

TRIGGER ALERTS—1. One very sensitive area-- I have substituted SW Asia throughout for Near East and Middle East. Do we want to do this? We have a real generational gap on this vocabulary. It is not going to go away. What to do? Also, is SW Asia the right term? Would West Asia be better if we change? 2. Parts of this are things we haven't done verbatim from last plan. They are still noble goals. Leaving them in at least means we continue to try.

Revised ASOR 2021-2025 Strategic Plan Draft (5-3- 21)

Preamble

For the past 5 years (2016-2020) ASOR has operated successfully under a 5 year plan worked out by a Strategic Task Force led by then President Susan Ackerman in 2015, and approved by the Board of Trustees in April 2016. That plan presented 8 goals, 4 of which the task force considered enhancement of existing key program areas—1. the Annual Meeting; 2. Publications; 3. ASOR's International Affiliations; 4. Supporting our members work both in the form of increased fellowships, and enhanced in-house resources for archaeological research. The second 4 goals represented new initiatives that focused on supporting ASOR's broadening programs and increasingly diverse membership. These included fostering the next generation of scholars, increasing, and better serving both our professional international members and the interested public, and finally, developing a more robust program of cultural preservation and protection.

Periodic strategic planning is a valuable exercise that promotes reflection on and reevaluation of an organization's goals and priorities. It was this mind that in February of 2020 ASOR's Executive Committee (EC) spent a day assessing the progress made on the 2016-2020 strategic plan and considered whether these goals still reflected and served the priorities laid out in our expanded mission statement as developed between 2010 and 2015:

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

- *Fostering original research, exploration, and archaeological fieldwork;*
- *Encouraging scholarship in the region's languages, texts, traditions, and histories;*
- *Disseminating research results and conclusions in a timely manner, through a robust publication program, annual meeting, and other venues;*
- *Adhering to the highest ethical standards of scholarship and public discourse;*
- *Upholding the highest academic standards in interdisciplinary research and teaching;*

- *Promoting educational opportunities for undergraduates and graduates in institutions of higher education around the world;*
- *Developing engaging programs of outreach for the general public;*
- *Supporting and participating in efforts to protect, preserve, and present to the public the historic and cultural heritage of the Near East and the wider Mediterranean and to raise awareness of its degradation.*

The EC agreed that the 2016-2020 goals remained central to ASOR's mission and that we had made significant progress toward their accomplishment, but, as always, there remained more to be done and some of our priorities had shifted as circumstances changed over five years. In light of this, and of transformative changing circumstances not foreseen in the 2016-2020 plan--such as the purchase of the Strange Center and opportunities opening up with the move to Alexandria, the exponential expansion of our cultural heritage activities, the shift of journal publication and distribution to the University of Chicago Press--we discussed whether we needed a completely new strategic plan or a revision of the current plan and who should produce the new or revised document. The EC stressed the importance of feedback from multiple membership sources, and agreed that the planning process should be a major item on the April 2020 Board of Trustees' meeting agenda.

Then came the COVID-19 lockdown. We regrouped in April and May. With circumstances changing on an almost daily basis and no realistic sense of what the post-pandemic landscape would be like, it did not seem to be the time for new long-term initiatives. On the other hand, we did need to respond to and deal responsibly with the changed and changing circumstances. We decided that the Chairs Coordinating Council (CCC) should meet over the summer and with input from the standing committees begin to craft a revised version of the 2016-2020 plan for consideration and revision by the EC in early 2021 and submission to the Board of Trustees at its Spring 2021 meeting.

This resulting 2021-2025 plan reflects both revision and expansion of the 2016-2020 document. The first section of the plan (Part I) identifies 6 key areas of activity from the earlier plan that remain central to ASOR's mission and goals, and outlines actions for enhancement in each area. The two most obvious changes from the 2016-2020 plan are the integration of aspirational and programmatic goals into a single section and, more striking, the elevation of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) efforts to a Key Program Area (Area 3). The latter is a response to the massive social equity movement that began in the spring of 2020, the consequent intensification of our member universities' diversity programs, and the growing demands of a large segment of our membership to be a positive part of this movement. DEI appears nowhere in ASOR's mission statement, but efforts to make ASOR welcoming to a more diverse membership clearly further many of our stated goals, including, *Upholding the highest academic standards in interdisciplinary research and teaching*, *Adhering to the highest ethical standards of scholarship and public discourse*, *Promoting educational opportunities for undergraduates and graduates in institutions of higher education around the world*, and *developing engaging programs of outreach for the general public*. While diversity was a repeated theme in the 2016-2020 plan, indeed Part II of that plan is titled "Serving ASOR's Diverse Membership", we focused on growing and better serving our international membership and nurturing our early career members.

While we had successes and will continue to strive in these areas, the DEI initiative in the 2021-2025 plan foregrounds efforts to bring BIPOC communities into ASOR. These efforts began before spring of 2020 with the push to modify ASOR’s name, which culminated in a vote to change the name from American Schools of Oriental Research to American Society of Overseas Research in November of 2020. Part II outlines needed infrastructure improvement and staff development to help achieve the goals set forth in Part I.

Part I. Strengthening ASOR’s Key Program Areas

Area 1: The Annual Meeting

ASOR Mission Rubrics

- *Fostering original research, exploration, and archaeological fieldwork;*
- *Encouraging scholarship in the region’s languages, texts, traditions, and histories;*
- *Disseminating research results and conclusions in a timely manner, through a robust publication program, annual meeting, and other venues*

Our goals: Conduct an exceptional, broadly attended and widely accessible professional meeting dedicated to scholarship on the history and cultures of SW Asia and the Greater Mediterranean Basin

Actions

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

The current quality of the academic program is already high. Applications to present papers exceed the number of sessions available, with the result that only the best papers are accepted. Maintaining a healthy number of sessions for paper presentations will guarantee that the quality of this aspect of the academic program continues. To further guarantee this, the Program Committee will regularly review the Annual Meeting’s “ASOR-Sponsored Sessions,” to make certain they continue to represent ASOR members’ primary areas of scholarly interest and engagement. Session chairs will continue to recruit paper presenters whose contributions will enhance the quality of the academic program and develop new directions as appropriate. 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. We will also continue to productively disseminate members’ research at the Annual Meeting through mechanisms other than papers—poster presentations, roundtable discussions, and similar events—and develop mechanisms to archive these at our Alexandria office. In addition, to encourage attendance and dialogue the ASOR staff will follow the model of other learned societies and enhance the co-curricular component of the Annual

Meeting program by offering museum visits, networking opportunities for various interest groups, movie events, and similar activities.

1B. Increase participation and attendance especially among international participants from regions of ASOR's academic interests and ensure equitable, inclusive, and diverse engagement in the Annual Meeting.

Due to COVID-19 travel restrictions in 2020, ASOR's Annual Meeting was held in an entirely virtual format. This improved access significantly for our international participants and others for whom travel is prohibitive in cost. In addition, the virtual platform offered more time for discussion and digestion of papers. The advantages of the virtual format were so great that we now plan to incorporate a virtual component in all upcoming Annual Meetings. In 2021 we will hold in-person and virtual meetings one month apart in November and December for a single registration fee. Depending on the success of that venture we will test other models of virtual and in person integration in following years. ASOR will continue to reach out to government entities and non-profit organizations to increase participation in the Annual Meeting for scholars from the regions of our research. We will investigate simultaneous translation programs to make the papers more accessible to our non-native English speaking colleagues.

ASOR recognizes that diversity and equity among participants and attendees of its programs is paramount. Equally important is recruitment of a diverse and inclusive community of scholars into ASOR-related professions. The Annual Meeting as a showcase of ASOR activities provides a potentially powerful recruiting tool. Therefore, ASOR plans to expand existing fellowship programs for registration fees and travel to the Annual Meeting for students and scholars from diverse social groups and economic circumstances. Together with Early Career Scholars and Program Committees we will provide mentorship for new attendees. We will also work to make our virtual platform an intellectually robust and value-added component of the Annual Meeting.

1C. Increase Meeting Revenue

Ensuring the academic rigor of sessions and workshops is the top priority in planning the Annual Meeting. 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 as well. Thus, the Annual Meeting is not necessarily financially self-sustaining. Nonetheless, if the Society is to survive to fulfill its other missions, cost effectiveness must be a *desideratum*.

With these considerations in mind, the ASOR leadership and staff will explore and implement strategies for increasing Annual Meeting revenue: for example, growing Annual Meeting attendance in ways that also enhance the meeting's quality by bringing in papers beyond the geographic regions and chronological periods in which ASOR members traditionally have worked (Bronze Age and Iron Age Levant) to reflect the wider range of research practiced by current members (Central Asia, the Western Mediterranean, Byzantine and Islamic studies). Attendance could also be enhanced by 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). Finally, ASOR will continue to develop virtual elements that enhance and broaden participation in future Annual Meetings.

Location and timing are other important drivers of attendance at the Annual Meeting. For ASOR these choices are complicated by the desire of many of our members to meet together with Society of Biblical Literature (SBL), which we have traditionally done to mutual benefit. Recent scheduling difficulties have caused ASOR to re-evaluate the time and location of the Annual Meeting for the next several years. A poll of membership and other constituents revealed substantial support for continued connection with the SBL, but uncovered insurmountable logistical difficulties with a joint venture in some venues chosen by the SBL. Consequently, in 2019 the ASOR Board of Trustees voted to continue to schedule the Annual Meetings generally at the SBL's and ASOR's traditional time (Wednesday-Saturday before the week of Thanksgiving) and to meet in the same city as SBL when hotel and conference facilities allow. However, in years in which the facilities in the same city do not provide financially reasonable or effective accommodations, ASOR will seek another city for its Annual Meeting. This choice will be based on convenience related to international travel hubs, as well as local attractions that would appeal to the academic attendees at the Annual Meeting (such as museums, cultural heritage sites, reception venues, etc.). The Program Committee and ASOR Staff will identify and work closely with local constituencies to arrange special events and visits for attendees between sessions or in the evenings.

1D. Work Toward a Carbon Neutral Annual Meeting

The preservation of cultural heritage is central to ASOR's mission. Climate degradation poses serious threats to cultural monuments in the form of air pollution, fire, and flooding. Travel to the Annual Meeting produces significant carbon emissions—an average of .89 tons of metric tons per year per attendee (Stephans and Hermann 2019). Therefore, ASOR will explore ways to mitigate these carbon emissions. Strategies include: 1. Meeting in central, hub cities; 2. Moving sections of the program, such as posters, to a virtual-only format; 3. Offering incentives for sustainable travel options (train, car pools); 4. Instituting a carbon offset fee with registration.

Area 2: Cultural Heritage

ASOR Mission Rubric

- *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.*

Our Goals: Participate energetically in efforts to protect, preserve, and present to the public all aspects of the cultural heritage of SW Asia and the Greater Mediterranean Basin and to promote engagement with and understanding of the cultural heritage.

Background

ASOR has always recognized that the protection and preservation of the cultural heritage of its region(s) of study is at the core of its mission and an area of profound interest to its membership. In recent years our active involvement in preservation and education efforts has increased dramatically. Beginning in 2014, ASOR started to work with grants from the US Department of State (DOS) to address the safeguarding of heritage sites, quickly accelerating past the original modest goals for funding. From 2014-2018, ASOR doubled its staff to work within the priorities of the US DOS large grant programs. ASOR enlisted into its projects volunteers from within and beyond its membership in the US, Europe, Middle East, and North Africa. With DOS funding, ASOR teams monitored the condition of cultural heritage sites in Iraq and Syria and assisted in planning and implementing post-conflict recovery. Again, with aid from the DOS, ASOR was able to organize workshops, both at the Annual Meetings and in countries in the SW Mediterranean and especially in North Africa, to counter illicit antiquities trafficking and to advance understanding of cultural heritage, education, and stewardship, especially for children. It also raised funds to bring overseas ASOR cultural heritage workers to the Annual Meeting.

ASOR plans to continue to participate energetically in efforts to protect, preserve, and present to the public all aspects of the cultural heritage of SW Asia and the Greater Mediterranean Basin and to promote engagement with and understanding of cultural heritage. ASOR aims to help carry out transformative work in cultural heritage through local members of the archaeological, conservation, museological, and touristic communities. Building on our core educational strengths we plan to continue these efforts in the following ways:

Actions

2A. Protect and Preserve Cultural Heritage

ASOR, through its Cultural Heritage Initiatives Program, and with the oversight of its Cultural Heritage Committee, will continue to participate in governmental and non- governmental projects to protect and preserve endangered sites, provided such projects are appropriate, effective, financially viable, and can be managed within the resource structure of the organization. While the funding efforts need to be initiated by ASOR, we commit to working with the local communities in the affected areas in order to have the best results. ASOR also commits to encourage complementary initiatives and efforts by its members. We currently fund a small number of preservation projects through the Shepard Urgent Action Grants, inaugurated in April 2020. With the Shepard funds we are able to award two to four grants ranging from \$2,500 to \$10,000 to excavation projects to carry out emergency conservation or stabilization activities at archaeological sites. Our first such project was the successful stabilization of the Tabira Gate at Ashur in collaboration with a team from the American University of Iraq, Sulaimani. We believe ASOR has the expertise to award and oversee more of these programs. We will seek funds from private and governmental sources to sponsor more of such projects.

2B. Promote Heritage Education, Documentation, and Presentation

Educational efforts to our North American membership are a crucial part of the goal to help protect and preserve cultural heritage. ASOR seeks to use its membership together with host-

country facilities and contacts to develop resources and programs for site preservation, documentation, and presentation. ASOR commits to promote activities that 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. ASOR will strive to learn from and contribute to the museum programming of its constituencies. In addition, ASOR will work with local and regional government and non-government agencies, and local communities to ensure the preservation of cultural heritage sites and their utilization as sources of information about cultural heritage for local, national, and international constituencies. Over the past two years we have sponsored, with funds from the US DOS Ambassadors' Program, successful education projects in Libya, including suitcase museum programs at Tripoli, Gadames, and Derj. We will work to expand such community affiliated projects in North Africa beyond Libya and elsewhere.

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*
- *Adhering to the highest ethical standards of scholarship and public discourse*

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

Actions

3A. Increase Membership from BIPOC Communities

ASOR was founded in 1900 by a small group of North American university and seminary scholars, predominantly white and male, focused on studying the Bible in its home territory. Over its 120 years of existence ASOR has expanded its areas of study and its membership. Despite this expansion ASOR remains, as were its founders, a predominantly white organization. We can tally our members of color on a single page. We have made progress on some diversity issues in the recent past. Our gender balance has improved markedly; our international membership has grown, and our foreign members now have full status; and we have worked to empower our early career scholars. Supporting the latter two groups were goals of our 2016-2020 Strategic Plan. Recruiting Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) to our membership was not a priority then. It must be now. We have formed a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Task Force to identify systemic barriers to greater inclusion and to study and recommend methods to achieve greater BIPOC membership and participation in ASOR. The Task Force reported to the Board of Trustees in May 2021, and the Board voted to enact on the following recommendations: **To be filled in after Board decisions**

Meanwhile, we have joined a partnership with Humans Against Poor Scholarship to support a Black Scholars Matter Initiative to bring black high school students to our Annual Meeting in Chicago in 2021. We are also funding 5 Research Stipends for undergraduates or graduate students that identify as African American/Black, Indigenous, and/or People of Color. We intend to 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

In 1920 ASOR filed incorporation papers in Washington D.C. with the name American Schools of Oriental Research. This was a change from its original name of American School of Oriental Research and reflected plans to expand from the original single research school in Jerusalem. Today, ASOR is formally affiliated with research centers in Amman, Jerusalem, and Nicosia. Our members conduct research from the Western Mediterranean to Afghanistan and from the Caucasus to the Sudan. The name as framed in 1920 no longer reflects the breadth and diversity of our work. Moreover, the term Oriental is misleading at best and offensive at worst. In 2020, the Board of Trustees, following a poll of the full membership and a report from an ad hoc committee tasked with considering alternatives to ASOR's name, voted to change the name to the American Society of Overseas Research. In the coming years ASOR will develop tag lines and branding materials to better explicate the breadth of our activities. We will also revisit the mission statement and goals published on our website to make sure they are in accord with our current priorities.

3C. Expand our International Activities and Better Serve International Communities

From its beginning ASOR has been an international organization with headquarters in the United States spearheading research in SW Asia and the wider Mediterranean. At its founding in 1900 ASOR supported one overseas research center in Jerusalem, which was named the American School of Oriental Research, later the Jerusalem School and finally, in 1970, the W. F. Albright Institute for Archaeological Research (AIAR). Over the course of the 20th century ASOR founded research centers in Iraq (1923, the Baghdad School, now the Baghdad Committee), Amman (1970, ACOR, the American Center of Research, formerly the American Center of Oriental Research), and Nicosia (1978, CAARI, the Cyprus American Archaeological Research Institute). In the early 1990s these research center became financially independent but remained affiliated with ASOR. They, along with 27 research centers worldwide are members of Council of American Overseas Research Centers (CAORC), with which ASOR maintains close relations.

a. Continue to Build Stronger Relationships with the Affiliated Overseas Research Centers
ASOR's affiliated Overseas Research Centers are a proven conduit for enhancing our overseas activities. They have long provided critical in-country support for ASOR researchers. Of late, they have developed robust interactive outreach programs with their local communities.

Thus, ASOR assigns high priority to maintaining and enhancing its relationships with the affiliated ORCs in Cyprus, Israel, and Jordan (CAARI, AIAR, and ACOR). These centers are critical to expanding and serving our overseas membership and to supporting the in-country work of our members. They are at the forefront of our fieldwork, overseas research, and training of graduate students. They also help recruit interested travelers to join and support ASOR. We will endeavor to increase the fellowships that fund study at the centers.

We will continue to support their programs within the Council of American Overseas Research Centers (CAORC), the US DOS and our institutional university members. We will seek to further normalize the use of the centers for early career scholars during graduate school by encouraging the use of the Annual Meeting to facilitate contact and networking between early career scholars and the international centers and providing access where possible to center directors, fellows, and alumni. We will also explore the establishment of ASOR sponsored programming (annual lecture or symposium) at each center and explore with them other mutually beneficial programs on which to partner. Travel and overseas fieldwork have been curtailed by the 2020/2021 lockdowns and the Centers have suffered financially. Once travel restraints are lifted we will reconstitute officer and member tours of field projects and encourage members travel to the centers as can be accommodated by them.

b. Increase Contacts with Unaffiliated Overseas Centers and Committees

ASOR also seeks to develop stronger relationships with ORCs located in other regions where ASOR members work: for example, the American Academic Research Institute in Iraq (TAARII), the American Academy in Rome (AAR), the American Institute for Maghrib Studies (AIMS), the American Institute for Yemeni Studies (AIYS), the American Institute of Iranian Studies (AIrS), the American Research Center in Egypt (ARCE), the American Research Institute in Turkey (ARIT), the American Research Institute of the South Caucasus (ARISC), the American School of Classical Studies at Athens (ASCSA), and the Palestinian American Research Center (PARC). We will work with CAORC to facilitate relationships with these ORCs. We look to pair posting information about them on the ASOR website to alert ASOR members to the resources of these various centers, as well as informing the ORCs about each other's resources as they relate to ASOR.

3D. Enhance Efforts to Secure the Success of the Next Generation

Sustaining a healthy stream of incoming members and emerging scholars is essential to ASOR's survival, diversity, and success. The threats to programs dedicated to the study of SW Asia and the wider Mediterranean in contemporary institutions of higher education affect most profoundly and alarmingly the career prospects of scholars within these programs, especially the scholars of the next generation. ASOR is thus committed to doing all it can to advance the careers of these scholars. As funding for humanities research continues to dwindle ASOR is 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. ASOR will continue its engagement with those students by increasing excavation fellowship award amounts as necessary for inflation and by cultivating a fellowship "alumni" community. We will also facilitate career development within the US and Canada. For example, in addition to raising funding support to help early career scholars and students participate in ASOR's Annual Meeting (above), ASOR will look for ways to increase their involvement in the Annual Meeting as part of their training and development as academics. In particular, ASOR will explore ways of enhancing graduate students' and early career scholars' engagement in modes of research presentations (poster presentations, roundtable discussions) that are emerging alongside traditional paper presentations (above). We will also continue to seek to expand participation in our governing structures by widely advertising open positions on committees and accepting self-nominations.

ASOR will also 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. ASOR also stands ready to support its early career scholars at their home institutions by, for example, writing in support of junior faculty members' reappointment and tenure cases. At the same time, ASOR recognizes that faculty positions in institutions of higher education are no longer as likely a career option for scholars in SW Asian and wider Mediterranean studies. ASOR thus seeks opportunities to support the professional development of scholars who may not pursue, or who are no longer pursuing, a career as a faculty member in an institution of higher education. Building on our successful standing session on careers outside the academy (organized by Susan Ackerman and Emily Bonney) ASOR will continue to present programming on various career tracks at its Annual Meeting: for example, NGOs, government agencies, IT, consulting, cultural resource management, museum work, and publishing and journalism. ASOR will also invest in strategic partnerships that benefit its 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. ASOR will also explore using its various publications as venues for discussing careers outside the academy.

Finally, ASOR recognizes that the "next generation" includes not just current graduate students and recently minted Ph.D.'s, but undergraduates and K-12 students. 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

ASOR Mission Rubrics

- *Disseminating research results and conclusions in a timely manner, through a robust publication program, annual meeting, and other venues*
- *Adhering to the highest ethical standards of scholarship and public discourse;*
- *Upholding the highest academic standards in interdisciplinary research and teaching;*

Our Goals: Produce a high quality, widely-read spectrum of publications. Enhance ASOR's monograph publishing program and develop new publishing venues appropriate to the twenty-first century.

Actions

4A. Expand the Monograph Publication Program

ASOR reaffirms its historic commitment to monograph publishing, as this investment in knowledge production and knowledge dissemination is an important service ASOR provides to its members and to our discipline. As part of this commitment and investment, ASOR will continue to publish three monograph series—the *Annual of ASOR (AASOR)*, the *Archaeological Reports Series (ARS)*, and the *Journal of Cuneiform Studies Supplement Series*—and will seek to resume publishing the ASOR Books Series. We recognize the need to clearly articulate the missions of *ARS* and the *Annual*, and identify new priorities in the monograph publication program.

In order to facilitate members' publication efforts, ASOR will seek funding from private donations, membership fundraisers, and grants to subsidize subventions for members who publish in ASOR's monograph series. The Board has recently agreed to use part of the accumulated gains from the Board-designated Opportunity Fund as a way to provide a base level of funding for these subventions.

4B. Exploit New Frontiers in Publishing, including Digital Publication

ASOR recognizes that digital publications will be a key element of ASOR's publication strategy moving forward. In order to facilitate this, we plan to:

1. Enact and help facilitate others to follow the guidelines set out in the ASOR Digital Media Policies for ASOR Publications.
2. Enhance our monograph series through increasing their digital (e-book) presence as well as their inclusion in aggregate library holdings. We will also explore ways to make our back catalogue of monographs available in digital format, whether as a money-making venture or open access.
3. 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.
4. Increase our digital presence. Work with our journal vendors to increasingly use digital support platforms to move material more suitable for an online presence there. Increase the interoperability between the digital *Levantine Ceramics Project* and other ASOR publications

4C. Situate our Publications to Appeal to a Wider Audience by:

1. Increasing the archaeological content of *JCS*, without undermining *BASOR*.
2. Helping *Near Eastern Archaeology (NEA)* find a greater audience beyond ASOR's membership.
3. Increasing the publicity surrounding *ANE Today* in order to attract more subscribers and, concomitantly, more ASOR members.

4D. Address the *BASOR* and *JCS* Backlogs

Both *JCS* and *BASOR* have developed significant backlogs of submitted articles in recent years. This prompts authors to take excellent articles to other journals. We will explore the possibilities of expanding the number of pages or issues in both journals as well as considering a supplementary *BASOR* series.

4E. Increase the Diversity of our Editorial Boards and our Contributors

There is often a natural lag time between changes in membership and representation of those changes in publications and leadership. ASOR is attentive to this lag and has taken

active steps to enlist a diverse range of board members and contributors for our journals. We have been successful in broadening our range but must remain vigilant proactive to maintain and improve our progress on these fronts.

Area 5: Public Outreach

ASOR Mission Rubrics

- *Developing engaging programs of outreach for the general public;*
- *Disseminating research results and conclusions in a timely manner, through a robust publication program, annual meeting, and other venues;*

Our Goals: Expand our Outreach Efforts to, and Engagement with, the General Public.

Actions

5A. Strengthen Current and Future Outreach Efforts

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

ASOR is committed to expanding its outreach efforts. In August of 2020 we launched a new webinar program tailored to the public. We have produced 8 webinars up through April 19, 2021. All have been well attended with an average registration of 189 and a peak of 266, with the numbers growing steadily. Through sponsorships and fees these have generated between \$1,000-\$2,500 in support of further outreach efforts. These are proving to be an effective gateway program to introduce new audiences to ASOR. Since their inception our associate members have increased by almost 25%--from 335 to 442. We plan to continue and expand this successful program, which in synergy with Friends of ASOR is highly effective outreach tool. We will be exploring multi-day webinarathons.

We are also 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. We envision the James F. Strange Center serving as a venue for community events, which will bring ASOR into closer connection with the local communities. We also to plan to explore joint programs with the nearby Smithsonian Institution, where CAORC is headquartered.

Area 6: Supporting the Work of Our Members

ASOR Mission Rubrics

- *Fostering original research, exploration, and archaeological fieldwork;*
- *Encouraging scholarship in the region's languages, texts, traditions, and histories;*
- *Disseminating research results and conclusions in a timely manner, through a robust publication program, annual meeting, and other venues;*
- *Adhering to the highest ethical standards of scholarship and public discourse*

Our Goals: Increase the fellowships, grants, and other forms of support available to individual ASOR members and to the faculty, students, and staff of institutional member schools. Foster cross generational and cross community mentorship opportunities.

Actions

6A. Assess and Modify Membership Benefits for the Twenty-First Century

ASOR thrives because of its dedicated individual and institutional members, whom ASOR strives to support by providing them with tangible benefits. Historically, these benefits have included subscriptions to ASOR journals. Now, given the ready access many ASOR members have to electronic resources such as JSTOR, and even more so in a world of Open Access, this benefit is no longer as attractive. As the value of the journal subscriptions has decreased, the research expenses, particularly for overseas fieldwork, have increased and at the same time federal funding for such projects is dwindling. ASOR must thus identify and provide new and different membership benefits to sustain and grow its individual and institutional membership base, including significant new fellowships and grants and more on-line resources as described in the sections below.

6B. Fund More Fieldwork and Fieldwork-Related Research Grants

ASOR has excelled in developing fellowship funds that support students engaging in archaeological fieldwork and related activities. Since the Shirlee Meyers/G. Ernest Wright Fellowships were first funded in 2007, ASOR members have generously donated funds for 8 more excavation participation programs, among the most recent are the Steinmetz Fellowships for Active/Reserve Military or Veterans and the Stevan B. Dana Fellowships for Hazor. From 2007 to 2021, ASOR has awarded more than \$990,000 to 740 researchers and students with mini-grants for scholarly research, annual meeting travel, excavation projects, and dig scholarships through our grant programs. Beginning in 2022, the dramatic increase in named endowments will enable ASOR to award about \$150,000 per year, and we anticipate seeing that level of support grow. Our dig scholarship endowments now (in 2021) total more than \$1,350,000. Our endowments for excavation projects are now (in 2021) just over \$500,000. Excavation is expensive, and with reduced federal support in recent years, ASOR needs to raise more funds to support its members' field work, documentation, and site preservation. These funds can serve to facilitate key yet discrete activities in projects: for example, funds to purchase a special piece of equipment, to pay the fees for otherwise unfunded laboratory tests, or to cover the cost of hiring a specialist. We goal for the next five years is to increase these endowments for excavation projects by at least 150% (to more than \$1,250,000).

ASOR also seeks to raise funds for grants to support archaeological fieldwork in other ways: for example, grants for subsidizing publication subventions, especially for ASOR monographs (above); grants that help subsidize pre-publication work; and grants demonstrating ASOR's commitment to the communities and countries in which ASOR members work by supporting field

work projects that engage surrounding communities or otherwise enhance ASOR's engagement with local or national interests. Our most recent venture in this area is the creation of the ASOR Lawrence T. Geraty Community Archaeology Endowment, designed to heighten awareness of cultural heritage by engaging and facilitating partnerships with local communities in heritage protection and community archaeology. We have also launched the Shepard Urgent Action Grant program with annual contributions, and we aim to create an endowment for this program during the period of this strategic plan.

ASOR has been particularly successful recently in working with the US DOS to carry out educational cultural heritage projects in Libya. ASOR's increased commitment to cultural heritage protection and preservation also suggests the development of other grants to protect and preserve sites that are at risk (see above section 2).

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6C. Create Other Fellowships and Grants that Support ASOR Members

ASOR seeks to 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 Annual Meeting, especially for junior scholars and international scholars, as well as for non-tenure-track scholars, independent scholars, and similar scholars who otherwise lack the funds to attend; and (iii) grants to support publication of non-fieldwork related scholarship (e.g., publications in the reinvigorated ASOR Books monograph series). These are programs we have begun but need to grow.

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.

6E. Develop In-House Resources in Support of Archaeological Fieldwork

To encourage the proper archiving of fieldwork records, and to meet the challenge of digital archiving and data recording, ASOR will work to develop and promulgate standards for archiving documentary records in all forms. In order that these archives be of maximal use, and maximally accessible, ASOR will also develop a database documenting the location of fieldwork records, especially the records of ASOR-affiliated projects. ASOR has administrative and fieldwork archives that go back to its foundation in 1900. We thought we had found a home for them at the Harvard Semitic Museum, but now we must take them back. We will endeavor to safeguard them at the James F. Strange Center. In addition, ASOR needs to develop web resources to facilitate the work of fieldwork projects by, for example, providing a place for directors to list fieldwork projects that are looking for volunteers, or by providing directors with advice on best practices about running a field school and about the increasingly important issue of site curation (including long-term site preservation and public presentation). ASOR's website will also be expanded to provide links to the guidelines and regulations of various Departments of Antiquities that are available on the Internet. ASOR's web resources will also serve all ASOR members and the members of "Friends of ASOR" by functioning as a clearinghouse for information about archaeological fieldwork in the Near East and wider Mediterranean world.

This concludes our survey of the six key areas of ASOR's mission and our five year goals for them. There remains one perennial role that cannot be overestimated. This is to stand as a champion for our mission at all times. ASOR is acutely aware that in contemporary institutions of higher education, programs dedicated to humanistic studies, particularly outside of the US, find themselves increasingly under threat. The budgetary constraints and travel restrictions brought on by the 2020/2021 COVID Pandemic have exacerbated an already alarming decline in the support of humanistic disciplines. Now, more than ever, ASOR must serve as a strong advocate on behalf of academic colleagues whose departments face cuts by their institutions' administrations.

ASOR will also seek to promote the study of SW Asia and the Greater Mediterranean Basin by regularly and consistently engaging the national humanities community. For example, ASOR will work with the National Humanities Alliance to advocate on behalf of the field of our field and to assert the overall value of the humanities. ASOR will in addition increase its involvement in public advocacy in the federal and international arena: for example, by speaking out in support of (i) continued or increased NSF funding available to the social sciences (and so to archaeology); (ii) continued or increased funding for the ECA grants that help support ASOR's affiliated ORCs; and (iii) continued or increased NEH funding available for humanities research. ASOR also will speak out, as appropriate, about funding decisions that negatively affect our mission: for example, the recent NEH decision to cease funding overseas summer institutes and seminars. In undertaking these efforts, ASOR will seek to work together with other organizations that share these same goals: for example, scholarly organizations such as the AIA, SAA, MESA, AOS, and SBL and like-minded federations such as CAORC. ASOR will also seek to work with individual scholars whose interests intersect with those of ASOR: for example, ASOR will seek to engage cultural resource specialists in discussions about ASOR's work to safeguard and preserve cultural heritage.

Part II. Infrastructure to Support Programs

ASOR Mission Rubrics

- *Fostering original research, exploration, and archaeological fieldwork;*
- *Disseminating research results and conclusions in a timely manner, through a robust publication program, annual meeting, and other venues;*
- *Developing engaging programs of outreach for the general public;*

Background: Following our displacement from Boston University, ASOR’s Board made the bold decision to both relocate to the District of Columbia area and to purchase our own headquarters. The goal was so that ASOR’s operations would be located in a location ideal for public outreach and engagement rather than an elite college city. The decision to purchase our own home was so that ASOR could be independent of changes in institutional leadership. Three years later, ASOR successfully relocated to Alexandria, VA, and generous donations from our members have retired the building debt. Based on current pledges, we anticipate that ASOR will have a \$500,000 board-designated building fund by 2024. This building fund will support basic operations and maintenance and ensure that ASOR’s office will not be a long-term drain on operational revenue. Now that we have actualized this major achievement not even contemplated when the previous strategic plan was written, we must consider how the James Strange Center can be used to do more than provide ASOR with “free rent.”

Actions:

7A. Develop James Strange Center to best serve our various programs

On one hand, a central purpose for the ASOR office is to be the physical location where staff who support ASOR members (and our more than 240 volunteers) will carry out the operations needed to conduct ASOR activities and programs (e.g., journals, books, e-newsletters, grants, and the annual meeting). While not losing sight of this need to support our core operations, ASOR aspires to utilize our location near Washington, DC to support broader outreach and engagement with the public—both in the U.S. and abroad.

1. Undertake modest remodeling needed to enable excellent office space for our staff to support our core programs.
2. Upgrade storage facilities appropriate for ASOR’s archives and other core records. Recognizing that the creation of a research center for archaeological archives is beyond the space and environmental control limitations at the James Strange Center, we need to create cost-effective and efficient storage systems. We should concurrently evaluate if long-term curation of basic archaeological and institutional records is within ASOR’s budgetary means given our other strategic priorities.
3. Raise funds to remove the first floor of the James Strange Center to create a multi-use meeting room / conference room that is completely ADA accessible. The renovations should create workspace that would be appropriate for future ASOR employees so that

ASOR can encourage diverse hiring without consideration of disabilities. The space will also be suitable for education and advocacy meetings and events with governmental agencies and bureaus.

4. Raise funds to renovate the kitchen area to make it more integrated with the proposed multi-purpose meeting (conference) space. In addition to being a space to host governance meetings and education / stewardship programs connected to ASOR's work, this space also could be used for community outreach events that foster celebration of cultural heritage from diaspora communities in the regions where ASOR supports research (the wider Mediterranean, North Africa, and the Middle East).
5. Raise funds to create a media room suitable for video and audio recordings that could be used in ASOR's growing webinar and educational video programs. The plan is to focus on basic functionality in this space, with the idea that state of the art video and recording studios are available for low to no cost at nearby affiliated institutions. Further, ASOR will explore the feasibility of physical network servers to be housed in this room if we determined that cloud hosting is not adequate or desired.
6. Expand the current facilities committee to include local membership who would be drawn from ASOR members who live in the wider area, and from faculty, administrators, and leaders from local education institutions and non-profits with whom ASOR partners or aspires to partner.

Staff Development at the James Strange Center

Because ASOR has experienced the reality of abruptly losing our office home at Boston University, there was a two-year period in which the physical location for our operations were somewhat transient. During the period, remote work was necessary, and ASOR's staff did not work in one location. During an 18-month period in 2020–2021, a global pandemic necessitated the need for ASOR staff to work remotely. The disruption created by the pandemic came at a moment when ASOR was just beginning to consolidate operations at the James Strange Center. Although ASOR has discovered that we are able to continue and even expand operations when staff are forced to work remotely, we have also concluded that our programs and activities will be more successful when employee team members can work together and collaborate in the same physical space.

We do not want to preclude specific programs continuing remotely (e.g., editors for our academic journals and the Annual Meeting), but we want to aspire to having as many staff as possible work together at the James Strange Center. We also want to facilitate and interaction and collaboration with staff from our three affiliated overseas research centers (ACOR, AIAR, and CAARI).

Improve Online Meeting and Office Data Management Systems

The move to remote work and interactions necessitated by the COVID-19 global pandemic has only reinforced the need to ASOR to have excellent online meeting and data management systems. As mentioned in several places above in this strategic plan, ASOR recognizes that online and web support systems will expand even further as we emerge from the global pandemic. Our membership has been forced to develop its capacity for online meetings and research, and ASOR must look for ways to expand our support in this space within our budget constraints.

Because the costs for online systems can be large (and almost infinite), our focus will be on practical solutions that support our members and core operations. We will preference cloud-based solutions that do not necessitate ASOR investing in hardware that will become outdated in a few years. We will also seek to choose solutions that can be utilized with current staffing and supplemented by IT contractors. Further, and most importantly, our focus will be on expanding crowd-source resources for our membership rather than investing in expensive data management systems that primarily benefit ASOR's staff.

