

Membership Report Spring 2011
Jennie Ebeling

The Membership Committee acknowledges the hard work of past Vice President of Membership, Tammi Schneider. Tammi accomplished a great deal during her tenure as VP, including working to expand the benefits of Institutional Membership in ASOR, challenging board members to recruit contributing members, adding a 'personal touch' to the renewal process through her many emails to individual and institutional members, and much more. The Membership Committee thanks her.

As of March 1, 2011, ASOR has the highest individual membership numbers in its history: 1392. Individual membership numbers have been growing steadily over the past few years. During the past two years, we have seen annualized growth of about 7% per year, which is strong compared to other learned societies. Kevin Cooney in the Boston office initiated two membership drives in February and March 2011 that have netted about 40 new individual memberships thus far; more membership drives are planned for later this year.

Institutional memberships stand at 85 as of April 15, 2011. This number has been trending downward during the past several years.

Retention Issues and Ideas

Issues persist with retaining members, especially those who join only to participate in the annual meeting. Members might be retained through good service in the Boston office, membership benefits and a feeling of belonging to ASOR. Membership service has improved with the hiring of Kevin, but we need to develop more benefits to individual members.

The Membership Committee met in November 2010 and came up with a list of ideas related to increasing individual members and providing membership benefits.

- Increase our web presence. We currently get the word out through emails, the ASOR website, the ASOR blog, and Facebook. Some ideas on how to engage the membership electronically include posting testimonials from members, dig volunteers, or junior scholars/graduate students to advertise the benefits of ASOR; publishing up-to-date news and recent finds in an electronic newsletter (similar to what AIA/Archaeology magazine does); and advertising how ASOR funding is at work supporting digs by publishing reports from fieldwork supported by ASOR grants.
- Increase the number of student memberships. This might be accomplished by requiring those participating in ASOR/CAP affiliated excavations to be members of ASOR. At least one ASOR/CAP affiliated project already requires this.
- Develop Annual Meeting events for members. We should make sure we have sessions that unite members with diverse interests. We could also develop events for our lay members at the AM.
- Develop membership through regional associations/events. Send local ASOR members 'on tour' to institutional member schools and other institutions to report on their projects and describe the benefits of ASOR membership.
- Utilize the expertise of ASOR members by developing archaeological handbooks. We might solicit summaries, reports, etc. from ASOR/CAP affiliated dig directors that could be published for the use of those touring the Middle East. We could also promote conservation of sites and highlight issues of preservation.
- Create new student travel grants for the AM. Find someone to sponsor more scholarships that help students attend the AM.