

ASOR Early Career Scholars 2021 Annual Report

Committee Members:

Tiffany Earley-Spadoni, Chair (until December 31, 2021)
Elie Akiki, Early Career Scholar Member (until December 31, 2024)
Shira Albaz, Early Career Scholar Member (until December 31, 2023)
Vicky Almansa, Graduate Student Member (until December 31, 2024)
Owen Chesnut, Early Career Scholar Member (until December 31, 2021)
Cecelia Chisdock, Graduate Student Member (until December 31, 2023)
Maggie Geoga, Early Career Scholar Member (until December 31, 2024)
Bianca Hand, Graduate Student Member and Liaison to the DEI Task Force (until December 31, 2023)
Vivian Laughlin, Early Career Scholar Member (until December 31, 2021)
Megan Lewis, Early Career Scholar Member (until December 31, 2023)
Daniel Sánchez Muñoz, Early Career Scholar Member (until December 31, 2024)
Marta Ostovich, ASOR Staff Member (ex officio, non-voting)
Tine Rassalle, Early Career Scholar Member (until December 31, 2021)
Steve Renette, Early Career Scholar Member (until December 31, 2023)
Leticia Rodriguez, Early Career Scholar Member (until December 31, 2024)
Avary Taylor, Graduate Student Member (until December 31, 2024)
Zachary Thomas, Early Career Scholar Member (until December 31, 2024)
Shane Thompson, Early Career Scholar Member (until December 31, 2024)
Jessica Tomkins, Early Career Scholar Member (until December 31, 2023)
Sarah Wenner, Graduate Student Member, Liaison to the Program Committee
Vanessa Workman, Graduate Student Member (until December 31, 2022)

I. History of the Early Career Scholars Committee (ECS) and Definition

The committee was formed in 2004 as a subset of ASOR’s Program Committee to provide networking and professionalization opportunities for ASOR “Junior Scholars.” The name “Junior Scholars” was changed in 2018 to **Early Career Scholars (ECS)** by request of the committee and formalized by vote of the Board of Trustees.

ECS is broadly defined as a constituency of ASOR characterized by a range of traits, including their status as a student (graduate or undergraduate) or their general rank in their respective academic or professional tracks (broadly encompassing Early Career members and all those without tenure). ASOR defines an Early Career member as anyone who has received a terminal degree in his or her field in the past five years for the purposes of discounted meeting and membership rates.

II. Early Career Scholars and the ASOR Strategic Plan

Because ECS participate in all levels of ASOR, and because ECS membership is on the rise and represents a key demographic for expansion, both ASOR and its ECS members benefit from ECS representation in ASOR’s governance. More specifically, several key areas in ASOR’s Strategic Plan require the support of the standing ECS Committee. These include ASOR’s commitment to secure the success of the next generation of its members by:

- Increasing the involvement of ECS in the Annual Meeting as part of their training and development as academics. In particular, ASOR will explore ways of enhancing ECS’ engagement in modes of research presentations, increasing the number of ECS who serve as session chairs, perhaps pairing them with more established chairs to increase mentoring and networking opportunities, supporting existing ECS

programming and developing additional programming, and raising funding support to help ECS participate in the meeting.

- Supporting the development and advancement of ancient and wider Mediterranean programs in university departments.
- Supporting ECS at their home institutions by, for example, writing in support of junior faculty members' reappointment and tenure cases.
- Seeking opportunities to support the professional development of scholars who might not pursue, or who are no longer pursuing, a career as a faculty member in an institution of higher education. ASOR will present programming on various career tracks at its Annual Meeting. ASOR will also explore using its various publications as venues for discussing careers outside the academy. ASOR will in addition work to enhance its job posting site by using part of the site to post non-academic jobs and to link to other sources for non-academic careers.
- Support the Diversity and Equality Initiatives (DEI) of the most recent strategic plan.

III. Area and Mandate

The committee represents ECS in ASOR governance and fosters interaction between ASOR leadership and ECS. Additional ECSC initiatives include:

- Planning events for the Annual Meeting, including a luncheon, with a panel discussion on a topic of interest to ECS, and more informal social gatherings, tours, and a reception.
- Supporting students at the Annual Meeting, including offering advice for first-time attendees, information regarding potential roommates, and publicity for Annual Meeting scholarships.
- Advocating with ASOR governance to maintain Annual Meeting prices that make the meeting accessible to ECS.
- Maintaining an online presence, both on the ASOR website and on social media platforms, publicizing areas of interest to ECS. These areas include scholarship, fellowship, and award opportunities, calls for papers for regional, national, and international meetings, and employment opportunities within the academy and beyond.
- Encouraging ECS participation in the ASOR blog and newsletter.
- Providing educational and training opportunities, including virtual events and webinars.
- Provide mentoring opportunities for ECS.
- Support the Diversity and Equality Initiatives (DEI) of the most recent strategic plan by promoting a welcoming environment for our constituents and providing resources and mentoring to BIPOC students and scholars.

IV. Activities in 2020-2021

To better support our members' desire for community through service, focus our activities, and to provide leadership development for a greater number of ECS, the committee was organized into subcommittees dedicated to specific areas: academic programming, professionalization resources, community building, online engagement, and DEI. All new members were solicited with a public call for service and the selection was the result of a competitive process (per our 2017 Committee Action Plan). The committee also chose to nominate a co-chair, Vanessa Workman, to allow for more leadership opportunities and the staggered terms of co-chairs.

Virtual and Online Activities

- We organized our first virtual brown bag webinar, "[Online Teaching: From Triage to Best Practices](#)" in Spring 2020 in response to critical needs posed by the worldwide pandemic. The webinar featured experienced online instructors, an online curriculum developer, and a copyright librarian. This and all

subsequent webinars have been made permanent resources on the ASORTV YouTube channel. (70 registrants, 260 video views online)

- We organized a virtual brown bag panel discussion in Fall 2020, “[Getting Published: From Idea to Journal Article.](#)” Editors from *Near Eastern Archaeology*, *BASOR* and the *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* were panelists. (90 registrants, 173 video views online)
- We organized a virtual brown bag panel in Spring 2021, “[Building Paths to Academic Careers](#)” with five expert panelists on the topic of academic job searches. (70 registrants, 90 video views online)
- In Fall 2021, ASOR ECS partnered with the Open Context to produce a series of three webinars on the theme of “Digging Up Data.” The workshops are designed to address best practices in digital data curation and digital, public scholarship, areas of perennial interest and need to our constituency. Each session has seen a pre-registration of more than 150 participants, with many of these coming from international research contexts including the Middle East countries where we conduct much of our research:
 - “[Data Literacy for Archaeologists](#),” September 2021 (150 registrants, 75 video views)
 - “[Working with Archaeological Data](#),” October 2021 (150 registrants, 150 video views)
 - “Telling Stories with Archaeological Data,” November 2021 (participation TBD)
- We developed a web page, “[Early Career Resources](#)” on the ASOR website to replace expired resources. This rich web resource provides useful information on job searching, grants and fellowships, and links to the growing library of video-based resources for our members.
- Two ECS committee members served as moderators for the May Webinarthon to support DEI initiatives (Tine Rassalle and Tiffany Earley-Spadoni)
- Organized bi-monthly virtual “coffee hours” with an average attendance of 15. These “laid back” virtual events are intended to create a feeling of community outside of the annual meeting.
- Promoted our events and activities through a vibrant Facebook group, a Facebook page and through a new ECS Twitter account.
- Created an ECS Instagram account to be used for sharing job postings, calls for papers, and other notices that are of interest to our members.
- Hosted a “twitter takeover” event in Fall 2021 which saw six early career scholars “takeover” our Twitter account by telling us about their research.
- We regularly amplify the activities of ASOR (e.g. fundraising efforts) and other committees such as CAP, membership, honors and awards, the Program Committee etc. by posting and promoting their activities on our established and robust social media platforms.

Annual Meeting

- At the 2021 annual meeting, we will organize:
 - Our annual Brown Bag Lunch: informative and informal lunch event for students to become acquainted with other ECS members of ASOR and hear short presentations on publishing, digital resources, and the activities of the ECS committee
 - Workshops (2): “Navigating the In-Between: Identifying a Career Trajectory in Academia for the Early Career Scholar” Both will be on the job market with panelists who have recently obtained their positions (in person) and on the post-doctoral process from recent post-docs’ perspectives (virtual).
 - In recent years, we have organized city tour activities but opted to focus our activities on hotel-based activities this year such as a socially-distanced ECS reception given the current public health context.
- We partnered with the Honors and Awards committee to create a student paper award at the annual meeting and collaborated with ASOR staff and the executive director to fund the scholarship.

- We partnered with Honors and Awards and the Program Committee to create greater alignment between the call for posters and the evaluations of posters per feedback from 2020 annual meeting participants.
- The recently formed ECS-DEI subcommittee will distribute a survey designed to evaluate retention rates of Annual Meeting participants.

V. Planned Activities, 2022

- We will continue our collaboration with OpenContext and organize the “Digging Up Data” participants into a mentoring cohort whose members will present digital projects at the 2022 ASOR annual meeting in a workshop format.
- Academic programming will build upon the success of our virtual brown bag events by organizing one per academic semester.
- ECS will organize a “speed mentoring” event at the 2022 annual meeting in Boston geared towards the needs of students. The event will provide feedback on the preparation of job seeking materials in addition to other aspects of professionalization.
- ECS will continue to collaborate with other committees (e.g. Program Committee and Honors and Awards) and ASOR staff to develop mentorship programs that guide students through the annual meeting process from submitting abstracts to poster/presentation development.
- ECS-DEI will host a BIPOC oriented townhall next year on Zoom and during the AM to discuss how we can better support and mentor BIPOC students attending the AM.
- ECS-DEI will collaborate with ASOR staff to build a mentorship network that will include both academic and social components for AM attendees.
- The community building sub-committee will draft introduction emails in different languages to send to universities and colleges around the world, to introduce ASOR to undergraduate, graduate, and post-doc students to increase our already robust international participation in our virtual coffee hour events.
- The social media sub-committee will host a summer “Twitter takeover” with news from the field (ASOR fellowship recipients).
- The ECS professionalization sub-committee will digitize the professionalization workshops organized for the Annual Meeting.
- The ECS professionalization sub-committee will create video and written resources on how to apply for various types of academic positions.
- The professionalization team will also expand its resources by identifying recent PhDs who have successfully obtained employment in non-teaching, non-tenure track roles, and interview them. The information gleaned will be used to create resources for graduate students that focus upon in-field or field-adjacent professional opportunities (i.e. “alt-ac” employment).