

ASOR Publications Committee (COP) Agenda
Kevin McGeough, Presiding
Thursday, November 21, 2024
8:20–10:20 am, Hilton Boston Park Plaza
Minutes taken by Moni Islam

Present: Andy Vaughn, Petra Goedegebuure, Jacob Lauinger, Kevin McGeough, Sharon Herbert, Gary Arbino, Andrea Berlin, Stephanie Budin, Jana Mynářová, Eric Kansa, William Caraher, Jessica Nitschke, Susan Cohen, Marwan Kilani, Chuck Jones, Jennie Ebeling, Adam Miglio

Absent: Jennifer Singletary, Alison Gruseke, Jeff Howry, Jimmy Schryver, Samuel Wolff, Simeon Chavel, Seth Richardson, Paul Delnero, Regine Pruzsinszky

Guests: Moni Islam, Sarah Kansa

1. Call to Order and Introductions: 8:22AM
2. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meetings

Kevin moved, Gary seconded, Petra abstained. Minutes approved.

3. Approval of Agenda

Kevin moved, Gary seconded. Agenda approved.

4. Acceptance of Reports of Chair and Editors

Kevin moved, Gary seconded. Acceptance of reports approved.

Items for Discussion and Possible Action

1. Discussion of the Non-English Language Abstract Initiative with *NEA*.

Andy explained translation firms handle most of them. Stephanie noted a lack of feedback and the need for a clearer workflow. Andy stated that costs are reasonable and raised the question of continuing the initiative. While Kevin noted limited feedback on usage, there was consensus that the initiative reflects goodwill, inclusivity, and global engagement, and should continue beyond one year. Stephanie added NEA has seen increased submissions from Iranian scholars, suggesting potential for broader international participation.

COP to explicitly continue Non-English Language Abstract Initiative with *NEA*. Andrea motioned. Gary seconded. Approved.

2. Welcome to the new *JCS* editors and incoming COP chairs, Eric and Sarah Kansa.
3. Recognition of Stephanie Budin's work as editor and update on *NEA* editor search. Motion going to Board on Sunday; most 2025 issues/articles ready to go, so expect there to be no problems with transition.
4. Nominations to fill class of 2027. Jake Lauinger, Jennifer Singletary, and Samuel Wolff are in the Class of 2023. Jake and Samuel are cycling off. Jennifer is eligible for one more term. Eric recommends Alexia Smith and Morag Kersel, and Sharon mentions Paul Flesher. Kevin states all are excellent candidates and will organize CVs to distribute around.
5. Summary of UCP report.

Kevin presented the UCP report, noting stable online usage and strong Maarav circulation, with no expectation of significant growth in views or downloads. Usage by ASOR publication members has more than doubled, which was viewed positively, though Andy requested clarification on whether reported access reflects total visits or unique users; Kevin will follow up with UCP. Stephanie confirmed that access to journals has improved due to a streamlined membership portal. UCP's efforts to increase Maarav subscriptions in Israel were noted as having mixed results.

Discussion highlighted many of the most accessed BASOR articles from 2023 were older articles, prompting suggestions for recognizing top articles annually, as a benefit especially for early career researchers. Questions were raised about verifying usage metrics and potential gaming of download counts, with acknowledgment of both motivational benefits and limitations. Kari encouraged greater emphasis on archival content, noting strong interest in older articles and citations by non-academic audiences. Kevin reported positively on journal accessibility and Andy reviewed the financial terms of the UCP agreement, including minimum annual payments to ASOR that cover most, but not all, editorial costs.

6. Introduction of new ASOR Office Coordinator, Moni Islam, and role in publications.

Andy leaves 9:16am.

7. AI Issues

The committee discussed emerging AI-related concerns, including the Taylor & Francis acquisition and the use of published content to inform machine learning without author consent. Kari confirmed that UCP has no interest in such practices under the current contract, and any future involvement would require renegotiation. Chuck is aware there are broader concerns about JSTOR, including author dissatisfaction, potential AI initiatives, and some university presses moving away from the platform.

The group agreed on the need to address generative AI more proactively, particularly regarding its use in journal article writing and content generation. While limited uses for

translation assistance, grammar checks, and copyediting were seen as potentially acceptable, there was strong consensus that ASOR should develop a formal generative AI policy. Andrea emphasized that these issues are already present. Jessica noted that policies at peer journals should be reviewed, and others mention Program Committee and ECS Committee should be involved in the process.

COP will form a subcommittee to explore the usage of generative AI in publications. Kevin motioned. Gary seconded. Motion approved.

8. Discussion of editorial responsibilities related to author's/scholar's personal activities.

Simeon urged that ASOR adopt a policy addressing editorial responsibilities related to authors' personal activities and potential reputational risk. Andrea and Jessica raised questions about the necessity and optics of such a policy, noting that editors already have discretion to reject submissions and that formal language could invite lawsuits. Sharon trusts judgement of editors; if a situation is highly controversial, it is likely to be escalated to Sharon, Andy, and COP chair. Generally against making a policy as it could lead to unintended consequences – Adam agrees. Where does the responsibility go if editors approve a publication from an individual which later harms ASOR's reputation but editors were not aware of such information? Kevin clarifies responsibility is not on the editors.

Sarah asks about an ethics statement, Kevin replies there is none. Petra would be unhappy with ethics statement, concerned about potential lawsuits and unwarranted questions. Stephanie mentions there is an ethics policy that authors must read/agree to before publishing. Bill wonders if editors may be exposed by not having a policy or if lack of a policy will encourage or discourage lawsuits for desk-rejection. Adam believes lack of a policy will discourage/disincentivize such lawsuits, based on personal knowledge of law.

General agreement between editors there should be no change in policy at this point.

9. New Business or issues arising from the floor.

Stephanie asks about usage of double-blind peer review for other journals as it's a new process for NEA. BASOR has it, but not ANE Today.

Chuck would like to thank Kevin for his leadership over the years. Applause by committee.

Adjournment at 10:04 am.