

Dear XXX,

Thank you for agreeing to serve on the committee that seeks to develop an ASOR Code of Conduct for the Annual Meeting.¹ We envision that this Code of Conduct will address multiple issues concerning the safety and well-being of participants at the ASOR Annual Meeting including but not limited to (1) discrimination based on sex, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, age, and religion; (2) harassment, including (a) sexual harassment, (b) harassment that creates a hostile or intimidating environment, (c) harassment that demeans a person or group of persons and that the person responsible knew or reasonably ought to have known would cause the target to be humiliated, intimidated, or otherwise gratuitously harmed; and (d) harassment that functions implicitly or explicitly to limit others' participation in the Annual Meeting's program and associated activities; (3) assault, including sexual assault. The code should also include plans for emergency management of such incidents at the Annual Meeting.

More specifically, we hope an ASOR Code of Conduct for the Annual Meeting can set forward a series of principles for respectful and professional behavior to which every participant at the ASOR Annual Meeting should aspire, as well as a series of best practices that ASOR should strive to enact. Such principles might include articulating expectations regarding professional and respectful behavior that ASOR has for every participant at the ASOR Annual Meeting. Best practices might require ASOR to develop more robust plans for emergency management: for example, one of ASOR's sister societies prints emergency phone numbers (the numbers for hotel security) on the back of participants' name tags.

We envision that an ASOR Code of Conduct for the Annual Meeting will, in tone, model itself on and be fully consonant with the ASOR Policy on Professional Conduct (with which any proposed Code of Conduct — like any ASOR policy — needs to be fully consonant). Specifically, the ASOR Policy on Professional Conduct deliberately set itself to be aspirational: to articulate a series of principles to which ASOR members aspire to adhere and best practices that ASOR members strive to enact. Conversely, we heard very clearly during the process that brought the ASOR Policy on Professional Conduct into being that our members did not want ASOR to become a policing body, by setting forth mechanisms of enforcement if the Policy's principles and best practices were not followed. The recently developed ASOR Code of Conduct for Fieldwork Projects was drafted based on this conviction, and we envision the ASOR Code of Conduct for the Annual Meeting will need to embrace, as fully as possible, this conviction as well.

Nonetheless, in the same way that directors of field projects must have some means for addressing participants' problematic behavior, an ASOR Code of Conduct for the Annual Meeting will need to offer some means by which ASOR might address

¹ As appropriate this code should be applied to other meetings/symposia that ASOR organizes or to which it lends its name as a sponsor and to other events associated with ASOR e.g., cultural heritage workshops and events; regional meetings; international symposia.

egregiously problematic behavior at its Annual Meeting. The recent incident at the Society for Classical Studies (SCS) Annual Meeting -- <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2019/01/07/racist-comments-directed-classics-scholar-disciplinary-meeting-floor-classicists>; <https://www.chronicle.com/article/After-Racist-Incidents-Mire-a/245430> -- demonstrates the need for ASOR to have a policy that allows for a quick, on-the-spot responses to incidents as they unfold, just as was possible at the SCS Annual Meeting under the terms of the Society for Classical Studies Annual Meeting Harassment Statement (<https://classicalstudies.org/annual-meeting/scs-annual-meeting-harassment-statement>). We do not advise, however, that ASOR put into place a multi-faceted and multi-layered adjudicatory process that we believe would go beyond what our members want (for an example of such, see https://www.sbl-site.org/assets/pdfs/Meetings/Professional_Conduct_Procedure.pdf).

In short, we think the goal of an ASOR Code of Conduct for the Annual Meeting should be primarily proactive: to set out guidelines that help and encourage participants avoid the sorts of inappropriate behaviors (harassment, assault, bullying, discrimination) we noted above and that allows ASOR to deal promptly with emergencies that do arise.

Many thanks, again, for your willingness to serve on the important committee. We look forward to supporting you in every way that we can, and we also encourage you to seek help and support from others in ASOR who might have particular expertise to bring to bear. These people include Beth Alpert Nakhai, the Chair of the Initiative on the Status of Women; Richard Coffman, the Chair of the ASOR Board, who is an attorney and could help navigate any legal issues and questions that might arise in your discussions; Lynn Swartz Dodd, who was the Chair of the Ethics Working Group; and Virginia Herrmann, who chaired the CAP sub-committee that wrote the ASOR Code of Conduct for Fieldwork Projects. Andy Vaughn, the ASOR Executive Director, can also help identify sister societies that have developed codes of conduct for their annual meetings and make those codes available for your reference as you work to develop a similar code of conduct for ASOR.

As always, all our best, and good luck!

Sincerely,

Susan Ackerman
ASOR President

Sharon Herbert
ASOR Vice President
Chair, Chairs Coordinating Council