

# **DIG DEEPER, REACH HIGHER**

## **The ASOR Strategic Plan, 2016-2020**

### **Executive Summary**

For the past five years (2011-2015), ASOR has been well guided by the Strategic Plan adopted by the Board of Trustees in April 2010. But ASOR is a constant work in progress, so there is always more to be done. ASOR's goals for the next five years (2016-2020) are (I) to build on the accomplishments realized between 2011-2015 in four key program areas (Strategic Goals Nos. 1-4), and (II) to undertake four new initiatives that serve ASOR's increasingly diverse membership (Strategic Goals Nos. 5-8).

The four key program areas addressed in Strategic Goals Nos. 1-4 are the ASOR Annual Meeting, ASOR Publications, ASOR's relationships with its affiliated Overseas Research Centers, and the ASOR's Fellowships and Grants programs. Between 2011-2015, ASOR significantly enhanced the quality of each. Going forward, ASOR aims to achieve still more in these key program areas and to respond to several emerging challenges: for instance, integrating digital publications into our Publications program.

Strategic Goals Nos. 5-8 comprise new initiatives that address ASOR members' increasingly diverse interests, as well as the membership's increasingly diverse constituencies. For example, Strategic Goal No. 8, which concerns cultural heritage, addresses ASOR members' increasing interest in heritage protection, preservation, and presentation. Strategic Goals Nos. 5, 6, and 7, which concern fostering the next generation, greater enfranchisement of ASOR's international members, and public outreach, address the interests of student members, members who are just beginning their professional careers in the study of the Near East and wider Mediterranean, members whose professional expertise lies elsewhere, and international members. In addressing diversity, ASOR also intends better to enfranchise ethnic and minority communities that have been traditionally underrepresented within the organization.

Accomplishing these goals will require hard work, the development of expertise in emerging areas (such as digital publishing), and sufficient funding. Yet though our plans are ambitious, ASOR's 115+ years of success assure us that our aspirations can be realized. By 2020, ASOR will have advanced its long-standing position as a premier international organization dedicated to exploring, understanding, presenting, and preserving the history and cultures of the Near East and wider Mediterranean.

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**The ASOR Strategic Plan, 2016-2020**

**Preamble**

For the past five years (2011-2015), ASOR has been well guided by the Strategic Plan adopted by the Board of Trustees in April 2010. In fact, ASOR has achieved many of the goals identified in the 2011-2015 Strategic Plan, especially with respect to the ASOR Annual Meeting, ASOR Publications, excavation fellowships, programs in public outreach and education, and the promotion of the highest ethical standards of scholarship and public discourse.

ASOR also successfully implemented the organizational restructuring that the 2011-2015 Strategic Plan put forward and realized many of the Strategic Plan's fund-raising goals, through the enormously successful "Building a Foundation for ASOR Campaign." This campaign raised \$1.7 million (approximately 30% more than our \$1.3 million goal) between July 2011 and June 2014.

These accomplishments all provide ASOR with the solid infrastructure it needs to move forward. ASOR's goals for the next five years (2016-2020) are (I) to build on the accomplishments realized in four key program areas—the ASOR Annual Meeting, ASOR Publications, ASOR's relationships with its affiliated Overseas Research Centers, and ASOR's Fellowships and Grants program (Strategic Goals Nos. 1-4)—and (II) to undertake four new initiatives that serve ASOR's increasingly diverse membership. Hereby, it is affirmed that ASOR values diversity, both the diverse interests of its membership, as well as the membership's many diverse constituencies.

Strategic Goals Nos. 5-8 address this diversity. For example, Strategic Goal No. 8, which concerns cultural heritage, addresses ASOR members' increasing interest in heritage protection, preservation, and presentation. Likewise, Strategic Goal No. 5, which concerns fostering our field and the next generation, speaks to ASOR members' growing apprehensions about the diminishing support (in institutions of higher education and elsewhere) for the study of the Near East and wider Mediterranean and outlines strategies for sustaining the ASOR constituents who are most vulnerable in the face of this crisis: ASOR's student members and members just beginning their professional careers.

Strategic Goals Nos. 6 and 7, which concern the greater enfranchisement of ASOR's international members and public outreach, address the needs of ASOR's international constituency and of members whose professional expertise lies elsewhere than the Near East and wider Mediterranean. In addition, ASOR commits to making its diverse constituencies—including members from ethnic and minority communities that have traditionally been underrepresented within ASOR—better represented among ASOR fellowship and grant awardees and Annual Meeting session chairs and in ASOR committees and other governing bodies.

## **Who We Are and What We Do: ASOR's Mission Statement**

ASOR, founded in 1900, is an international organization whose mission is to initiate, encourage, and support research into, and public understanding of, the history and cultures of the Near East and wider Mediterranean, from the earliest times, by:

- Fostering original research, exploration, and archaeological fieldwork;
- Encouraging scholarship in the region's languages, texts, traditions, and histories;
- Disseminating research results and conclusions in a timely manner, through a robust publication program, annual meeting, and other venues;
- Adhering to the highest ethical standards of scholarship and public discourse;
- Upholding the highest academic standards in interdisciplinary research and teaching;
- Promoting educational opportunities for undergraduates and graduates in institutions of higher education around the world;
- Developing engaging programs of outreach for the general public;
- Supporting and participating in efforts to protect, preserve, and present to the public the historic and cultural heritage of the Near East and the wider Mediterranean and to raise awareness of its degradation.

### **I. Strengthening ASOR's Key Program Areas (Strategic Goals Nos. 1-4)**

#### **Strategic Goal No. 1: ASOR's Annual Meeting**

**Our goal: Conduct an exceptional professional meeting dedicated to scholarship on the history and cultures of the Near East and the wider Mediterranean world.**

##### **1A. Promote the Highest Quality Content in the Academic Program**

The current quality of the academic program is high. Applications to present papers exceed the number of sessions available, with the result that only the best papers are accepted. Maintaining the current number of sessions for paper presentations (below) will guarantee that the quality of this aspect of the academic program continues. To guarantee this further, the Program Committee will review the Annual Meeting's "ASOR-Sponsored Sessions," to make certain they best represent ASOR members' primary areas of scholarly interest and engagement. Session chairs are also encouraged to recruit paper presenters whose contributions will enhance the quality of the academic program.

Members' research is also productively disseminated through mechanisms other than papers, and ASOR will expand opportunities for poster presentations, roundtable discussions, and similar events at its Annual Meeting. In addition, the ASOR staff will follow the model of other learned societies and enhance the co-

curricular component of the Annual Meeting program, by offering museum visits, networking opportunities for various interest groups, and similar activities.

### **1B. Maintain the Current Number of Paper-Presentation Sessions**

The current number of paper-presentation sessions (approximately 96 sessions over the course of a three-day meeting) should remain roughly as is (i) to preserve the intimacy of the meeting, and (ii) to allow meeting participants to attend most (or all) of their desired sessions, with minimal scheduling conflicts.

### **1C. Increase Annual Meeting Revenue**

The Annual Meeting is not financially self-sustaining. To be self-sustaining, ASOR would need to raise the meeting's registration fees, and/or attract more exhibitors, sponsors, and advertising, and/or grow Annual Meeting attendance by 15-20%. Preserving the intimacy of the Annual Meeting, however, is a priority (above), and considerations regarding the meeting's affordability, especially for scholars who might struggle financially to attend (e.g., junior scholars, international scholars, non tenure-track scholars, independent scholars, retirees), are a priority as well (below).

The ASOR staff will be tasked with developing strategies for increasing Annual Meeting revenue while keeping competing priorities in mind: for example, incrementally growing Annual Meeting attendance in a way that enhances the meeting's quality by bringing in papers about geographic regions and chronological periods in which ASOR members increasingly work (central Asia, the western Mediterranean, medieval archaeology). Increasing the number of exhibitors and sponsors would also increase the quality of the Annual Meeting.

### **1D. Re-Evaluate the Annual Meeting's Time and Location**

Given the reunification of the American Academy of Religion (AAR) and the Society of Biblical Literature (SBL), and the consequence—ASOR's increasing inability to access hotel space reasonably close to the AAR/SBL meeting—ASOR must re-evaluate whether meeting at the same time and in the same location as AAR/SBL remains a viable prospect. Alternatives include (i) meeting on our own; (ii) meeting in conjunction with AAR/SBL on occasion (e.g., every other year); or (iii) meeting in conjunction with another learned society: for example, the Archaeological Institute of America (AIA), the Society for American Archaeology (SAA), the Middle East Studies Association (MESA), or the American Oriental Society (AOS).

ASOR will appoint an *ad hoc* Annual Meeting committee to address this issue. This committee—which will include, among others, representatives from the current Program Committee—will be charged with (i) evaluating the meetings in Atlanta (2015) and San Antonio (2016), to gauge the impact of the lack of

geographical proximity to AAR/SBL and the number of ASOR members affected, and (ii) making recommendations about the way forward. These recommendations should be made in time for ASOR to implement potential schedule changes for 2020 (currently scheduled for Boston) or 2021 (currently scheduled for San Antonio). This committee will also consider whether ASOR should approach other organizations, such as the American Research Center in Egypt (ARCE) or the American Research Institute in Turkey (ARIT), to assess whether these organizations are interested in participating in ASOR's Annual Meeting.

## **Strategic Goal No. 2: Publications**

**Our Goal: Enhance ASOR's monograph publishing program and develop new publishing venues appropriate to the twenty-first century.**

### **2A. Expand the Monograph Publication Program**

ASOR reaffirms its historic commitment to monograph publishing, as this investment in knowledge production and knowledge dissemination is an important service ASOR provides to its members and to our discipline. As part of this commitment and investment, ASOR will continue to publish three monograph series—the Annual of the American Schools of Oriental Research (AASOR), the Archaeological Reports Series (ARS), and the *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* Supplement Series—and will seek to resume publishing the ASOR Books Series.

In order to facilitate members' publication efforts, ASOR will seek funding for grants to subsidize subventions for members who publish in ASOR's monograph series. Consideration should be given to using the (historically modest) revenue generated by the ASOR Books Series as seed money for this subvention fund.

### **2B. Develop a Digital Publication Program**

ASOR acknowledges that publishing in the twenty-first century, especially the publication of archaeological data, requires digital modes of publication that allow for the presentation of hypermedia, videos, three-dimensional reconstructions, and animated fly-throughs. Digital publication also allows for the presentation of the voluminous bodies of evidence now collected during archaeological excavations, thereby advancing stewardship of cultural heritage and promoting responsible research.

ASOR will thus investigate developing a high-quality digital publishing program that makes possible the publication of scholarly works incorporating evolving digital media. ASOR will also investigate the digital publication of classroom resources, such as state-of-the-art textbooks or course modules on various aspects of the archaeology and history of the Near East and wider Mediterranean.

## 2C. Expand Open Access

In 2015, ASOR made available through Open Access 65 volumes from its various monograph series that were previously available only to Hathi Trust subscribers. Indicated here is ASOR's deep and fundamental commitment to broad-based knowledge dissemination, which dictates that as appropriate and as economically feasible, ASOR will expand its Open Access offerings, including some materials published through the digital publication program described above. Expanding Open Access is also important in the case of ASOR monographs, for while ASOR journals are widely (albeit not universally) available in electronic form, the monographs are not.

## 2D. Determine the Structure for Publications Oversight

The Committee on Publications (COP) will continue to oversee ASOR's scholarly publications (the three journals and the monograph series).

ASOR's outreach publications (currently *News@ASOR*, *The ANE Today*, the ASOR Blog, and the ASOR website) are central to ASOR's presentation of itself to academics and the general public—all of whom are prospective new members and sources of support. It is critical that the content and presentation of these outreach publications be engaging and of the highest quality. Responsibility for their oversight must be determined to ensure excellence, as well as a wider distribution. The Chairs Coordinating Council (CCC) should decide whether this responsibility should be assigned to the Committee on Publications (COP), to the Membership and Outreach Committee, or another body.

“Oversight” of our outreach publications also must be precisely defined. For example, whatever committee is designated to oversee these publications must make decisions regarding the need for a periodic review of the editor of *The ANE Today*, limits to this editor's term of service, and editorial policy for the ASOR Blog.

## Strategic Goal No. 3: ASOR's International Affiliations

**Our Goal: Strengthen relationships with ASOR's affiliated Overseas Research Centers and develop more robust organizational ties both with other Overseas Research Centers and in regions and countries where overseas research centers are not currently found.**

### 3A. Enhance Relationships with ASOR's Affiliated Overseas Research Centers

ASOR's relationships with its affiliated Overseas Research Centers (ORCs)—the W. F. Albright Institute of Archaeological Research in Jerusalem, the American

Center of Oriental Research in Amman, Jordan, and the Cyprus American Archaeological Research Institute in Nicosia, Cyprus—are foundational and distinguish ASOR from many other learned societies. ASOR enthusiastically endorses these relationships and commits itself to exploring how to make them more effective, functional, and mutually beneficial to both ASOR and the affiliated ORCs.

For example, ASOR will provide its excavation fellowship recipients in Israel, Jordan, and Cyprus with information about each country’s affiliated ORC, so that the fellowship recipients might stay at, or otherwise connect with, the affiliated ORCs and so the ORCs could help ASOR cultivate a fellowship alumni network (below). Connecting excavation fellowship recipients with the affiliated ORCs also sends recipients a powerful message that “ASOR is there for you in-country.”

In addition, ASOR and the affiliated ORCs—in conjunction with the Council of American Overseas Research Centers (CAORC)—will explore working together on funding projects: for example, permanent funding to support the Directors’ Exchange program, funding for multi-center fellowships for ASOR members, and funding to bring the affiliated ORCs in-country associates to the ASOR Annual Meeting. Also, we will explore ways that ASOR could pair its commitment to protecting and preserving cultural heritage (below) with the affiliated ORCs’ in-country infrastructure to establish programs in sustainable archaeology and heritage protection and preservation (including programs that offer employment opportunities in-country).

In addition, ASOR will explore using the affiliated ORCs as part of ASOR’s outreach initiatives (below): for example, developing a travel program that used the affiliated ORCs for lodging and/or other sorts of programming.

### **3B. Form Stronger Relationships with Other Overseas Research Centers**

While ASOR assigns high priority to enhancing its relationships with its affiliated ORCs, ASOR also seeks to develop stronger relationships with ORCs located in other regions where ASOR members work: for example, the American Academic Research Institute in Iraq (TAARII), the American Academy in Rome (AAR), the American Institute for Maghrib Studies (AIMS), the American Institute for Yemeni Studies (AIYS), the American Institute of Iranian Studies (AIrS), the American Research Center in Egypt (ARCE), the American Research Institute in Turkey (ARIT), the American Research Institute of the South Caucasus (ARISC), the American School of Classical Studies at Athens (ASCSA), and the Palestinian American Research Center (PARC).

Facilitating relationships with these ORCs—especially if paired with posting information about them on the ASOR website—would inform ASOR members about the resources of these various centers, as well as informing the ORCs about each other’s resources as they relate to ASOR.

### **3C. Establish More Overseas Committees**

ASOR seeks to expand its formal organizational ties in regions and countries beyond those with affiliated and non-affiliated ORCs (e.g., Sicily, Lebanon, and Libya) by establishing overseas committees within its governance structure, analogous to the already extant Baghdad Committee, Saudi Arabia Committee, and Damascus Committee. These overseas committees could especially help develop programming for relevant sessions at the ASOR Annual Meeting.

## **Strategic Goal No. 4: Fellowships, Grants, and Other Forms of Support for ASOR Members**

**Our Goal: Increase the fellowships, grants, and other forms of support available to individual ASOR members and to the faculty, students, and staff of institutional member schools.**

### **4A. Assess Membership Benefits for the Twenty-First Century**

ASOR thrives because of its dedicated individual and institutional members, whom ASOR strives to support by providing them with tangible benefits. Historically, these benefits have included subscriptions to ASOR journals. Now, given the ready access many ASOR members have to electronic resources such as JSTOR, and even more so in a world of Open Access, this benefit is no longer as attractive. ASOR must thus identify and provide new and different membership benefits to sustain and grow its individual and institutional membership base, including significant new fellowships and grants. As these fellowships and grants are developed, ASOR will need to determine mechanisms for vetting applicants and awarding funding.

The ASOR staff will also conduct a review of its membership fee structure, in order to ensure ASOR's membership fees—especially for students and recent graduates—are compatible with the realities of the contemporary academy.

### **4B. Fund More Fieldwork and Fieldwork-Related Research Grants**

ASOR has excelled in developing fellowship funds that support students engaging in archaeological fieldwork (approximately \$270,000 in endowed funds raised since 2012). However, ASOR has not met the goal outlined in the 2011-2015 Strategic Plan to fund fieldwork grants to support dig directors. ASOR thus seeks to augment its current Harris Grant program (which awards about \$6000 in funding per year) by raising comparable funds to facilitate key yet discrete activities to benefit dig directors' archaeological fieldwork: for example, funds to purchase a special piece of equipment, to pay the fees for otherwise unfunded laboratory tests, or to cover the cost of hiring a particular specialist. The Joe D.



Seger Excavation Fund, inaugurated in November 2015 with an endowment of \$50,000, marks an important initial step in this development project.

ASOR also seeks to raise funds for grants to support archaeological fieldwork in other ways: for example, grants for subsidizing publication subventions, especially for ASOR monographs (above); grants that help subsidize pre-publication work; and grants demonstrating ASOR's commitment to the communities and countries in which ASOR members work by supporting fieldwork projects that engage surrounding communities or otherwise enhance ASOR's engagement with local or national interests. ASOR's increased commitment to cultural heritage protection and preservation (below) also suggests the development of grants to protect and preserve sites that are at risk.

#### **4C. Create Other Fellowships and Grants that Support ASOR Members**

ASOR seeks to raise funds for fellowships and grants to support the work of its members in areas beyond fieldwork-related projects, such as (i) "travel to collections" grants (e.g., funding to conduct work in museum collections; fellowships to work in the ASOR archives); (ii) grants to support travel to and registration for the Annual Meeting, especially for junior scholars and international scholars, as well as for non tenure-track scholars, independent scholars, and similar scholars who otherwise lack the funds to attend; and (iii) grants to support publication of non-fieldwork related scholarship (e.g., publications in the reinvigorated ASOR Books monograph series).

#### **4D. Develop In-House Resources in Support of Archaeological Fieldwork**

To encourage the proper archiving of fieldwork records, and to meet the challenge of digital archiving and data recording, ASOR will work to develop and promulgate standards for archiving documentary records in all forms. In order that these archives be of maximal use, and maximally accessible, ASOR will also develop a database documenting the location of fieldwork records, especially the records of ASOR-affiliated projects.

In addition, ASOR will develop web resources to facilitate the work of fieldwork projects by, for example, providing a place for directors to list fieldwork projects that are looking for volunteers, or by providing directors with advice on best practices about running a field school and about the increasingly important issue of site curation (including long-term site preservation and public presentation). ASOR's website will also provide links to the guidelines and regulations of various Departments of Antiquities that are available on the Internet.

ASOR's web resources will also serve all ASOR members and the members of "Friends of ASOR" by functioning as a clearinghouse for information about archaeological fieldwork in the Near East and wider Mediterranean world.

## **II. Serving ASOR's Diverse Membership (Strategic Goals Nos. 5-8)**

### **Strategic Goal No. 5: Fostering the Field**

**Our Goal: Advocate frequently and forcefully on behalf of the scholarly study of the Near East and wider Mediterranean within the academic community and elsewhere, and through this advocacy and other means, engage vigorously in processes and programs that promote the success of the next generation of scholars of the Near East and wider Mediterranean world.**

#### **5A. Champion the Study of the Near East and Wider Mediterranean**

ASOR is acutely aware that in contemporary institutions of higher education, programs dedicated to the study of the Near East and wider Mediterranean increasingly find themselves under threat. ASOR thus commits to advocate on behalf of academic colleagues whose departments face cuts by their institutions' administrations. Moreover, ASOR will continue to support the development of new programs and the advancement of existing programs dedicated to the study of the Near Eastern and wider Mediterranean world.

ASOR will also seek to promote the study of the Near East and wider Mediterranean by regularly and consistently engaging the national humanities community. For example, ASOR will work with the National Humanities Alliance to advocate on behalf of the field of Near Eastern and wider Mediterranean studies and to assert the overall value of the humanities.

In addition, ASOR will increase its involvement in public advocacy in the federal arena: for example, by speaking out in support of (i) continued or increased NSF funding available to the social sciences (and so to archaeology); (ii) continued or increased funding for the ECA grants that help support ASOR's affiliated ORCs; and (iii) continued or increased NEH funding available for humanities research. ASOR also will speak out, as appropriate, about funding decisions that negatively affect our mission: for example, the recent NEH decision to cease funding overseas summer institutes and seminars.

In undertaking these efforts, ASOR will seek to work together with other organizations that share these same goals: for example, scholarly organizations such as the AIA, SAA, MESA, AOS, and SBL and like-minded federations such as CAORC. ASOR will also seek to work with individual scholars whose interests intersect with those of ASOR: for example, ASOR will seek to engage cultural resource specialists in discussions about ASOR's work to safeguard and preserve cultural heritage.

## **5B. Secure the Success of the Next Generation**

The threats to programs dedicated to the study of the Near East and wider Mediterranean in contemporary institutions of higher education (above) affect most profoundly and alarmingly the career prospects of scholars within these programs, especially the scholars of the next generation. ASOR is thus committed to doing all it can to advance the careers of these scholars.

For example, in addition to raising funding support to help these scholars participate in ASOR's Annual Meeting (above), ASOR will look for ways to increase the involvement of graduate students and junior scholars in the Annual Meeting as part of their training and development as academics. In particular, ASOR will explore ways of enhancing graduate students' and junior scholars' engagement in modes of research presentations (poster presentations, roundtable discussions) that are emerging alongside traditional paper presentations (above).

ASOR will also increase the number of junior scholars who serve as session chairs, perhaps pairing them with more established chairs to increase mentoring and networking opportunities. ASOR also stands ready to support its junior scholars at their home institutions by, for example, writing in support of junior faculty members' reappointment and tenure cases.

At the same time, ASOR recognizes that faculty positions in institutions of higher education are no longer as likely a career option for scholars in Near Eastern and wider Mediterranean studies. ASOR thus seeks opportunities to support the professional development of scholars who may not pursue, or who are no longer pursuing, a career as a faculty member in an institution of higher education. ASOR will present programming on various career tracks at its Annual Meeting: for example, NGOs, government agencies, IT, consulting, cultural resource management, museum work, and publishing and journalism. ASOR will also explore using its various publications as venues for discussing careers outside the academy.

The Junior Scholars discussion at the Annual Meeting is another place where conversations about different career tracks is likely to take place, and this event will be better publicized. ASOR will in addition work to enhance its job posting site by using part of the site to post non-academic jobs and to link to other sources for non-academic careers (e.g., [www.usajobs.gov](http://www.usajobs.gov), to search for federal positions available in archaeology).

Finally, ASOR recognizes that the "next generation" includes not just current graduate students and recently minted Ph.D.'s, but undergraduates and K-12 students. As part of its expanded outreach programs (below), ASOR aims to build on the very successful teacher educational workshops that have been held in conjunction with the Annual Meeting to develop resources that individual members and regional societies can use in other contexts: for example, to reach

out to local K-12 schools. Excavation scholarships are the primary way ASOR reaches out to undergraduates (as well as graduate students). ASOR will increase its engagement with those students by increasing excavation fellowship award amounts and by cultivating a fellowship “alumni” community.

### **Strategic Goal No. 6: An Increased International Identity for ASOR**

**Our Goal: Expand ASOR’s increasingly large community of international members (about 22% of our membership, from 35 countries outside North America) and enhance ASOR’s engagement with them.**

#### **6A. Increase International Members’ Access to ASOR**

Ensuring international members’ full access to ASOR’s programs and benefits is among ASOR’s highest priorities. ASOR is thus proud that at its November 2015 meeting, the Committee on Archaeological Research and Policy (CAP) changed its long-standing policy regarding CAP affiliation for fieldwork projects so that ASOR’s international members are now eligible to apply. This change was unanimously endorsed by the ASOR Board of Trustees.

Going forward, ASOR seeks to do more by developing fellowships to support travel to the ASOR Annual Meeting for (among others) international scholars (above). Other funding sources should also be explored, including (i) formalizing the funding partnership that has recently allowed Iranian scholars to attend the Annual Meeting; (ii) seeking out similar funding to support the participation of Lebanese scholars; (iii) working with the affiliated ORCs—and in conjunction with CAORC—to identify funding (possibly from the Department of State or the European Union) to support travel fellowships for scholars from the ORC countries to come to the ASOR Annual Meeting.

ASOR realizes, however, that it is not possible to raise enough funding to support the travel needs of all its international members requiring aid, and ASOR thus aspires to bring the sort of scholarship showcased at its Annual Meeting to its members outside North America. For example, ASOR will explore ways it might participate in international conferences and/or symposia. Possibilities include an ASOR session, or sessions, and/or an ASOR reception or booth, at the International Congress on the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East (ICAANE); ASOR’s joining as a partner in international symposia being planned by kindred organizations; or a symposium hosted by ASOR and one of ASOR’s affiliated ORCs. Through these means, ASOR aims to offer its international members a better and more sustained opportunity to experience the benefits of ASOR membership.

ASOR does not, however, seek to develop internationally-based programming that competes with its North American meeting. Moreover, ASOR is committed to making any international programming completely self-sustaining.

The ASOR Office, in conjunction with the Membership and Outreach Committee, should develop plans for these efforts at internationally-based programming (location, time, financial model), at which point the Chairs Coordinating Council will need to develop structures for oversight (especially of ASOR’s contributions to an academic program).

### **6B. Ensure ASOR’s International Members are Fully Enfranchised**

ASOR’s Membership and Outreach Committee—a key player in ASOR’s work of better serving its international members—has committed to expanding its membership to include multiple international members. ASOR aims to build on the Committee’s work by ensuring that international members are better represented elsewhere on ASOR committees and in other governing bodies and among Annual Meeting session chairs.

ASOR’s name—the American Schools of Oriental Research—reflects profoundly the organization’s origins and early history: a North American-based organization committed to the study of the Near East (or, in the parlance of ASOR’s founders, the “Orient”). This name, however, may no longer reflect the organization’s twenty-first century identity. This issue—which also has implications for outreach and ASOR’s work beyond the academy—will be taken up by the Board of Trustees.

## **Strategic Goal No. 7: Outreach**

**Our Goal: Expand our outreach efforts to, and engagement with, the general public.**

### **7A. Strengthen Current and Future Outreach Efforts**

Public service and outreach are central to ASOR’s mission. Our Board of Trustees proudly includes trustees whose professional expertise lies elsewhere than the Near East and wider Mediterranean and who play key roles in ASOR’s leadership. In addition, all ASOR programs are open to the public, and our members regularly make themselves available to serve the public through lectures, advising, and other activities. Moreover, ASOR offers several online and print publications designed specifically to address the general public’s interests in the ancient Near East and wider Mediterranean world.

ASOR is committed to expanding its outreach efforts. For example, ASOR should explore creating a “consumer-friendly” outreach program to be held in conjunction with its Annual Meeting. Because outreach often happens at the local level, we also aim to make resources available—especially digital resources—for ASOR members to use in their own communities (e.g., in local schools). ASOR should in addition explore ways in which it could form partnerships to enhance its outreach efforts: for example, partnerships with media outlets or partnerships with

digital resource developers.

ASOR also intends to expand membership in the “Friends of ASOR” program beyond the approximately 12,500 currently enrolled, by offering these members additional opportunities to engage with ASOR’s people and programs. By 2020, we aim to be at least halfway to our ultimate goal of 50,000 members.

### **7B. Provide Staffing Support**

ASOR will seek permanent funding for the position of Outreach Specialist in the ASOR Office. The Outreach Specialist will facilitate ASOR’s public service efforts (media contacts, lectures, special events), outreach publications (*News@ASOR*, *The ANE Today*), social media initiatives (Facebook, the ASOR Blog, Twitter, ASORtv, etc.), and educational programming.

## **Strategic Goal No. 8: Cultural Heritage**

**Our Goal: Participate energetically in worldwide efforts to protect, preserve, and present to the public all aspects of the cultural heritage of the Near East and wider Mediterranean.**

### **8A. Protect and Preserve Cultural Heritage**

ASOR seeks to promote engagement with and understanding of all aspects of cultural heritage in the Near East and wider Mediterranean world. ASOR recognizes that the protection and preservation of the cultural heritage of the region is at the core of its mission and an area of profound interest to its membership.

ASOR, especially through its Cultural Heritage Initiatives Program, will continue to participate in large-scale governmental and non-governmental projects to protect, preserve, and promote awareness about all aspects of the cultural heritage of the Near East and wider Mediterranean world, provided such projects are appropriate, effective, financially viable, and can be managed within the resource structure of the organization. ASOR also commits to encourage complementary initiatives and efforts by its members.

### **8B. Promote Site Preservation, Documentation, and Presentation**

ASOR seeks to use its membership and host-country facilities and contacts to develop resources and programs for site preservation, documentation, and presentation. ASOR commits to promote activities to encourage public engagement with, and advocacy for, the cultural heritage of the region.

## **Conclusion**

Firmly grounded in its long-standing mission and distinguished history, ASOR continues to aim ever higher. Indeed, this Strategic Plan propels ASOR on a trajectory that is both wider in the scope of its research and programs and more intentionally focused on supporting its increasingly diverse members. Over the next five years, as ASOR accomplishes the eight strategic goals outlined above, the organization will enhance its long-standing position as a premier international learned society dedicated to examining, understanding, presenting, and preserving the history and cultural heritage of the Near East and wider Mediterranean. Through the ongoing participation and committed support of members, friends, and enthusiasts, ASOR will carry out this vision to dig deeper and reach higher.

Submitted by the ASOR Strategic Planning Task Force: Susan Ackerman (Chair), Gary Arbino, Vivian Bull, Richard Coffman, Sharon Herbert, Ann-Marie Knoblauch, Øystein LaBianca, Heather Parker, B. W. Ruffner, Frederick Winter, J. Edward Wright