partnerships or distributors). Our present approach of publishing internally may not be sustainable.

\*Providing an opportunity for scholarly exchange and connection building among professionals also remains important but again will never directly provide significant benefits to the bottom line. The budget for the Annual Meeting is predicated on the reality of the favorable terms for the venue in Boston and on the hope that circumstances in Gaza and Israel will have improved. The Annual Meeting remains important for the bridges it builds and for the extent to which it encourages donors.

\* We are optimistic that the Annual Fund, standing at \$103,000, will reach the budgeted \$150,000 (including bank fee gifts) before the end of the fiscal year.

\*Finally, we will also note that the goal was to establish a Building Fund of \$500,000, a target we have not yet reached but continue to inch toward. It is not clear that the bronze plaque mounted adjacent to the entry at the Strange Center with enough spaces

for the names of donors of five more gifts of \$10,000 each toward that fund is sufficient in and of itself to attract the last few gifts to reach the \$500,000 target. Perhaps a photograph of the plaque in *ASOR Today* and a link to the 125<sup>th</sup> celebration would inspire a few more donors.

We must also recognize that new and potentially more significant challenges have appeared with a new administration in Washington DC.

\*The likelihood of federal grant moneys is uncertain. ASOR has received positive feedback on our AFCP grant that is currently “paused,” but a reinstatement is not guaranteed. We have also heard some encouraging news for new applications, but there is much uncertainty. This means that some administrative expenses, such as a portion of the Executive Director’s salary may not be charged to those funds, increasing the demand on unrestricted revenue for the organization’s operating expenses. There are no items in our budget for which we can reduce our funding and remain true to our mission. We must be active in seeking additional sources of income, and ASOR has been in contact with private and European state donors.

\*We also must assume that again at least in the near term the markets will remain volatile; this may have an unfavorable impact on our endowment funds. We will continue to provide support through scholarships and grants but will need to be even more proactive in seeking funds from non-governmental sources. The cautionary note we must include is that if this instability persists people in the private sector may feel constrained in their giving plans. At the same time, ASOR remains attractive to donors in this period of volatility because of our solid financial position and our ability to continue operations with the use of prior year funds if necessary.

#### *Conclusion:*

ASOR’s financial stability made possible by the generous contributions of ASOR’s supporters, and the number and amount of endowment funds bodes well for ASOR’s future. The dedication and commitment of our members and of the Trustees who support the work keep the organization true to its mission. Outreach in whatever forms we can manage will be even more critical in the coming months. We face some fiscal challenges but remain convinced that ASOR’s mission and record of achievements will enable us to continue to get support from our expanding circle of donors. The Executive Director should be commended for the work in securing grants, working effectively with donors and for managing the Schwab accounts efficiently. Finally, thank you to the members of the Finance Committee for their work.