



**ASOR Executive Committee Winter Retreat
January 31-February 1, 2026
The James F. Strange Center, Alexandria, VA**

Present: Emily Miller Bonney, Jane DeRose Evans, Sheldon Fox, Kate Grossman, Sharon Herbert, Kevin McKeough, Eric Meyers, Kiersten Neumann, Sarah Scott, Jason Ur, Andy Vaughn

Guest: Marta Ostovich

Saturday January 31, 2026

Preliminary Matters

1. Call to Order (9:07 Sheldon Fox) (welcome to Kevin and thanks to Sharon)
2. Approval of Agenda (9:05 Sheldon Fox)
3. Approval of the Minutes from the November 2025 EC Meeting (9:10 Sheldon Fox)
Emily moved. Kate seconded. Unanimous approval.

Nominations (Chairs)

Avary Taylor, co-chair Early Career Scholars Committee (9:15 Kevin McGeough)

Motion from CCC. Emily Seconded. Unanimous.

Jason requested overview of what ECS does, and Chairs' role. Discussion on the nature of Co-Chairs' role and how senior professionals are involved.

BE IT RESOLVED that the Executive Committee acting on behalf of the Board accepts the recommendation of the Chairs Coordinating Council and appoints Avary Taylor to an initial three-year term as co-Chair of the Early Career Scholars Committee (January 1, 2026–December 31, 2028).

Kevin will notify Avary.

Financial Matters

1. Financial Matters (Emily Miller Bonney and Andy Vaughn) Emily shared good news regarding fewer reserves being used than expected, but too early to forecast. Discussion about how and whether expanding institutional membership might help, as well as its benefits (students). Suggestion for Membership Committee to review these benefits. Further discussion on budget forecasting, sustainability and long-term planning, annual fund campaign, and operational needs.
2. Report on CHI, Tunis Public Affairs Office (9:50-10:10 Andy Vaughn)
MOU signed with Libya Dept of Antiquities in early Dec. Meetings with them, Lebanon, and Syria are all positive. Work with Tunisia on pause, due to challenges in Gaza, but outlook remains positive. MOU with Sudan. All this is evidence of continued interest from Muslim majority countries in working with ASOR. Positive outlook on future grant opportunities and the strategic work Darren is doing. Discussion of communities interested in supporting work in Syria.
3. Development (10:10-10:30 Kiersten Neumann and Andy Vaughn) Kiersten reported the need to add at least 3 members. Points of focus for Development include: 1. Legacy gifts (names welcomed), 2. Current endowments, 3. Annual Fund, 4. FOA: Kiersten, Laura Mazow, and Jane, are discussing the possibility of FOA becoming a subcommittee of Development – maybe first a working group (change of bylaws) rather than Membership & Outreach. EC in favor of Kiersten and Lisa working on this. Andy provided some history on FOA. Further discussion of unrestricted fundraising plan named the ‘Fund for ASOR.’

10:53 reconvene
4. Report on proposed publications contract (10:45-11:00 Andy Vaughn)
Andy provided background on overbudget book, why publications are important, and how the ISD proposal developed. The proposal has many benefits, including the good work and relationships with the Editors and staff. ISD will assume all cost for books, while ASOR will keep subventions as-is. Discussion about the completion of any backlog, paths for open access, and member pricing. Andy and Emily feel this is the best option for our budget and membership. Discussion about non-English manuscripts. Andy would like to see this move forward in the next month. No vote needed.
5. Report on proposed Blue Shield space (11:00-11:10 Andy Vaughn) Andy provided background on the US Committee of Blue Shield. AIA signed MOU with them a few years ago and ASOR has been approached to sign as well. CH Committee is discussing and Fred Winter (Chair) is in favor. It could have potential positive outcomes for future grants. Blue Shield would use Strange Center as mailing address.

BE IT RESOLVED that the Executive Committee, acting on behalf of the Board, authorizes the President and Executive Director to sign a general MOU with the US Commission of the Blue Shield without financial obligation to ASOR, contingent upon a Cultural Heritage Committee recommendation.

Motion made by Andy. Emily seconded. Unanimous.

President and ED to determine the address fee details.

EC discussed concern about UN affiliation. Andy reported that they are independent of the UN though they work closely with UN and UNESCO as an advisory body.

Report on CCC Activities (11:10 Kevin McGeough)

Motion from CAP regarding ASOR affiliation and universities on occupied territories. Jane underscored that Bylaws would need to be considered. Discussion of whether this also applies to civilian and/or government agencies, and how ASOR would respond given that that ASOR is apolitical. Discussion about whether ASOR would be exclusionary, and how we would compare with peer organizations. Jane emphasized this request came unanimously from CAP to the CCC. Further discussion of how to provide guidance in ways similar to what was done for PC in 2025 and how to bring all committees into alignment. Discussion of *BASOR* events. Discussion of how to determine if groups are working with competent national authorities.

Break for lunch at 12:20. Reconvene 1:03

Discussion of how to consider ‘*Civil Administration*’ in the wording. An edited motion will come back to EC Sunday.

Strategic Plan & Values Taskforce (Jane DeRose Evans) 1:30

Preliminary responses from membership survey included questions about geographic scope, AI, and why the lack of committee directives. Survey still open. Taskforce put it aside to look at Mission statement, resulting in discussions about aligning language between the Mission (more general and public) and the Strategic Plan (more specific and academic).

Values statement is now being developed by the Taskforce. The Strategic Plan and Values statement will both likely come for a vote at May meeting. Discussion about placing both Mission and Values statement together on same webpage, but distinct from Strategic Plan.

Formation of Taskforce on Policy of Professional Conduct; Jane indicated this has been more difficult than expected and is still being formed. Geographic representation and diversity of the committee will be emphasized.

Discussion topics

Onboarding to ASOR Board: processes, materials (1:00 Jane DeRose Evans, Kiersten

Neumann) Kiersten reviewed Ann's request. Kate and the Chairs Nominating Committee volunteered to work on it. Suggestion to use some materials from the previous ASOR Board of Trustees binder. Put together an orientation session on Zoom prior to BOT meeting.

IAA-Albright fellowship (1:20 Jane DeRose Evans) Jane reviewed the document. Discussion about clarity of where Fellows would work (IAA), how ASOR sponsorship aligns, funding sources, and visibility. Discussion about optics of the affiliation with IAA, how it will be presented to funders at Albright, and how it will be of benefit for strengthening ASOR ties to overseas organizations. EC asked for clarity on whether this is a concept note due to the relative lack of details. Andy asserted it is, and any approval would be with the understanding that it will eventually align as other affiliated grants. Discussion about timeline, who would be candidates (US vs. International; members only?), and how to move forward with concept note development.

BE IT RESOLVED that the Executive Committee, acting on behalf of the Board, authorizes the President and Executive Director to participate in the creation of an ASOR-IAA-Albright Internship concept note consistent with policies and guidelines of ASOR.

Emily moved. Kate seconded. Unanimous.
(removal of names on note by Jane and Andy)

Jane requested other items such as work in Tunisia be announced when this does.

Additional discussion Item (Jane): Director of the Palestinian Rural History Project requested ASOR to help his appeal to META regarding the removal of his project from FB. Discussion of why it was kicked off. Suggested he be directed to Eric and Sarah Kansa (COP) and/or the University of California libraries and Chuck Jones. Two issues – mentorship and publishing support.

Online Social Media Complaints: Some of these are impactful, particularly on younger scholars. Resignation of Board member and pressure being placed on other colleagues and younger scholars. Discussion about repercussions from program withdrawals and how they may not have been related to boycotts. Discussion of whether it would be beneficial for Jane to share something. What kind of messaging/PR style would be good? Discussion of how to better tell ASOR's story – town hall, survey, or membership meeting. Marta and Rachel will decide how to move forward – suggested a town hall first.

Sunday's item #3; Discussion of possible new Board- elected trustees (Andy). We are short 4 of 12.

Adjourned 4:29

Sunday February 1, 2026

1. Call to order (9:00 Sheldon Fox) (9:04)
2. Results of poll on possible candidates for Board-elected Trustees
Discussion. Andy, Sheldon, and Jane will proceed with invitations accordingly.
3. Continued discussion on CAP motion:
Review and discussion of new motion language.
Jane moved the motion. Emily seconded. Unanimous.

In response to CAP's request, EC offers the following guidelines:

EC Guidance to CAP on Guidelines

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. ASOR will neither include in its list of Committee on Archaeological Research & Policy (CAP)-affiliated projects institutions established in these territories without the cooperation of the competent national authority (see [ASOR's Policy on Professional Conduct, III. E. 7](#)) nor consider affiliation applications from such institutions.

EC thanked Kiersten for her work on revising this language.

4. Preliminary discussion on the current Policy on Professional Conduct
Jane provided an overview of the policy's background. Eric followed up with perspective from his scholarship. EC discussed the 'Cuneiform Exception' clause on topics including differing of opinions: 1. Between Assyriologists and other disciplines (e.g., art historians, object-based disciplines) and 2. Generational divide regarding unprovenanced objects in publications, ethical considerations, and preferential outcomes for western scholars. EC felt it would be good to have the editors of *JCS* and the Baghdad Committee weigh in, and the inclusion of multiple voices is key. Discussion about the language not being adjudicatory or punitive. Further discussion of what constitutes a primary publication and peer-review.

Jane raised the question of whether CAP guidelines also extend to COP. Discussion about the need for consistency across committees regarding all 'venues,' publications, and presentations. Sharon pointed out the statement regarding the code acting was designed to be invoked in cases of conflict. Discussion of urgency and 2027 as a preferred deadline for new language. EC in agreement the new Task Force should have original members (Lynn Dodd).

Further discussion of geographical reach of our publications – Rachel reported: Israel 115, Jordan 63, Tunisia 58, Türkiye 49. Andy indicated this tracks with funding. Jane commented on how this relates to the Social Media discussion – who is taking part in the organization, who is welcomed.

Discussion of item 7 (‘venues research that has been undertaken in occupied territory’). How to welcome Jordan back (ACOR)? Andy reported many folks favor returning, participation in trips and funding but feeling challenged to do so. Discussion on how to share sentiments without negative outcomes. Additional discussion of professional conduct policy regarding human remains and the benefits of language for this. Further discussion of individuals that would be beneficial to serve on the Task Force. Jane thanked the EC for fruitful discussion.

Andy reported that bids for the Strange Center Renovation were coming soon.

Announcement: BOT meeting May 1-3 at the Residence Inn.

Adjourned 10:30.