

ASOR DEI Taskforce

Final Report and Recommendations

August 2020-May 2021

Overview of the ASOR DEI Taskforce	4
Executive Summary of Taskforce Recommendations	6
Structural Changes	6
Graduate Student Support	7
Annual Meeting and Membership	7
Programming	9
Research Support	9
Partnerships	10
Recognition and Publication	10
Goal 1 Working Group	11
Introduction	11
Recommendations for Developing Partnerships with BIPOC-serving Organizations and Institutions	12
Problems and Recommendations Based on Working Group Interviews	13
1. Lack of mentorship and community-building opportunities for BIPOC students	13
2. Systemic issues impede retention of BIPOC students in ASOR-related fields	14
3. Impediments to entering fields in Ancient Studies	15
4. Lack of opportunities through ASOR to conduct research in museum settings	16
5. Lack of awareness about ASOR’s cultural heritage work	16
6. Climate at the Annual Meeting	16
7. Bias in field programs	17
Partnership Organizations	18
Goal 2 Working Group	19
Introduction	19
Identified Barriers	20
1. Financial	20
a. Annual Meeting & Fieldwork	20
b. Membership	21
c. Other	21

2.	Institution/Experience Barrier	22
a.	Membership as a barrier	22
b.	Cost of attendance	22
c.	Scholarships	23
3.	Awareness (of ASOR by BIPOC scholars and students)/Reach of ASOR to BIPOC scholars, students, and organizations	23
a.	Pool of Applicants for Scholarships/Attendees	23
b.	Retention	24
4.	Sense of Belonging: Not feeling welcome, invited, or as though you ‘belong’	24
a.	Membership questions	24
b.	Annual Meeting Isolation	25
c.	Scope of the Annual Meeting	25
d.	Moderation and code of conduct	26
5.	Competition with other conferences (SBL, MESA, AAA)	27
	Goal 3 Working Group	28
	Overview	28
	Professional Development Recommendations	29
	<i>Board of Trustees</i>	30
	Goals for Professional Development	30
	Obstacles for Professional Development	30
	Recommendations	30
	Accountability/Standard for success	30
	<i>Staff</i>	31
	Goals for Professional Development	31
	Obstacles for Professional Development	31
	Recommendations	31
	Accountability/Standard for success	31
	<i>Chairs Coordinating Council (CCC)</i>	31
	Goals for Professional Development	32
	Obstacles for Professional Development	32
	Recommendations	32
	Accountability/Standard for success	32
	<i>General Membership</i>	32

Goals for Professional Development	32
Obstacles for Professional Development	33
Recommendations	33
Accountability/Standard for success	33
Further Resources	33
Goal 4 Working Group	35
Introduction	35
ASOR Strategic Plan	35
● Area I: The Annual Meeting:	36
○ 1A. Promote the Highest Quality Content in the Academic Program	36
○ 1B. Ensure equitable, inclusive, and diverse participation in the AM.	36
○ 1C. Increase Meeting Revenue	37
● Area 2: Cultural Heritage	37
○ 2B. Promote Heritage Education, Documentation, and Presentation	37
● Area 3: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion	37
○ 3A. Increase Membership from BIPOC Communities	38
○ 3B. Present a Public Face More Representative of ASOR’s Expanded Mission and Diverse Membership	38
○ 3D. Enhance Efforts to Secure the Success of the Next Generation	38
● Area No. 4: Publications	39
○ 4B. Exploit New Frontiers in Publishing, including Digital Publication	39
○ 4E. Increase the Diversity of our Editorial Boards and our Contributors	39
● Area 5: Public Outreach	39
○ 5A. Strengthen Current and Future Outreach Efforts	39
● Area 6: Supporting the Work of our Members	39
○ 6C. Create Other Fellowships and Grants that Support ASOR Members	39
○ 6D. Create Fellowships to Recruit and Nurture Members from BIPOC and other Underserved Communities	40
Recommendations on Governance and Institutional Infrastructure	40
1. The taskforce should continue to function between May and December 2021	40
2. The taskforce recommends ASOR create a standing DEI Committee	40

Overview of the ASOR DEI Taskforce

In August of 2020, the ASOR President, Sharon Herbert, crafted a charge to create a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Taskforce. There were a number of instigating factors. Over the last decade ASOR has begun to focus on issues in diversity and inclusion, including (though not limited to) establishing the Initiative on the Status of Women (ISW),¹ improving service to international ASOR members, increasing attention and activities related to heritage preservation,² creating ASOR codes of conduct for professional activities, field work, and the Annual Meeting,³ and removing the term “Oriental” from the organization’s name. The charge was also a response to increased demand for action by many ASOR members, particularly early career scholars and graduate students. Finally, the events of summer 2020 motivated ASOR to prioritize the work of the taskforce during the 2020-21 academic year.

The complete charge can be found [here](#), but a summary is as follows:

The Task Force on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (hereafter DEI) will seek out methods and recommend programs through which ASOR can recruit and support BIPOC members by (1) identifying partners in community organizations and institutions, (2) creating fundraising initiatives for scholarships that promote BIPOC participation at meetings and in the field, (3) recommending sensitivity training programs for ASOR leadership, and (4) collaborating with all ASOR committees and leadership to integrate these objectives in all areas of our new strategic plan.

The primary work of the taskforce between September 2020 and May 2021 was to focus on recommendations for improving ASOR diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), particularly as pertain to North American scholars who are Black, Indigenous and/or People of Color (BIPOC), identify ways these objectives could be integrated across the organization, and establish a permanent body that could oversee this and other DEI work. This focus for the 2020-21 year is best explained in the language of the charge itself:

We have made progress on some diversity issues in the past. Our gender balance has improved markedly; our international membership has grown, and our foreign members now have full status; we have worked to empower our early career scholars. Supporting the latter two groups were goals of our 2015-2020 Strategic Plan. Recruiting Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) to our membership was not a priority there. Now is the time to make it one as we revise our current plan and craft our next strategic plan.

¹ <https://www.asor.org/about-asor/committees/ad-hoc-asor-committees/asor-initiative-on-the-status-of-women/2020>

² <https://www.asor.org/chi/>. Projects for the last 4+ years have focused on education and stewardship programs developed and led by local stakeholders, with ASOR providing funding and support -- but not dictating an approach. There has been intense effort to localize all programs and to minimize a colonial approach to CPP (cultural property protection) programs.

³ ASOR Policy on Professional Conduct: <https://www.asor.org/about-asor/policies/policy-on-professional-conduct/>; ASOR Code of Conduct for Fieldwork Projects: <https://www.asor.org/about-asor/policies/code-of-conduct-for-fieldwork-projects/>; Code of Conduct for the ASOR Annual Meeting and other ASOR Sponsored Events: <https://www.asor.org/about-asor/policies/code-of-conduct/>

Given impediments presented by the COVID pandemic, taskforce membership was not settled until early October, and thereafter the taskforce met twice per month until May, with individual working groups meeting in the interim. The ASOR Office provided support for the taskforce's work, most importantly in the form of the time and energy invested by Meagan Shirley (office coordinator), to whom the taskforce is very grateful.

The taskforce consisted of the following ASOR members:

Sharon Herbert (University of Michigan), *ex officio*
Erin Darby (University of Tennessee), chair
Teddy Burgh (University of North Carolina Wilmington)
Kara Cooney (University of California Los Angeles)
Danielle Steen Fatkin (Knox College)
Kate Larson (Corning Museum of Glass)
Julia Troche (Missouri State University)
Bianca Hand (Johns Hopkins University)
Chuck Jones (Penn State University)
Mike Homan (Xavier University)

The labor was divided among three primary working groups, and each group focused on one constituent goal of the charge. The final goal of the charge was addressed by all taskforce members in collaboration with the ASOR Office, the Chairs Coordinating Council (CCC), the Early Career Scholars (ECS), the Committee on Archaeological Research and Policy (CAP), and the Annual Meeting Program Committee (AMPC). The goals of each group were as follows:

Goal 1: Identify partners in community organizations and institutions.

– *Bianca Hand, Kara Cooney, Mike Homan, and Erin Darby*

Goal 2: Identify barriers for BIPOC participants at the Annual Meeting and in fieldwork / hands-on research and possible solutions.

– *Danielle Fatkin, Teddy Burgh, and Julia Troche*

Goal 3: Evaluate and recommend professional development opportunities to increase awareness, provide resources, and build capacity for internal ASOR groups, including Board, staff, and members.

– *Kate Larson and Chuck Jones*

Goal 4: Collaborate with all ASOR committees, leadership, and membership to identify needs and integrate these objectives across all areas of our new strategic plan.

– *Entire taskforce*

While the taskforce was working over the last year, several actions have already been taken to improve ASOR as a space open and accessible to BIPOC scholars as well as scholars from other diverse constituencies. For example, CAP has incorporated DEI-related questions in all

scholarship applications and has collaborated with the ASOR Office, the EC, donors, and the Board of Trustees to raise additional funds to serve underrepresented minority students. The Publications Committee (COP) has undertaken an analysis of its editorial boards and moved to diversify representation in its positions of leadership. The Office, Board of Trustees members, and this taskforce have collaborated to weigh best practices in land acknowledgement statements for the AM and for events at the James F. Strange Center. The ASOR Office formalized its collaboration with Archaeology In The Community to help serve K-12 students and is partnering with the Black Scholars Matter Initiative to offer scholarships to attend the 2021 AM. ECS has already begun developing mentorship programming for the 2021 AM and has been increasing digital outreach and support programming during the year.

Members of the taskforce would like to thank the ASOR Office staff, ASOR senior leadership, the CCC, ECS, ISW, the Executive Committee (EC), the Board of Trustees, ASOR members who advocated for the priority and timeliness of this work, and external partners who participated in interviews for the report.

Executive Summary of Taskforce Recommendations

The following list includes a summary of the recommendations found throughout this report. Each line item also includes a link to sections of the report and page numbers where the recommendation is discussed in further detail, including rationale, action items, timeline, personnel, and relevant initiatives in the 2021-26 strategic plan.

Structural Changes

- Establish a standing DEI committee that will have a seat on the CCC:
[The taskforce recommends ASOR create a standing DEI Committee](#).....40-41
- Incorporate DEI objectives into all annual ASOR committees and require each committee to provide an annual report, including progress on DEI-objectives for the year
[The taskforce recommends ASOR create a standing DEI Committee](#).....40-41
- Include DEI-related issues and institutional progress as a standing Board of Trustees and EC agenda item on an annual basis
[Board of Trustees](#).....30
- Incorporate DEI-related outcomes into ASOR staff employee responsibilities and annual evaluations
[Staff](#).....31

- Incorporate DEI-related outcomes into all ASOR standing committees represented on the CCC
[Chairs Coordinating Council \(CCC\)](#).....31-32
- Provide DEI professional development to leadership at all levels of the organization
[Overview](#).....28-30
[Board of Trustees](#).....30
[Staff](#).....31
[Chairs Coordinating Council \(CCC\)](#).....31-32
- Improve transparency and communication about service opportunities, organizational leadership structure, and DEI initiatives to the general membership
[Systemic issues impede retention of BIPOC students in ASOR-related fields](#).....14
[3D. Enhance Efforts to Secure the Success of the Next Generation](#).....38
[The taskforce recommends ASOR create a standing DEI Committee](#).....41

Graduate Student Support

- Continue to (a) integrate graduate students into institutional governance, the AM program, and publications and (b) expand programming and resource pages supporting graduate students
[Systemic issues impede retention of BIPOC students in ASOR-related fields](#)14-15
[Impediments to entering fields in Ancient Studies](#)15
[3D. Enhance Efforts to Secure the Success of the Next Generation](#).....38-39
- Improve process for student memberships (avoid invasive questions) and evaluate the ways temporary, free, or subsidized membership could be used as an incentive to attract new members
[Membership](#).....21
[Membership as a barrier](#).....22
[Cost of attendance](#).....22
[Membership questions](#).....24-25
[3D. Enhance Efforts to Secure the Success of the Next Generation](#).....38

Annual Meeting and Membership

- Continue to develop funding mechanisms to support BIPOC membership and participation in the AM and in research opportunities
[Annual Meeting & Fieldwork](#).....20-21
[Membership](#)21
[Membership as a barrier](#)22

Cost of attendance	22
1B. Ensure equitable, inclusive, and diverse participation in the AM	36-37
1C. Increase Meeting Revenue	37
3A. Increase Membership from BIPOC Communities	38
3D. Enhance Efforts to Secure the Success of the Next Generation	38
6C. Create Other Fellowships and Grants that Support ASOR Members	39
6D. Create Fellowships to Recruit and Nurture Members from BIPOC and other Underserved Communities	40
● Improve communications about financial aid and other forms of support for membership and participation in the AM	
Annual Meeting & Fieldwork	20
Membership	21
Other	21-22
● Create mentorship, professionalization, and networking opportunities for BIPOC scholars, both at the AM and beyond	
Lack of mentorship and community-building opportunities for BIPOC students	13-14
Retention	24
Annual Meeting Isolation	25
1B. Ensure equitable, inclusive, and diverse participation in the AM	37
● Reevaluate the role of session moderators at the AM in creating a welcoming and inclusive environment within meeting sessions	
Climate at the Annual Meeting	17
Retention	24
Moderation and code of conduct	26
● Clearly communicate code of conduct, harassment policy, and communication guidelines ahead of and during the AM	
Climate at the Annual Meeting	17
Moderation and code of conduct	26
● Continue to expand AM program to include regions that are currently a focus for BIPOC scholars (e.g., North Africa and East Africa), sessions that cultivate transferable skills (e.g., Cultural Resource Management, Heritage Preservation, Community Archaeology, Public Education, Museum Studies), and keynote speakers from diverse constituency groups and vocations	
Systemic issues impede retention of BIPOC students in ASOR-related fields	15
Lack of awareness about ASOR’s Cultural Heritage work	16
Climate at the Annual Meeting	17
Scope of AM	25

1A. Promote the Highest Quality Content in the Academic Program	36
1C. Increase Meeting Revenue	37
2B. Promote Heritage Education, Documentation, and Presentation	37
● Consider incorporating land acknowledgement statements for the region where the AM is held and for events at the James F. Strange Center, wherever appropriate	
Climate at the Annual Meeting	17
● Build capacity to incorporate multiple languages in the call for papers and other ASOR communications, publications, and events	
Scope of the Annual Meeting	26
1B. Ensure equitable, inclusive, and diverse participation in the AM	36
● Build DEI-centered sessions (academic sessions, professional development, etc.) into the AM	
General Membership	32-33
The taskforce recommends ASOR create a standing DEI Committee	41

Programming

● Continue to expand the range and types of digital programming (including AM), while signaling that these programs are valuable to the organization	
Lack of awareness about ASOR’s Cultural Heritage work	16
Cost of attendance	22
Competition with other conferences (SBL, MESA, AAA)	27
1B. Ensure equitable, inclusive, and diverse participation in the AM	36
2B. Promote Heritage Education, Documentation, and Presentation	37
3D. Enhance Efforts to Secure the Success of the Next Generation	38-39
5A. Strengthen Current and Future Outreach Efforts	39
● Build DEI-centered programming and professional development throughout the year for members	
General Membership	32-33

Research Support

● Review current CAP-affiliated field school policies and procedures that impact BIPOC participation and the DEI climate during field research; recognize and reward field projects who are taking a lead in these areas	
Bias in field programs	17

- Continue to develop funding to support BIPOC student research, including opportunities that do not require international travel (e.g., exploring museum placements, community archaeology, and digital or public-facing humanities projects)
 - [Impediments to entering fields in Ancient Studies](#)15
 - [Lack of opportunities through ASOR to conduct research in museum settings](#)16
 - [3A. Increase Membership from BIPOC Communities](#).....38
 - [6C. Create Other Fellowships and Grants that Support ASOR Members](#).....39
 - [6D. Create Fellowships to Recruit and Nurture Members from BIPOC and other Underserved Communities](#).....40

Partnerships

- Cultivate partnerships with BIPOC-serving organizations to improve communication about ASOR and to expand collaborations that could increase BIPOC participation
 - [Recommendations for Developing Partnerships with BIPOC-serving Organizations and Institutions](#)12-13
 - [Pool of Applicants for Scholarships/Attendees](#).....23-24
 - [5A. Strengthen Current and Future Outreach Efforts](#).....39
- Compensate non-ASOR members for DEI-related consultations
 - [Recommendations for Developing Partnerships with BIPOC-serving Organizations and Institutions](#).....13

Recognition and Publication

- Publicly recognize ASOR members for DEI-related service and scholarship
 - [Systemic issues impede retention of BIPOC students in ASOR-related fields](#).....14
- Continue to review scholarship and awards criteria and judging rubrics to account for barriers to participation and any areas of implicit bias
 - [Annual Meeting & Fieldwork](#)21
 - [Scholarships](#)23
- Continue to monitor ASOR publications for BIPOC diversity among subject matter, authors, reviewers, and editorial leadership
 - [Systemic issues impede retention of BIPOC students in ASOR-related fields](#).....15
 - [4B. Exploit New Frontiers in Publishing, including Digital Publication](#).....39
 - [4E. Increase the Diversity of our Editorial Boards and our Contributors](#).....39

Goal 1 Working Group

Goal: Identify partners in community organizations and institutions

– Bianca Hand, Kara Cooney, Erin Darby

Introduction

In order to make ASOR more inclusive and diverse, we have to work with peer institutions and organizations. Collaboration has many advantages, including learning from the successes and failures of others and identifying avenues for future partnerships. Furthermore, interviews with outside entities help shed light on how ASOR might be perceived by both BIPOC-serving and predominantly white organizations. Originally, the working group identified five possible objectives:

- Identify and contact counterparts at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU)
- Identify and contact counterparts in Community Archaeology Outreach Organizations
- Identify and contact counterparts in diasporic communities in the US connected to the region of research
- Identify and contact scholars working in regions traditionally outside the ASOR regional purview
- Identify and contact counterparts in other scholarly societies

We divided potential partner organizations into categories, including individuals actively working to diversify the field, organizations with diverse leadership who have established relationships with BIPOC-majority institutions and BIPOC students and professionals, and predominantly white organizations that are actively seeking to diversify their membership and participant base. Following the procedures of this working group, we suggest that when liaising with potential partners, ASOR bear in mind the following issues:

- Organizations, individuals, and heritage representative groups often have agendas that are in competition with each other.
- Some organizations advocate on behalf of certain constituency groups whereas others are seeking to increase membership from particular constituency groups.
- The questions asked during interviews can be based on a predetermined list but should also be informed by a group's own positionality.

The working group has adopted the following criteria for reporting the outcome of interviews. We likewise suggest ASOR follow the same procedures in any future reporting. These criteria

are especially important in recognizing that academic systems are rarely, if ever, welcoming, accepting, or even safe spaces for BIPOC professionals.

- Individuals- the report uses quotes from interviews but keeps them anonymous
- Organizations-the report protects both individuals' names and organizations

Recommendations for Developing Partnerships with BIPOC-serving Organizations and Institutions

There were two types of organizations that the working group did not contact: Heritage Representative/Community Groups and HBCUs. In part, the working group had a short window during which to conduct this preliminary research, but throughout the process more substantive reasons emerged for proceeding with caution -- namely, BIPOC interviewees confirmed that many BIPOC communities and institutions have been overwhelmed with requests from predominantly white institutions (PWIs) for participation and partnership during the last year. In addition to the added labor on BIPOC individuals, organizations, and institutions, there are concerns that the recent uptick in activity by PWIs is performative rather than substantive and that PWIs are recruiting participants without having crafted mechanisms to retain BIPOC members or to support and value their contributions.

The working group compiled a substantial number of potential contacts associated with HBCUs, with the particular goal of increasing diverse participation in the Annual Meeting (available upon request). However, throughout our interview process we became acutely aware of how many institutions and scholars have been contacted for the same reasons. To avoid undue pressure on their time and resources, we also wanted to avoid reaching out to those who may not currently benefit from participating in the Annual Meeting (AM). We believe this would rightly be seen as a performative action that does not align with the goals of this taskforce.

As ASOR moves forward, the working group strongly suggests that ASOR collaborate with organizations that have both diverse leadership and strong relationships with BIPOC students, professionals, institutions, and organizations, rather than reaching out directly to BIPOC institutions with which ASOR may have no prior relationship. Based on the recommendations of BIPOC scholars interviewed by the working group, we also suggest ASOR adopt the following criteria in developing any new partnerships:

1. Partnerships require long term, perpetual work.
2. Partnerships should seek to establish long-lasting and sustainable action, rather than one-off events or publications.
3. PWIs need to consider how partnerships will change institutional culture for the better.
4. PWIs need to ask whether a partnership is about listening to and building community or performativity.

5. PWIs need to adopt an honest understanding about change and what success looks like, including:
 - a. Establishing both quantitative and qualitative goals
 - b. Establishing benchmark goals that are consistent and encompass every level of leadership
 - c. Willingness to admit mistakes/failures, acknowledge them, and rectify them
 - d. Willingness to stand up and advocate for BIPOC students both in and outside the classroom
 - e. Commitment to compensate and recognize those who contribute to DEI work

Problems and Recommendations Based on Working Group Interviews

Interviews were held between February and March of 2021. The following reflect the major themes emerging from these interviews as recommendations for ASOR actions. While the working group did not interview the entire list of peer institutions and organizations at the end of this report section, the more comprehensive list is included for future ASOR collaborations. As will become clear, many of the conversations focused heavily on graduate student and early career recruitment and retention. The increased diversity of graduate student cohorts, the challenges in recruiting students in general and BIPOC students in particular, and loss of scholars in the pipeline out of graduate school and into professional life all pose significant challenges in diversifying ASOR and ASOR-affiliated disciplines.

Unlike other sections of the taskforce document, the Goal 1 working group is reporting only the thoughts, opinions, and analysis of entities outside of ASOR. Most of the challenges listed below are also addressed in the recommendations from the Goal 2 and Goal 3 working groups. Moreover, ASOR is already implementing a number of these recommendations, as reflected in the excerpts of the strategic plan found in the final section of the taskforce report.

1. Lack of mentorship and community-building opportunities for BIPOC students

One major problem students of color face studying the ancient world is that they are simultaneously visible and invisible at the same time. Their needs are rarely considered because they make up the minority in many departments, but their labor, resources, and often even images are used to support institutional reputations. It is important for leaders to build spaces so that students can create support networks needed to thrive in the field. ASOR should address the multifaceted needs of BIPOC students as well as consider the needs of those who are neuro-divergent, differently abled, etc.

Recommendation: Make informal and formal networking opportunities for BIPOC students

- i. Avoid treating such programs as peripheral and segregated from the organization
- ii. Give early career scholars access to established scholars in networking events
- iii. Mentorship needs to lead to professional development
- iv. Faculty should be trained how to mentor, given issues graduate students/early career scholars face

Recommendation: Create a caucus for BIPOC students at the AM

- i. Requires facilitators who address how to fix isolation/negative experiences

Recommendation: Create a page on ASOR website where BIPOC students can find resources to connect with other BIPOC scholars

- i. For an example, see Nadhira Hill blog that aimed to assist grad BIPOC students in Classics, linked [here](#).

2. Systemic issues impede retention of BIPOC students in ASOR-related fields

Power imbalance between graduate students and professors can lead to mistreatment. Graduate students, who are increasingly a more diverse constituency than ASOR membership as a whole, are doubly impacted by (1) power imbalances and systemic inequality related to the treatment of graduate students in higher education and (2) systemic inequalities that impact students of color and other diverse constituency groups. Interviewees had observed or experienced the “condescending nature of working with graduate students,” and noted “[m]any black students are in graduate school and getting around this bias towards early career scholars is important.”

Recommendation: ASOR should continue to incorporate graduate students in organizational governance, recognize their work, and create an open and welcoming atmosphere so they may speak freely without concern for retribution.

- i. Interviewees cautioned that even when graduate students are involved in the organization, these students are those who have survived or are comfortable enough to participate; many BIPOC students do not have a voice.
- ii. ASOR should adopt practices for recognizing and rewarding graduate students for their service, such as institutional letters of reference from committee chairs or ASOR administrative leadership.

Recommendation: ASOR should support initiatives in which the quality of life and mental health of students in graduate school are addressed.

- i. Interviewees noted that workplace and educational culture in our field normalizes stress and isolation, which are detrimental to longevity. They ask how we can make sure these fields are less stressful, toxic, and problematic. Improving retention means identifying real world issues that many scholars face and that have real world implications.

Recommendation: ASOR should continue to provide graduate students opportunities to participate in the AM, expand topics relevant to BIPOC graduate student research areas, remain open to publishing graduate student scholarship, and award graduate students for their scholarly work

- i. Interviewees noted that scholarly societies currently impeding graduate student presentations and participation are actively hurting the diversity of their organizations.
- ii. Interviewees noted that expanding the AM to include regions like North and East Africa might make the meeting more relevant to the types of scholarship that many BIPOC graduate students are currently undertaking.
- iii. Interviewees noted that BIPOC scholars want opportunities to highlight their scholarship rather than being included in publications solely because of their identity group. They also noted that these opportunities should be afforded on a consistent basis rather than in one-off deliverables, like special issues of journals. Predominantly white organizations also noted the performativity of the “special issue” approach to publication.

3. Impediments to entering fields in Ancient Studies

Peer organizations identified a number of impediments preventing students, including BIPOC students, from entering ancient studies.

- Lack of exposure to ancient language opportunities before grad school
- Lack of training in multiple modern languages
- Expectation of field work and assumption that everyone can do physical labor
- Bias in the field that is not addressed appropriately
- Reluctance to change structure/organization of field work and classroom pedagogy

Recommendation: ASOR should explore new ways to support student participation in museum and research collections work and digitally based archaeological work opportunities that do not require extensive international travel or active excavation.

Recommendation: Alongside its fieldwork projects, ASOR should highlight professional opportunities that are broadly accessible, cross-disciplinary, and interregional.

Recommendation: ASOR should publicize a wide variety of graduate programs in ASOR-affiliated fields, including non-traditional pathways, dual degree programs, and other opportunities that demonstrate the breadth of graduate work and career trajectories.

4. Lack of opportunities through ASOR to conduct research in museum settings

Recommendation-ASOR should create CAP affiliated museum opportunities, and partnerships with museums (similar to that of ASOR affiliated excavations) that provide opportunities to explore museum work.⁴

- i. Museum work may open up potential opportunities for students hesitant to enter into higher education in ancient studies due to lack of job opportunities.
- ii. The graduate school pipeline often leads to underemployment; access to more museum opportunities may help.
- iii. Access to paid museum work/ internships could help broaden interest and access to ancient studies.

5. Lack of awareness about ASOR's cultural heritage work

Recommendation- ASOR should further enhance and integrate its cultural heritage work into broader programming and communications

- i. These could include introductory lectures incorporating case studies, scenarios, research, and professional ethics that can give early career scholars and archaeologists ways to practice these types of presentations and how to engage positively with local communities.
- ii. It is important to take into account the ethics of cultural heritage preservation and the colonial approach that has permeated archaeology

6. Climate at the Annual Meeting

Interviewees discussed the importance of the climate for BIPOC scholars at scholarly meetings. Individuals described feeling isolated, but they also gave examples of openly problematic behavior. BIPOC scholars attested to being variously ignored, patronized, and being mistaken for service staff, as well as having to endure inappropriate comments from senior scholars during

⁴ While the taskforce agrees that ASOR could and should do more to support museum engagement and professionalization, the taskforce discussed several challenges impacting museum work, including the lack of job opportunities, the impact of COVID (with staff reductions across the board, ca. 20-25%), the large number of graduates with MAs from Museum Studies programs who are already un- or under-employed, and the impact of systemic racism within and across museum work. For more on these points, see https://www.aam-us.org/2021/04/13/aam-announces-findings-from-impact-of-covid-19-on-people-in-the-museum-field-survey/?utm_source=American+Alliance+of+Museums&utm_campaign=f701ac9322-Dispatches_April29_2021&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_f06e575db6-f701ac9322-37289653 and https://news.artnet.com/art-world/aam-covid-19-impact-1958793?utm_content=buffera02ea&utm_medium=social&utm_source=facebook.com&utm_campaign=news

session presentations and discussions. These issues are compounded when the scholar is a graduate student.

Recommendation: Moderators should be trained in how to address problematic behavior that occurs during sessions and ensure that everyone is aware of the AM guidelines before every session. It may be advisable to make sure AM sessions, where possible, include a tenured ally in the room, particularly if the session moderators are early career or non-tenure track professionals.

- i. For further resources, discussants referred to Eve Tucks twitter thread on moderating panels linked [here](#).

Recommendation: ASOR should adopt and widely communicate a clear harassment policy, code of conduct, and communication guidelines at the AM. These could be circulated in advance and in Power Point slides at the beginning of each AM session. ASOR could require applicants to the AM acknowledge they have read, understood, and will abide by these policies.

Recommendation: ASOR should consider adding a land acknowledgement statement at the beginning of every AM.

- i. ASOR can collaborate with institutions in the area where the AM will be held to identify land acknowledgement statements typically used in that geographical area and that were developed in collaboration with local indigenous communities.

Recommendation: ASOR should choose keynote speakers with explicit attention to diversity and representation.

- i. This may include thinking beyond the traditional professoriate to include museum curators, artists, and other professionals in the field.

7. Bias in field programs

Recommendation: ASOR should encourage, support, and award CAP affiliated field projects that incorporate bias and diversity education for the leadership of their field team, cultural competency in field school curricula, and policies and procedures that produce a safe and welcoming field school experience.

Partnership Organizations

Potential Funding Partners

1. Sportula
2. Black Trowel Collective

Potential Partnerships

1. Academics for BLM
2. Hansberry Society
3. Inluseum
4. Archaeological Institute of America
5. Society of American Archaeology
6. American Center of Research in Jordan
7. Society of Black Archaeologists
8. International Council of Museums
9. Smithsonian-National Museum of American History
10. American Research Center in Egypt
11. Institute for Field Research
12. Save Ancient Studies in America
13. Humans Against Poor Scholarship
14. American School of Classical Studies at Athens
15. American Historical Association
16. Indigenous Archaeology Collective
17. Association of Latino and Latina Anthropologists
18. AAR
19. University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology
20. The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago
21. Johns Hopkins University Archaeological Museum

Goal 2 Working Group

Goal 2: Identifying barriers for BIPOC participants at Annual Meeting (AM) and in fieldwork / hands-on research and possible solutions (originally: create fundraising initiatives for scholarships that promote BIPOC participation at meetings and in the field)

– Danielle Fatkin, Teddy Burgh, and Julia Troche

Introduction

As part of its vision for the future, ASOR has prioritized making its membership more reflective of the diversity of North America and the other regions that ASOR serves. In order to do so, the task force members working on this goal sought to identify barriers to participation in professional events for BIPOC students and scholars (referring to those in the Black, Indigenous, and People of Color community, understood in as inclusive of Latinx, Asian/Asian-American and other national, ethnic, and racial communities who are underrepresented in ASOR). Professional events include participation in ASOR’s AM as well as fieldwork and other hands-on research. Notably, the suggested recommendations to many of these barriers would not only help make ASOR’s professional events more accessible and welcoming to our BIPOC colleagues, but they will also benefit other membership groups, such as first-generation college students.

Below, we have identified a number of barriers and proposed potential avenues (“recommendations”) to move forward on dismantling these barriers. In addition to the financial barriers identified early in the process, the working group identified a number of additional barriers to participation in the AM, fieldwork, and scholarly work generally. While fundraising will be a fundamental component that will support these efforts to broaden participation in the fields covered by ASOR and to diversify ASOR’s membership, financial support alone is not enough without mentorship and creating an inclusive and welcoming ASOR community in which all have equitable access to participation. We have identified specific barriers to BIPOC student and scholar participation in the AM and fieldwork, and in ASOR membership more broadly, including recruitment of BIPOC students and scholars into the field in the first place.

This will not happen overnight and is an ongoing effort. We need to build trust, and thus we need to be thinking about immediate action items alongside long term and generational efforts. The following list includes both short- and long-term goals. The task force members recognize that we cannot fix everything at once. Rather, as in teaching, if we commit to regular incremental change, assessment, and course correction, then over time ASOR can meet its goal of creating a more welcoming and inclusive organization and discipline. Ongoing, meaningful assessment of ASOR’s initiatives will be vital to the long-term success of our efforts.

Identified Barriers

1. Financial

a. Annual Meeting & Fieldwork

Access/Means to AM and fieldwork

- i. **RECOMMENDATION 1:** Scholarships (for AM; for fieldwork; for travel) (inaugural version launched Feb 2021)
 1. **ACTION ITEM 1:** Work with current donors, identify new donors, identify new partners (organizational) to establish more scholarships broadly, but also specific scholarships aimed at BIPOC students and scholars
 - a. **TIMELINE:**
 - i. Early February: Meet with Advancement committee to assess current situation and opportunities
 - ii. March: Report findings as part of next steps
 - b. **PEOPLE:** Goal 2 group + Advancement? / Andy Vaughn, Sharon Herbert, et. al
 2. **ACTION ITEM 1:** Assess outcome of 2021 summer initiative
 - a. **TIMELINE:** August-October 2021
 - b. **PEOPLE:** ASOR Office, CAP, Project directors, and student participants
- ii. **RECOMMENDATION 2:** Work with ASOR Office to create strategies for (summer) research opportunities
 1. **ACTION ITEM 1:** Urge CAP (and other committee) to push out Call for Proposals for summer research opportunities
 - a. **TIMELINE:**
 - i. Late January: CAP (and other committees?) push out description of summer scholarship opportunity
 - ii. March(?): Advertise summer research opportunities to institutions, students; focus on broadening where opportunities are advertised
 - b. **PEOPLE:** Steve Falconer and CAP, ASOR Office, Membership?
- iii. **RECOMMENDATION 3:** Communicate/Advertise clearly financial support options when registering for membership and/or submitting a paper for the AM
 1. **ACTION ITEM 1:** Make explicit that if you have financial burden, you do not need to pay for AM registration when submitting abstract, and link to available scholarships (COMPLETED for 2021 AM)
 2. **ACTION ITEM 2:** If this is costly in terms of office staff hours, could we ask those applying with/without membership/registration to select a box and those without perhaps could automatically be sent a link to scholarships? It would also

be a way for these people to be identified more readily by office staff. Or this may cause more headache?

- iv. **RECOMMENDATION 4:** Expand options for students and early career scholars to work registration desk (or similar) for free conference registration
 - 1. **ACTION ITEM 1:** ASOR Office designs and implements a recruitment and scheduling system. Make the process clear and visible on the website.
 - a. **TIMELINE:** Can this be implemented for 2021?
 - b. **PEOPLE:** ASOR Office, ECS
 - v. **RECOMMENDATION 5:** Critically assess who and how scholarships are being awarded
 - 1. **ACTION ITEM 1:** Scholarship committees shall engage in education about implicit bias and structural bias / barriers; create position on committees for process advocate -- a person to ensure that scholarship process and candidate vetting is carried out in such a way that scholarship candidate pools include candidates from diverse backgrounds; overseas schools should make an official response to the models and processes created by ASOR. ASOR could provide models / best practices for overseas schools' scholarship committees via institutional trustees.
 - a. **TIMELINE:** By March, identify some scholarship, resources on these topics
 - b. **PEOPLE:** ASOR Office, CAP, CAORC?, individual overseas research institutes.
- b. Membership**
- i. **RECOMMENDATION 1:** Continue to include costs of membership in scholarships
 - ii. **ACTION ITEM 1:** This has already begun to be implemented into new scholarships, but a systematic consideration should be undertaken
 - 1. **TIMELINE:**
 - a. Early February: Meet with Advancement committee to assess current situation and opportunities
 - b. March: report findings as part of next steps
 - 2. **PEOPLE:** EC and Board of Trustees, Advancement, Membership and Outreach, ASOR Office, donors
- c. Other**
- There are a wide range of socio-economic hurdles that may affect one's ability to fully attend and participate in the AM, such as food insecurity and childcare costs.
- i. **RECOMMENDATION 1:** Evaluate solutions, including a possible resources page associated with AM that identifies food pantries and other resources that may be helpful to any attendee with a range of barriers to successful, comfortable attendance.

1. **ACTION ITEM 1**: Research resources that may be of help to attendees with a range of barriers.
 - a. To minimize reliance on Program Committee, could there be an option for attendees to submit suggestions (like a google form) that then could be released as appropriate to the AM resources page? Or simply make the page like a facebook page or twitter # so people can find it easily?
 - b. Examples of resources: food pantries, childcare, low stimulus room/spaces, safe/private breast feeding/pumping rooms, etc.
 - c. **TIMELINE**: By next AM
 - d. **PEOPLE**: AM Program Com., ASOR Office, ECS

2. Institution/Experience Barrier

a. Membership as a barrier

If students cannot afford individual memberships, the current system gives preference to students who are at particular institutions with institutional membership, which are usually R1 and may have their own barriers to entry, thus compounding barriers of access.

- i. **RECOMMENDATION 1**: Continue to allow/strongly encourage BIPOC students to apply for scholarships regardless of membership status (no membership?, individual or institutional, or perhaps with partnered memberships--see #3 below about reaching out to other organizations); consider broadening to other student groups as well
 1. **ACTION ITEM 1**: Discuss with Advancement as new scholarships are developed (see 1a-i above) and Assess if reciprocal partnerships with other organizations that already better serve BIPOC students and scholars is possible.
 - a. **PEOPLE**: Advancement, ASOR Office, Awards Committee, ECS, Membership and Outreach

b. Cost of attendance

Travel costs and meeting registration fees present a barrier to low-income students and some early career scholars.

- i. **RECOMMENDATION 1**: Continue to pursue virtual options. Maybe tied in to “Friends of ASOR” YouTube?
- ii. **RECOMMENDATION 2**: Allow interested, local students to (only once) attend the conference or part of the conference in order to gain experience and/or see if the conference is right for them. Perhaps paying a nominal fee?
 1. **ACTION ITEM 1**: Discuss with ASOR staff and AM Program Committee to see which options are financially and logistically feasible.

c. Scholarships

Scholarships are not consistently going to BIPOC awardees. This could be an issue of reach (getting advertisements out to diverse groups of possible applicants--see Item 3 below) but could also reflect implicit bias or other barriers, such as awards prioritizing applicants with certain 'skills' (or other markers) that are typical of certain institutional preparations that may not necessarily be tied to success of applicant outcomes.

- i. **RECOMMENDATION 1** [duplicate answer, see 1a-iv above]: Critically assess who and how awards are being awarded
 - 1. **ACTION ITEM 1**: Scholarship committees shall engage in education about implicit bias and structural bias / barriers; create position on committees for process advocate -- a person to ensure that scholarship process and candidate vetting is carried out in such a way that scholarship candidate pools include candidates from diverse backgrounds; overseas schools should make an official response to the models and processes created by ASOR. ASOR could provide models / best practices for overseas schools' scholarship committees via institutional trustees.
 - a. **PEOPLE**: CAP, Awards Committee, ASOR Office

3. Awareness (of ASOR by BIPOC scholars and students)/Reach of ASOR to BIPOC scholars, students, and organizations

a. Pool of Applicants for Scholarships/Attendees

Applicants and participants at the AM do not reflect the diversity of North America nor the other regions that ASOR serves. This is reflected in the institutional goal for making ASOR more diverse, and in particular more serving of BIPOC scholars and students.

- i. **RECOMMENDATION 1**: Active recruitment. Reach out to BIPOC students and scholars directly. Meet them where they are, versus expecting them to come to ASOR. This shows respect, acknowledges them directly, and helps foster a sense of welcoming and belonging (see Item 4 below).
 - 1. **ACTION ITEM 1**: Identify and cultivate partnerships that are willing to share our ads, communications, calls for papers, etc. to grow our reach and help make more people more aware of what ASOR is doing (for example, the Society of Black Archaeologists; the Indigenous Archaeology Collective; Association of Latino and Latina Anthropologists; HCBUs (specific departments); Native-serving institutions (specific departments); etc.
 - 2. **ACTION ITEM 2**: See Additional Recommendations about forming partnerships from Goal 1 Group.
 - a. **PEOPLE**: ASOR Office, Membership and Outreach, ECS

- ii. **RECOMMENDATION 2:** Create reciprocal (or similar) relationships with other organizations that already better reach BIPOC communities.
 1. **ACTION ITEM 1:** If you are a member of a partner organization, you can attend ASOR AM at member rate (If this is a fiscal issue for ASOR, we could implement a time limit for a ‘trial run’ or 5 years or 10 years?)
 2. **ACTION ITEM 2:** Collaborate with partners to identify ways to use James F. Strange Center to support their programming, e.g., current conversations with Howard University
 - a. **TIMELINE:**
 - i. 2021 -- lay groundwork by connecting with organizations
 - ii. 2022 -- begin process of recruiting AM participants from new organizations -- make sure that they have a good experience at the meeting (see Item #4)
 - b. **PEOPLE:** ASOR Office, external partners

b. Retention

Some BIPOC students and scholars are aware of ASOR. They may have attended an AM or two but do not return.

- i. **RECOMMENDATION 1:** Create a culture at ASOR that is welcoming and inviting to BIPOC students and scholars. A sense of belonging is important in student success and retention at predominantly white institutions, and arguably this data could be applied to the AM and membership in professional organizations as well.
 1. **ACTION ITEMS:** See Item 4 below.
 2. E.g. Bibliography in support of this data and its implications:
 - a. Tinto, V. (1993). *Leaving College: Rethinking the Causes of Student Attrition* (2nd ed). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
 - b. Hunn, V. (2014). “African American students, retention, and team-based learning: A review of the literature and recommendations for retention at predominately White institutions.” *Journal of Black Studies*, 45(4), 301-314

4. Sense of Belonging: Not feeling welcome, invited, or as though you ‘belong’

a. Membership questions

Students may experience questions as invasive.

- i. **RECOMMENDATION 1:** Ensure the process of joining ASOR from step 1 minimizes barriers.
 1. **ACTION ITEM 1:** Review questions / process of procuring individual student memberships
 2. **TIMELINE:**

- a. Early February: review process of obtaining student membership
- b. Late February: make recommendations to remove any invasive questions that are part of student membership application
3. **PEOPLE:** ASOR Membership Committee (Teddy Burgh); Andy Vaughn and member(s) of the ASOR office staff (Felice Herman), ECS

b. Annual Meeting Isolation

AM feels isolating for first-time-attending (and repeat attending?) BIPOC students and scholars (and/or for first generation college students, and/or students and scholars from ‘non-elite’ institutions or non-Western institutions, etc.).

- i. **RECOMMENDATION 1:** Mentorship. AM social/networking event to welcome new students, new attendees, etc. that connects first time attendees with peer mentors to ‘show them the ropes.’
 1. **TIMELINE:**
 - a. Spring 2021: Develop plan for new event(s) and select leadership
 - b. Summer 2021: Advertise new event and make sure all necessary elements in place to support event
 - c. Fall 2021: Event takes place at AM
 2. **PEOPLE:** AM Prog Comm, ASOR staff, ECS

c. Scope of the Annual Meeting

Scholars may be unclear whether or not a particular scope/region of research ‘belongs’ at ASOR AM, including those working on African history and culture.

- i. **RECOMMENDATION 1:** Continue to broaden fields welcomed at AM--for example, Egypt is in Africa and therefore Africa IS a topic that is included in ASOR’s program.
 1. **ACTION ITEM 1:** Collaborate to support current work, including \$50k grant to increase participation by Libyans
 2. **ACTION ITEM 2:** Support ongoing efforts to diversify membership and participation; currently ASOR has ca. 25 new members from Sudan, Egypt, Libya, and Tunisia.
 3. **ACTION ITEM 3:** Continue to collaborate with AITC and Hansberry Society to feature Nubian scholars in video programming
 4. **PEOPLE:** AM Program Com, Cultural Heritage Committee, ASOR Office, cultural heritage partners
- ii. **RECOMMENDATION 2:** Program Committee recruit more papers and sessions based on African material

1. **ACTION ITEM 1**: Continue to increase programming at AM and support current initiatives, such as the new session for projects in the Sudan and for Nubian archaeology
 2. **PEOPLE**: AM Program Com
- iii. **RECOMMENDATION 3**: Reserve certain scholarships for work on African materials
- iv. **RECOMMENDATION 4**: Translate the call for papers and other communications in multiple languages.
1. **ACTION ITEM 1**: ASOR should communicate more frequently in the native language of MENA region scholars. Papers should still be presented in English, but ASOR should look at communications in other languages in order to show respect and help cultivate belonging. ASOR can build upon its current work, such as scholarship advertisements in Arabic in 2020, incorporating Arabic and English translations in the 2020 and 2021 virtual meeting, and creating Arabic language video programming.
 - a. **PEOPLE**: ASOR Office staff, Cultural Heritage Committee, COP
 2. **ACTION ITEM 2**: Brainstorm appropriate target languages (Spanish, Hebrew, Arabic?) and identify members or professional translation services who may be able to help in this regard.
 - a. **PEOPLE**: AM Program Com, COP, Cultural Heritage Committee, ASOR Office

d. Moderation and code of conduct

AM spaces, attitudes, and conversations may feel unwelcoming or even hostile to some individuals. Much of this happens during academic sessions, which should be more strongly moderated. We need to help make the AM an inclusive and safe space for all attendees, or they may not return or remain in the field.

- i. **RECOMMENDATION 1**: Empower session chairs to be more proactive in building an inclusive space during sessions and give them tools to intervene if necessary and they feel able. (nb: if we provide training, we take on liability).
1. **ACTION ITEM 1**: Continue developing a template slide with AM code of conduct <https://www.asor.org/about-asor/policies/code-of-conduct/> to be displayed at the start of every session (similar to the template slide required for all recorded papers in the 2020 Virtual AM).
 2. **ACTION ITEM 2**: Hold session chairs more accountable for upholding the code of conduct themselves and within their sessions
 - a. **PEOPLE**: AM Program Committee, especially co-chairs

5. Competition with other conferences (SBL, MESA, AAA)

- a. ASOR AM conflicts with other meetings around the same time
 - i. **RECOMMENDATION 1:** Continue to explore additional virtual components / participation options
 - 1. **TIMELINE:**
 - a. 2021: Explore possibilities and assess possible audience given various formats; develop new participation rules
 - b. 2022: Implement new participation rules
 - 2. **PEOPLE:**
 - a. Program Committee; ASOR staff

Goal 3 Working Group

Goal 3: evaluate and recommend professional development opportunities to increase awareness, provide resources, and build capacity for internal ASOR groups, including the Board/EC, staff, and members.

– Kate Larson and Chuck Jones

Overview

Among the goals proposed to the DEI taskforce in the President’s Charge was “recommend sensitivity training programs for ASOR leadership.” One of the responsibilities of the taskforce, therefore, was to gather research and make a recommendation for what such a training program might look like and what resources would be needed to achieve it.

The DEI taskforce felt some degree of discomfort with this task, recognizing several barriers to mandated training, among them emerging data from the last decade that increasingly shows that workplace trainings fail to achieve the desired goals and are often ignored or laughed off at best, or lead to retrenchment and erection of barriers at worst.⁵ To be successful, DEI training requires authentic engagement from all parties, a commitment to the work and the process, and willingness to engage in uncomfortable moments of reflection and growth. The problem cannot just be discussed in an abstract or impersonal way, but rather requires deep investigation into the root of the problem at an individual and institutional level. Training is not a box to check, but rather a deep, introspective, and sustained effort. Further concerns discussed by the DEI taskforce were more logistical than conceptual, including who constituted ASOR leadership, how such training could be conducted, the logistics and legality of mandating training for non-staff members of the organization, and budget required for any external consultant.

On the other hand, the taskforce recognized that full support of DEI initiatives from those in leadership positions has, time and time again, proven key to establishing and maintaining that work.⁶ Individuals must be willing to listen, learn, and reflect on their own biases, complicity, and blind spots in upholding white supremacy, and that deep work is often stimulated by readings, trainings, and ongoing conversations. We are heartened by a commitment to the work of DEI in the organization, including the resolve to remove the word “Oriental” from the name of the organization, the formation of the taskforce, the establishment of dedicated scholarships

⁵ On efficacy of DEI training, see Robin DiAngelo, 2018 “How White People Handle Diversity Training in the Workplace” <https://gen.medium.com/how-white-people-handle-diversity-training-in-the-workplace-e8408d2519f> ; “Can Training Eliminate Bias? Starbucks will test the thesis” New York Times, April 18, 2018 <https://nyti.ms/2vmEX3u>.

⁶ “Facing Change: Insights from the American Alliance of Museums’ Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, and Inclusion Working Group,” 2018. <https://www.aam-us.org/programs/diversity-equity-accessibility-and-inclusion/facing-change/>

for Black, indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC), and a challenge grant and fundraising burst to establish a permanent endowment for diversity initiatives. However, we have a long way to go, as suggested by the difficulties in raising matching funds in support of the challenge grant. The taskforce also recognized that, beyond the core of organizational leadership, many people within our membership were turning to ASOR, as a leading organization of learned professionals, for guidance for their own reckonings as scholars of the ancient middle east in a field colored by colonial and white supremacist origins, e.g. for best practices in inclusive teaching the ancient world and stimulating student interest and discussion and for organizing field projects to be more inclusive and supportive for participants of color.

In light of these discussions, the taskforce determined it would focus on professional development as an ongoing process that is self-governed and related to our own positionalities within the field, rather than an approach to training that consists only of an expert teaching to a passive audience. We feel different strategies are appropriate for various levels of stakeholders across the organization, from members of the Board, to staff, to members. We also recognized that ASOR membership is itself diverse, and a “one size fits all” solution would not be advisable. Early career scholars, scholars based in North America, Europe, and the Middle East, archaeological project directors, advisors to undergraduate and graduate students: each have their own concerns and questions. The taskforce acknowledges that each lens is a valuable one, and encourages more targeted programmatic opportunities for each group. Moreover, offerings by ASOR can supplement those by other professional organizations to which ASOR members may belong; archaeologists, for instance, may participate in offerings from the Society of Black Archaeologists, Archaeological Institute of America, or the Society of American Archaeology.

We recommend that a future membership survey on diversity, equity, and inclusion should include a set of questions gauging attitudes toward professional development opportunities, including interest in participating, the type of content to be delivered, and resources or alternate platforms where members have found reliable content. This helps ensure buy-in across the organization. Recommendations from membership should inform the type of programmatic offerings ASOR might choose to provide.

Professional Development Recommendations

This section provides a high-level overview for what professional development opportunities related to DEI might look like at different levels of the organization, the goals and obstacles, a general recommendation, and measures of accountability. A standing DEI Committee (See Goal 4 Working Group), if chartered, could program and oversee these professional development opportunities.

The Task Force emphasizes that any formal training should be conducted by an external facilitator, which would need to be heavily vetted by the Executive Committee and DEI Committee (or representatives thereof). Especially in the last few years, many consultants have sprung up in this space, and some are better than others.

Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees is ASOR's governing body, responsible for setting ASOR policy. The Board currently consists of approximately 35 members. More information on the Board and its members is available at <https://www.asor.org/about-asor/committees/board-of-trustees-2021/>. The Executive Committee (EC) of the ASOR Board of Trustees acts on behalf of the Board to manage the business and affairs of ASOR between the regular Board meetings. The EC is composed of the Board Chair, Vice Chair(s) of the Board (if any), President, Past President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, Chair of the Development Committee, and two (2) or three (3) other Trustees. [<https://www.asor.org/about-asor/committees/executive-committee-2021/>].

Goals for Professional Development

- Develop a shared vocabulary
- Build support for DEI initiatives at the Board level
- Provide leadership on DEI issues within the organization
- Stimulate a culture of inclusion through a personal and organizational investment in long-term DEI-related education and growth

Obstacles for Professional Development

- Limited time in standing Board meetings
- Board members are volunteers; training cannot be mandated
- Possible resistance to or lack of recognition of importance of DEI work
- May have their own experiences with DEI training in their home organizations

Recommendations

- Dedicated time for DEI discussions during Board meetings (DEI as a standing Board agenda item)
- Optional reading group for Board members to discuss DEI-related topics (the reading lists below would be a good place to start)
- Continue to explore the possibility of a dedicated training session(s) to be conducted by an external facilitator

Accountability/Standard for success

- Increased time dedicated to discussing DEI matters
- Shared understanding of basic DEI principles and vocabulary

- Preliminary training to be completed by end of 2022

Staff

Staff are paid employees of ASOR and responsible for conducting the day-to-day business of the organization. It is the understanding of the taskforce that staff is the only group within ASOR for which we could legally mandate training.

Goals for Professional Development

- Increase cultural competency of staff members, as they are often the ‘face’ of the organization, particularly for members and potential members
- Help staff members understand their role in organizational DEI accountability
- Empower staff members to prioritize DEI initiatives in their own work

Obstacles for Professional Development

- Training requires support of institutional leadership
- Staff is geographically dispersed
- Lack of staff time to dedicate to DEI work

Recommendations

- Dedicated training session(s) to be conducted by an external facilitator
- Allow space for DEI conversations in the work of the organization

Accountability/Standard for success

- Preliminary training to be completed by end of 2022
- Staff members begin to understand their role in advancing organizational DEI principles

Chairs Coordinating Council (CCC)

The Chairs Coordinating Council takes responsibility for (a) monitoring the activities of ASOR’s standing committees, by receiving monthly reports about the committees’ discussions and business; (b) discussing and coordinating programs and policies that cut across the purview of two or more of the CCC’s constituent committees (e.g., policies regarding ethical issues or professional standards) and also adjudicating, if need be, between competing claims regarding jurisdiction or resource allocation among the CCC’s constituent committees; (c) annually receiving, from the Program Committee, recommendations regarding the plenary speaker for the ASOR Annual Meeting (AM) and then recommending to the ASOR President the name of an individual to invite; and (d) transmitting, through its chair (the ASOR Vice-President) reports regarding the work of the CCC, and its constituent committees, to the Board of Trustees, at the

Board's biannual meetings. [<https://www.asor.org/about-asor/committees/chairs-coordinating-council-2021>]

In short, the CCC is where much of the coordination of ASOR's various volunteer committees is conducted and ultimately carries a high degree of decision-making power. For example, the CCC is closely involved in the development and implementation of the strategic plan.

Goals for Professional Development

- Develop a shared vocabulary
- Build support for DEI initiatives at the committee level
- Provide leadership on DEI issues within committees
- Stimulate a culture of inclusion through a personal and organizational investment in long-term DEI-related education and growth
- Commitment to championing DEI initiatives in the development and implementation of the strategic plan

Obstacles for Professional Development

- Limited time and bandwidth
- Members likely have participated in trainings in their own organizations

Recommendations

- Dedicated time for DEI discussions during CCC meetings (DEI as a standing agenda item)
- Optional reading group for CCC members (potentially in conjunction with Board) to discuss DEI-related topics (the reading lists below would be a good place to start)
- Review individual committee DEI updates as part of annual reporting process

Accountability/Standard for success

- Embrace accountability for DEI initiatives outlined in the Strategic plan
- Annual reports from CCC committees about progress toward their DEI-initiatives

General Membership

The general membership includes those who are paying members of ASOR at varying levels or belong to ASOR-member institutions. Regular members of ASOR may present at the ASOR AM, receive academic journals, and/or serve on editorial boards and academic committees. They receive print or electronic subscriptions to ASOR journals as well as email newsletters.

Goals for Professional Development

- Provide resources to members looking for information on race-related DEI work
- Members feel supported and encouraged by ASOR in their own professional equity work

- Individuals continue a journey of self-reflection on social justice and racial equity

Obstacles for Professional Development

- We cannot mandate anything for our members
- Members from outside North America have a different history and relationship with race and racism
- Not all members will want to participate or support this work

Recommendations

- Offer 1-2 talks, workshops, or panels throughout the year open to membership. These talks could focus on topics of general interest to ASOR members but still somewhat specific to our field, including inclusive teaching practices, supporting students of color, and best practices for fieldwork.
 - These events could be co-sponsored or co-organized with groups such as Humans Against Poor Scholarship and Society of Black Archaeologists
- Create a DEI portal on the ASOR website with links and resources for members
- Continue to focus on DEI work around race through a North American lens

Accountability/Standard for success

- Monitor engagement and participation with online resources, including panels and website portal

Further Resources

The following is a list of general anti-racist resources that members of the DEI taskforce have used and recommend for any ASOR stakeholder looking to begin or continue their own journey.

Resources and Essential Reading

- Harvard Implicit Bias Tests <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html>
- [Scaffolded Antiracism Resources](#). This list includes many significant readings and is built to meet people where they are on the journey to anti-racism
- How to be an Antiracist, Ibram X. Kendi
- White Fragility, Robin DiAngelo
- Everyday Antiracism, Mica Pollock
- Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain, Zaretta Hammond
- Racial Equity Resource Guide <http://www.raciaequityresourceguide.org/>
- 21-Day Racial Equity Challenge <https://www.eddiemoorej.com/21daychallenge>
- [Layla Saad, *Me and White Supremacy: Combat Racism, Change the World, and Become a Good Ancestor* https://www.meandwhitesupremacybook.com/](https://www.meandwhitesupremacybook.com/)

- [What if Instead of Calling People Out, We Called Them In?](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/19/style/loretta-ross-smith-college-cancel-culture.html)
<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/19/style/loretta-ross-smith-college-cancel-culture.html>
- The Racial Healing Handbook, Anneliese A. Singh, PhD, LPC
 - Discusses tactics to be a better ally, including: stay humble; acknowledge mistakes; actively listen; educate yourself; and connect with others

Formal Training Suggestions/Recommendations

- Virtual Anti-Racism Training Workshops <https://www.diversitytalkspd.com/antiracism>
- 2020 Inclusion, Anti-Racism, and Wellness from the NIH
https://www.training.nih.gov/2020_inclusion_anti-racism_and_wellness_resources
- Crossroads Anti-Racism Organizing & Training
<http://www.racialequityresourceguide.org/guides-workshops/crossroads-anti-racism-organizing-and-training>
- Unconscious bias training <https://legacycultures.com/what-we-do/organizational-development-training-programs/blindsided-uncovering-understanding-and-managing-bias>
- [Vallo Karp](#), based in New York City, has worked with museums and professional organizations on diversity and inclusion measures. They are a reasonable starting point for external consultancies and training.

Goal 4 Working Group

Goal 4: Collaborate with all ASOR committees, leadership, and membership to identify needs and integrate these objectives across all areas of our new strategic plan.

Introduction

In order to avoid a reductionist or performative approach to DEI, the taskforce has identified ways DEI objectives must be embedded throughout the entire ASOR organization. Approaches that concentrate DEI-related advocacy in the hands of only one committee are doomed to failure. In contrast, effective progress requires a commitment across all levels of an organization and both a top-down and bottom-up approach. To that end, the taskforce has worked with the ASOR Office, the ASOR President, the ASOR Vice-president and Chairs Coordinating Council (CCC) Chair, Executive Committee (EC) and Board of Trustees members, and the leadership of the ASOR standing committees, as well as members on those committees. The suggestions found throughout this document impact all of the ASOR governance structure as well as membership, thus infusing DEI practices throughout the organization and solidifying them as integral aspects of the organization's goals.⁷

ASOR Strategic Plan

A strong argument can be made that DEI is central to accomplishing most, if not all, of ASOR's areas of activity:

- Fostering original research, exploration, and archaeological fieldwork
 - How would this be accomplished without the participation of scholars from diverse backgrounds, the participation of communities made up of diverse constituency groups, and the participation of students from diverse backgrounds?
- Encouraging scholarship in the region's languages, texts, traditions, and histories
 - This is, at its foundation, an exercise in cultural competency
- Disseminating research results and conclusions in a timely manner, through a robust publication program, Annual Meeting (AM), and other venues
 - Publication programs and the AM must be welcoming to and highlight the work of scholars from diverse backgrounds and working with diverse communities; we cannot broadly disseminate research if we do not disseminate research into all communities
- Adhering to the highest ethical standards of scholarship and public discourse

⁷ The importance of a distributed model was confirmed in interviews with peer societies, which have found that concentrating DEI only in the hands of one committee blunted the impact of policy recommendations, implementation, and programming.

- It would be difficult to imagine an ethical standard that does not align with DEI-related objectives or that could exist apart from them
- Upholding the highest academic standards in interdisciplinary research and teaching
 - Academic standards in both research and teaching are increasingly tied to inclusive teaching, cultural competency, multicultural mentorship, and access
- Promoting educational opportunities for undergraduates and graduates in institutions of higher education around the world
 - Educational opportunities are likely to fail if they do not keep pace with inclusive teaching strategies, cultural competency practices, community engagement standards, and standards of access
- Developing engaging programs of outreach for the general public
 - As the general public in the US continues to become more diverse, programming must take this fact into account, as well as the urgent calls to right the historical wrong of not serving diverse constituency groups in the US and beyond
- 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
 - Cultural resource management and heritage preservation demand an accounting of the colonial background of exploration, the advertent and inadvertent exploitation of local populations, a consideration of who is empowered to define or access cultural heritage, and how to communicate the significant and polyvalent approaches to cultural heritage across a wide variety of ethnicities, racial identities, national identities, geographic locations, socio-economic backgrounds, gender identities, and other forms of diversity.

Thus, it is no surprise that the taskforce's work directly intersected with the development of the new ASOR strategic plan. The new 2021-2026 strategic plan has not only elevated DEI to a main program area (Area 3; see below), DEI is also incorporated explicitly into several other aspects of the plan. The following include goals and action items from the current draft of the strategic plan (as of May 5, 2021) that echo recommendations made by this taskforce, particularly those that could impact North American BIPOC scholars and communities.

- Area I: The Annual Meeting:
 - 1A. Promote the Highest Quality Content in the Academic Program
 - The Program Committee and sessions chairs will encourage submissions and participation from scholars representing diverse perspectives in support of ASOR's strategic initiative regarding diversity, equity and inclusion.
 - 1B. Ensure equitable, inclusive, and diverse participation in the AM.
 - Continuation of virtual AM and make virtual platform an intellectually robust and value-added component of the AM.

- Investigate simultaneous translation programs to make the papers more accessible to our non-native English speaking colleagues.
 - Expand existing fellowship programs for registration fees and travel to the AM for students and scholars from diverse social groups and economic circumstances.
 - Together with Early Career Scholars and Program Committees, provide mentorship for new attendees.
 - 1C. Increase Meeting Revenue
 - Considerations regarding the meeting's affordability, especially for scholars who might struggle financially to attend (e.g., students, early career scholars, international scholars, non tenure-track scholars, independent scholars, alternate career members, retirees, etc.), are a priority
 - Bringing in papers beyond the geographic regions and chronological periods in which ASOR members traditionally have worked to reflect the wider range of research practiced by current members (central Asia, the western Mediterranean, Byzantine and Islamic archaeology).
 - Increasing conceptual categories for standing and member-organized sessions (for example, expanding sessions devoted to museums and collections that meet ASOR's standards of professional conduct).
- Area 2: Cultural Heritage
 - 2B. Promote Heritage Education, Documentation, and Presentation
 - Promote activities to encourage public engagement with, and advocacy for, the cultural heritage of the regions where we work. We envision these efforts to engage several constituencies. For instance, museums provide important resources for the preservation of cultural heritage and particularly effective venues for raising public awareness of cultural heritage
- Area 3: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

ASOR Mission Rubrics

 - Promoting educational opportunities for undergraduates and graduates in institutions of higher education around the world
 - Developing engaging programs of outreach for the general public
 - Upholding the highest academic standards in interdisciplinary research and teaching

Our Goals: Reaching out to and including diverse communities in our activities in meaningful and sustainable ways. In North America this centers on promoting intersectional diversity with inclusion and equality for BIPOC, LGBTQ, and other underserved communities. Overseas we focus on increasing and serving our international membership and working with local archaeological communities

- 3A. Increase Membership from BIPOC Communities
 - We have formed a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Task Force to study and recommend methods to achieve greater BIPOC membership and participation in ASOR.
 - Joined a partnership with Humans Against Poor Scholarship to support a Black Scholars Matter Initiative to bring black high school students to our AM in Chicago in 2021.
 - Funding 5 Research Stipends for undergraduates or graduate students that identify as African American/Black, Indigenous, and/or People of Color and will raise money to continue these programs and expand these programs (see below section 6D).
- 3B. Present a Public Face More Representative of ASOR's Expanded Mission and Diverse Membership
 - Board of Trustees voted to change the name to the American Society of Overseas Research.
- 3D. Enhance Efforts to Secure the Success of the Next Generation
 - Committed to finding funds to support essential student training in field research. Excavation scholarships are an important way ASOR reaches out to undergraduates and graduate students.
 - Increase its engagement with those students by increasing excavation fellowship award amounts and by cultivating a fellowship "alumni" community.
 - Facilitate career development within the US and Canada, including looking for ways to increase early career involvement in the AM as part of their training and development as academics, such as engagement with modes of research presentations (poster presentations, roundtable discussions) that are emerging alongside traditional paper presentations (above).
 - Continue to seek to expand participation in our governing structured by widely advertising open positions on committees and accepting self-nominations.
 - Endeavor to increase the number of early career scholars who serve as session chairs, perhaps pairing them with more established chairs to increase mentoring and networking opportunities.
 - Support its early career scholars at their home institutions by, for example, writing in support of junior faculty members' reappointment and tenure cases.
 - Seek 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 continue to present programming on various career tracks at its AM: for example, NGOs, government agencies, IT, consulting, cultural resource management, museum work, and publishing and journalism.
 - Invest in strategic partnerships that benefit early career scholars and membership as a whole by providing training and opportunities for enhanced credentials. For example,

- webinars on pedagogy and educational technology will continue to be developed in conjunction with the Early Career Scholars Committee, as well as training from partners such as the Council on Undergraduate Research and Forum on Education Abroad.
- Explore using its various publications as venues for discussing careers outside the academy.
 - Recognize that the “next generation” includes not just current graduate students and recently minted Ph.D.’s, but undergraduates and K-12 students. We will reach out to these constituencies by partnering with organizations such as Archaeology in the Community (AITC), a Washington D.C. based organization, and adding experts on such activities to our staff.
- Area No. 4: Publications
 - 4B. Exploit New Frontiers in Publishing, including Digital Publication
 - Articulate an open access statement that respects the rights of authors, the value of the work of publishers, and acknowledges the systemic inequalities that lead to differential access to scholarly work.
 - 4E. Increase the Diversity of our Editorial Boards and our Contributors
 - Have taken 12 active steps to enlist a diverse range of board members and contributors for journals and have been successful in broadening our range; must remain vigilant proactive to maintain and improve our progress on these fronts
 - Area 5: Public Outreach
 - 5A. Strengthen Current and Future Outreach Efforts
 - Expanding outreach efforts, such as a new webinar program tailored to the public.
 - Investigating ways to reach out to K-12 communities in the US, working with Archaeology in the Community. AITC promotes and facilitates the study and public understanding of archaeological heritage through informal educational programs, providing hands-on learning, professional development and community events.
 - James F. Strange Center may serve as a venue for community events, which will bring ASOR into closer connection with the local communities.
 - Area 6: Supporting the Work of our Members
 - 6C. Create Other Fellowships and Grants that Support ASOR Members
 - Continue 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 AM, 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).

- 6D. Create Fellowships to Recruit and Nurture Members from BIPOC and other Underserved Communities
 - ASOR received a \$150,000 challenge gift in 2021 that will serve as the cornerstone of a targeted campaign to raise \$250,000 to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion within our research community. ASOR plans to use \$200,000 from this campaign to establish a permanent endowment that will generate \$10,000 per year to support research scholarships, internships, and travel fellowships dedicated to BIPOC students. These fellowships will be a foundation for future efforts and will be a tangible sign of ASOR's commitment to long-term change.

While the strategic plan does not include every recommendation advanced by the taskforce, there is significant overlap. The plan has also made a strong start in integrating DEI objectives across the organization.

Recommendations on Governance and Institutional Infrastructure

Given the amount of work already incorporated in the strategic plan, the additional recommendations being made by the DEI taskforce, action items that must be executed to follow-through with these recommendations, and the need to assess our institutional progress, the DEI taskforce suggests two structural changes.

1. The taskforce should continue to function between May and December 2021

We need an intermediary body to help support the continued development of the strategic plan, to provide support for DEI initiatives that will be carried out already at the 2021 AM (including a President's Town Hall to discuss DEI work over the past year), to help communicate with general membership about these initiatives, and to provide institutional continuity for a new standing DEI Committee.

2. The taskforce recommends ASOR create a standing DEI Committee

In order to support the DEI work happening across all ASOR committees and leadership, to communicate with the membership, to help develop new programming, and to assess impact ASOR needs a standing DEI Committee.

The taskforce recommends this committee would:

- have a seat on the CCC
- receive updates from all ASOR bodies on their annual progress toward DEI-related goals

- provide additional support for other ASOR committees and the Office on DEI action items
- improve communication with general membership on DEI-related activities
- lead DEI initiatives, which could include a program unit on diversity, equity, and inclusion at the AM, an ASOR climate survey, as well as other initiatives suggested by the taskforce
- liaise with community organizations and institutional partners on DEI-related affairs

Membership on the DEI committee would be broadly inclusive of different aspects of diversity, equity, and inclusion, though the taskforce recommends that BIPOC recruitment, retention, wellness, and professional success remain a major priority. The DEI committee could have representatives from other constituency groups, such as the Initiative for the Status of Women and Early Career Scholars, to enable effective collaboration and support. Other constituencies might include ASOR members affiliated with a BIPOC caucus (see recommendations above), a representative working with ASOR’s internationalization efforts, and members with expertise on LGBTQIA concerns, religious diversity, disabilities, or other aspects of diversity. Finally, the committee could include the ASOR ED as ex officio to improve collaboration, interaction, and communication across the organization.

In order to assess the progress ASOR is making, to communicate that work effectively to the membership, and to promote DEI related contributions, the DEI committee recommends that every ASOR committee, the ASOR Office, the EC, and the Board of Trustees provide an annual report that includes a section describing their DEI initiatives for the year and evaluating their impact. While the CCC does not currently require annual reports from all committees, several already provide a report, and others were amenable to the suggestion at the joint DEI-CCC meeting held in March 2021.⁸

Postscript

In closing, the DEI taskforce would once again like to thank the many ASOR members working tirelessly to improve DEI outcomes, the ASOR Office, ASOR leadership on the Board and the CCC, and our community partners and collaborators. As chair of the DEI taskforce, I would also like to acknowledge the incredible contributions of the DEI taskforce members throughout the unprecedented difficulties of the last academic year and to thank them for their commitment to this work moving forward.

⁸ Interviews with peer societies confirmed that DEI committees should report directly to senior leadership, should be integrated into the governance of the organization, and should have mechanisms to collaborate with all other committees, to liaise with peer organizations and partners, and to assess DEI activities across the organization.