



**ASOR Executive Committee February Retreat
February 15-16, 2025
The James F. Strange Center, Alexandria VA
Saturday 9AM–5PM EST
Sunday 9AM-11:30AM EST**

Present: Emily Miller Bonney, Lynn Swartz Dodd, Jane DeRose Evans, Sheldon Fox, Kate Grossman, Sharon Herbert, Chuck Jones, Eric Meyers, Kiersten Neumann, Sarah Scott, Andy Vaughn

Absent: Jason Ur

Guest: Marta Ostovich

Morning 2/15 Convene at Strange Center at 9:00 AM

Preliminary Matters (Sheldon)

9:00 AM call to order

1. Sheldon welcomed new members Sarah Scott, Kiersten Neumann, and Jason Ur.
2. Approval of minutes and agenda

Emily moved. Jane seconded. Minutes approved with one correction: “dev. should be Dev.”

Morning Discussion Topic: Planning for the Next Strategic Plan

Introduction (Sharon)

The EC was thanked for their work. Discussion focused on an open-ended approach for future action through the Strategic Plan (SP), and the history of the SP was presented, as well as the alignment of the new plan with incoming President. The six SP areas were assessed.

Area 1: The Annual Meeting (Kiersten)

General discussion included the desire to produce the highest quality content, increase attendance and revenue, and work toward a carbon neutral footprint. Questions on growth management, weighing competition against participation, meeting size, DEI language and goals, and the hybrid model were discussed. Financial figures and attendance numbers were reviewed.

Scholarships were discussed. Concern over federal worker ban, and costs were raised.

Area 2: Cultural Heritage (Eric)

Summary remarks included the observations about the large footprint for our CH work. Protection and Preservation actions are successful. Discussion around promotion, documentation, and presentation began with the observation that the AM session on ASOR CHI was not well attended. EC concurred more visibility would be good. Concern about State Department funding was raised. Further discussion emphasized that global accomplishment in CH have been made, and should be made more visible. Additional points included

the presence of CH in other AM sessions, that CH is stronger now than before, and that the new SP should include examples of the work.

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

Report indicated 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.

Discussion cited other organizations changing their DEI language, and national policy/legal implications. EC discussed concern for member safety around this issue, and will seek to provide guidance. The general sentiment is that ASOR's work is rooted in diversity, and we should continue our efforts by making our work forward facing without drawing negative attention, and thinking long-term rather than being reactionary.

Break

11:05 resume

Area 4: Publications (Chuck)

Report indicated overall we are doing a good job. Monographs are more regular. New frontiers and digital publications are making good but slow progress. Discussion of continual evolution of best practices and how to proceed. Numbers reflect increased engagement with digital resources, but less with *NEA*. Discussion on how to improve readership among student populations. *BASOR* and *JCS* backlogs are gone. Diversity and internationalization regarding contributions and editors' efforts are successful. Outsourcing and increasing readership was discussed.

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)

The goal of publicly engaged scholarship was addressed and questions asked regarding how the SP must address the public-facing reality of *ANE Today* and *NEA*. Online content and in person programming (at the Strange Center) was discussed and ideas were presented.

EC discussed the need for greater capacity in SP goals for outreach. The possibility of a study was raised in order to see where ASOR might be missing opportunities.

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

Discussion included how publications and online library play a role in benefiting members. EC was asked to consider ways to increase institutional membership. Report on the growth and use of field work scholarships and grants; suggestion that there might be need for mid-career support. Report on annual grant and fellowship goals was discussed. Further discussion on the benefits provided by growing small endowments and the need for better publicity on these successes. Discussion on BIPOC and underserved communities' fellowships and in-house support of Archaeological Fieldwork. Determined there should be clearer links to these opportunities through membership benefits, and observation made that this is very much a work in progress.

Adjourned for lunch 12:20

Rating the success of our current plan (Sheldon) and Next steps (Sharon): *Moved to 2/16*

1:00 PM: 4 Broad Topics: Communications and Outreach, Finances and Development, Governance, and Publications

Topic 1 Communication and Outreach

125th celebration and logo (Sheldon)

Report presented the 125th Celebration Committee that formed in late January. Logo for celebration and site options (Hilton Boston or elsewhere) were discussed. Decisions will be made by March 1st. Format of celebration and potential partners were discussed. The need for ECS support and scholarships was raised, and it was made known a lower-key event might be a good option. Further discussion about a keynote attendee and capacity.

Statement policy redux in light of ongoing events, particularly in Israel, Lebanon, and Palestine, and feedback. Recurring and new hot topics: contested university; Israeli Antiquities Law; “Conference on Archaeology in “Judea and Samaria” <https://arch-js.co.il>; proposed new Israeli antiquities law <https://main.knesset.gov.il/en/news/pressreleases/pages/press11225s.aspx> (Sharon)

President noted that this challenge is continual. ASOR wants to maintain values as we continue to work with good people and support our members when they have their own views. PC asked for guidance regarding paper and session proposals from a university in occupied/contested territory. This is particularly important given the need for guidance for 2025 AM submissions. The report from the Ad hoc committee on contested territories was presented. Discussion focused on impact to communities and current ASOR policy which has no language about affiliations. Suggestion to look to ASOR professional conduct policy 3B6 which addresses cooperation with such bodies without naming them. EC recommends forming guidelines that prohibit presenting such institutions’ names in print and that ASOR should witness and support the work of colleagues who want to work together when their regions are at war. It was noted that the language we use must be composed carefully. International Law is a topic to consider in light of this concern. EC determined the need for clarity in policy going forward.

Topic 2 Finances and Development

Discussion of current budget status. Reduction of federal funding and ramifications on staffing and programs. Strategies for dealing with reductions (Andy)

Comparative Analyses of Revenues, Endowments, and Assets (Exhibit A)

ASOR Net Investment to December 2024 (Exhibit B)

List of grants for FY24 and FY25 (Exhibit C)

ASOR Staff and Interns (Exhibit D)

Report shared increase in the number of endowments, good returns for the first quarter of the fiscal year, but that building funds are not quite where we want them. Presentation and discussion of Exhibit C (will have further updates in May) and Exhibit A suggest we are good stewards of our resources, which makes us attractive to donors and that moving forward we are in good place to meet the needs of our members. Endowment will not need to be used for operating costs. Concern was raised regarding any financial impact if we lose the ability to take from direct and indirect federal grants. ASOR will focus on fundraising and ways to be more flexible and less reactive to federal restrictions.

Development progress and plans. Should we establish a visiting committee? (Lynn and Sharon)

Update on fundraising goal of \$5 million - we are currently at \$4.55M. Contributors were thanked. Greater visibility of the outcomes was recommended. Report indicated that while it is a tricky time for fundraising, members have confidence in ASOR and it remains important to keep communicating about ASOR’s mission so that we are all encouraged to consider making donations and creating endowed funds.

The concept of a ‘visitors’ group was discussed; Their role would be letting people know more about ASOR, and being part of the organization, without being Trustees. Cultivating such a group would help with filling potential board positions. Discussion about additional ways people might contribute and how we might further build out our capacity.

Topic 3 Governance

Remarks on CCC: (Chuck) Report indicated structure works very well, but may need more time in which to do so. Recommended the Chair of the Trustee Nominations Committee come to the CCC and talk about finding potential Board members.

New CCC chair approvals

Fred Winter as chair for CH and Luiza Osorio G. Silva as co-chair for Early Career Scholars.

Kate moved. Eric seconded.

BE IT RESOLVED that the Executive Committee acting on behalf of the Board accepts the recommendation of the Chairs Coordinating Council and recommends that Board appoint Fred Winter to an initial three-year term as Chair of the Cultural Heritage Committee (January 1, 2025–December 31, 2027).

BE IT RESOLVED that the Executive Committee acting on behalf of the Board accepts the recommendation of the Chairs Coordinating Council and recommends that the Board appoint Luiza Osorio G. Silva to an initial three-year term as Co-Chair of the Early Career Scholars Committee (January 1, 2025–December 31, 2027).

Both unanimously approved.

Adjourned at 5:00P

Morning 2/16

8:45 AM Re-convened at Strange Center

Continued discussion of contested territories, AM submissions, sessions, and presentations

EC deliberated on how to proceed with concise language for PC to use regarding AM

Preliminary submission on occupied/contested territories was discussed, focusing on how to be concise but considerate of the continually evolving situation. After considerable discussion and an initial failed resolution, the Executive Committee approved the following guidance to the program committee:

BE IT RESOLVED that the Executive Committee offers the following guidance to the Program Committee:

Final submission:

ASOR is committed to the dissemination of scholarly knowledge about the broad geographic and chronological parameters of the regions in which ASOR members work and these include occupied territories. These areas include territories in which there may be at any given moment a dispute about which national entity or population properly has political control. Scholars affiliated with institutions established in these territories without the cooperation of the competent national authority can produce work that would be of interest to ASOR members or the wider public. If ASOR accepts (based on its scholarly review), sessions, papers, posters, or other presentation formats for the Annual Meeting from scholars associated with these institutions, it will not publish in the program those institutional affiliation(s) of the presenters or organizers whose proposals it accepts. Presenters may not include any such references to those institutional affiliation(s) in their visual, oral, or written materials.

Chuck moved to adopt revised language. Eric seconded.

8 votes for; 2 abstentions. Resolution carried

10:30: Topic 3 Governance (con't.)

Further discussion of DEI language. Question: Do we need to change the committee name?

Discussion about whether members of the committee would find a re-naming helpful given their position in individual institutions and that the Committee planned a meeting to discuss this on 2/25. Noted that we cannot amend without changing the bylaws. EC agreed supporting the DEI Committee on what they would like to do following their meeting. EC supports them in their consideration of the name change, following appropriate changes to the bylaws 30 days prior to May 3rd meeting.

Committee memberships and methods of selection (Sharon)

The process for selection was reviewed: 8 CCC committees (action committees) 7 board-appointed committee (support). The CCC committees self-nominate, and area approved via democratic votes. Chairs are nominated by Chairs Nominating Committee, then go to the CCC and EC/Board for votes. Suggestions have come forward that there should be more leadership presence on the committees. Question to EC: should there be 1-2 EC members on those committees? Point raised that the President may appoint an individual from EC to sit on Committees.

Discussion about why this has come up. Reported that self-nominations sometimes result in internal duplication of personnel and perhaps there is need to add someone to increase balance of perspectives and experiences. EC determined an attendee would be of service as a means of providing a conduit of communication when the President is not able to attend whole or partial meetings.

Procedures for identifying and recruiting Board appointed trustees (Sharon)

Discussion on how to best proceed. Topics included timeline and the need for flexibility when ideal candidate become apparent through interactions with Pres, Board Chair, and ED. The potential 'visitors' (or 'president's council') might be a way to vet such individuals.

Enlarging the Personnel Committee (Sharon)

This has been done by adding the COP co-chairs and the CHC chair.

Topic 4 Publications

***ANE Today*, Substack, and other social media platforms (Sharon)**

Request for EC to consider how our more public oriented platforms interact with social media. This came to EC because a member was concerned about moving *ANE Today* to Substack because it does not monitor platforms (anti-trans, Nazi organized publications). After discussion of other organizations and the rationale for moving it, EC concurred Substack makes sense.

How to best support and fund our monograph series (Sharon and Andy)

Agenda item rolled into SP discussion for May.

Revisit Strategic Planning—map out preferred timeline, procedures, information gathering methods, potential committee or task force members. (Sheldon)

Each area of SP was scored.

Decision to create a dedicated committee, with co-chairs Sharon and Jane; other members to be invited. May 2025 board meeting is the deadline for formation of this committee. Suggestions for proceeding included developing the mission/values and action points with §CC, formatting, separating the plan from the action

items, and removing the preface and backstory.

Lynn moved. Kate seconded.

BE IT RESOLVED that the Executive Committee appoints Sharon and Jane to lead the Strategic Plan Task Force.

Unanimously approved.

EC members Sheldon, Emily, and Kiersten volunteered for the committee. Recommendation for constituency meetings as potential place for content, process, and personnel. In-person gathering of the task force was suggested. This would follow previous SP tradition. The EC and task force were asked to consider big picture ideas and not be bound to existing structure/points.

EC recommended the call for a VP go out by May.

Adjourned 11:29.