ASOR Membership and Outreach Annual Report 2025
Submitted by Theodore W. Burgh

To begin with, this is Teddy Burgh's final report as chair of Membership and Outreach. I'd like to take a moment to thank Teddy for his many years of service. I, Laura Mazow (for those who don't know), am the incoming chair of Membership and Outreach Committee, to begin in January. According to Teddy's notes, here, and I quote "The committee looks forward to her leadership."

The ASOR Membership and Outreach Committee reports the following for 2025:

ASOR Membership:
   It is our understanding that ASOR membership remains solid. There are 2,020 active members and 53 member institutions.

US: 1,391
Israel: 88
Canada: 99
UK: 37

We continue to have members located in Turkey, Egypt, Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, Kenya, Iraq, Iran, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, and Tunisia.

Membership Renewal:
   The committee, with the ASOR staff, is investigating ways to promote auto-renewal of annual membership.

Friends of ASOR (FOA) is a currently a subcommittee of Membership and Outreach. As such, the committee is exploring the role of Friends of ASOR in relation to membership and membership benefits – in other words, what content is public and freely available vs. what's behind a membership paywall. FOA Webinars and ANEToday, which is distributed through the FOA email list, are currently free, as is most items identified as "education".

Possibly Establishing a Mentoring Network
   The committee discussed working with the GIV Committee to have a membership benefit for early career colleagues who join ASOR to be part of a mentoring network.

The network would consist of pairing them with willing senior scholars when possible. The pairs would meet or be in contact throughout the year to discuss the early career colleagues' progression, address questions, discuss research ideas, etc. This would help in developing a social network for these new members immediately upon them becoming a part of ASOR, as well as establishing important relationships, guidance, etc. This work would of course be connected with the Programming Committee for scheduling, activities, etc., at the Annual Meeting.

Feedback on the DRAFT of the ASOR 2026 Strategic Plan

The committee also reviewed the draft of the strategic plan and found many ways that this committee could contribute to the strategic plan. Some of the items discussed, that relate particularly to the parts of the plan designated "looking outward" and "preparation for the future," include:

-Work to focus on what ASOR can do or does that is unique, different, etc., than other similar organizations, particularly in terms of developing these areas in social media, so that we are not simply re-posting.

-Develop and promote ASOR's photo and video archive. Highlight these essential educational resources.

-Make the on-line resources more accessible, user-friendly and organized. To do this effectively, check to see if there are there any issues with the ASOR website's capabilities.

-Increase resources dedicated toward organizing the website and maintaining it as an up-to-date resource.

-Inquire about website metrics/analytics to assist in organization. For example, what areas of the website are being visited the most? What resources are being utilized the most? Review social media posts, etc., to see what has done well or has been the most popular.

-Be involved as necessary with social media input.

ASOR Virtual Archaeology

The Committee continues to develop the ASOR Virtual Archaeology Initiative.

-ASOR did a little more with advertising this year:

-For example, advertisements were sent to fieldwork scholarship recipients;

-Invited submissions were submitted generally on the website post via advertisement (https://www.asor.org/news/2025/07/virtual-archaeology-initiative-dig-diaries)

The committee is exploring ideas to increase participation in ASOR Virtual Archaeology:

    -Consider making a brief video required for the fieldwork reports. Right now, people submit a written report and photos, with the option to contribute to the virtual archaeology initiative. Making it required of scholarship recipients would generate more videos and hopefully more traffic to the site.

    -We understand that there may be some concern regarding some projects not allowing videos, but these can be addressed on a case-by-case basis if necessary.

Goals for M&O 2026 and Beyond

  -The committee discussed approaches to the future with AI (e.g., how can we use this tool effectively?), along with setting long-term goals.

  -We had some brief discussion regarding the development of AI tools to read ancient languages. ASOR can be instrumental in working with people in sharing what they've found useful or not. ASOR can also assist in assessing AI so that people can use the tools effectively or not at all.

  -We also discussed developing workshops with people who have knowledge of AI with ASOR.

  -This work could help ASOR to possibly establish certifications in how to use AI effectively.