

Annual Report
ASOR Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee
November 2024

Committee membership for 2024 consisted of two co-chairs and eleven members.

Co-Chairs:

Katherine Larson (class of 2025)

Julia Troche (class of 2026)

Committee Members:

Theodore Burgh (class of 2024)

Margaret Cohen (class of 2024)

Bianca Hand (class of 2024)

Aaron Brody (class of 2025)

Leticia Rodriguez (class of 2025)

Carolyn Midkiff Strange (class of 2025)

Avary Taylor (class of 2025)

Debora Heard (class of 2026)

Jenail Marshal (class of 2026)

Robyn Price (class of 2026)

Karlene Shippelhoute (class of 2026)

Marta Ostovich (ex officio, non-voting)

DEI Committee members also serve on the Board of Trustees and the Program and Early Career Scholars committees. We continue to encourage cross-representation with the DEI Committee and other ASOR standing committees and task forces. Unlike other ASOR standing committees, the DEI Committee has no clear area of oversight or jurisdiction, but rather “makes recommendations to ASOR’s President, Executive Director, Board, Chairs Coordinating Council, standing and ad hoc committees, and staff.” We encourage individuals and groups within ASOR to continue to use us as a resource in matters related to inclusion, equity, and accessibility of the organization.

The DEI Committee wishes to acknowledge the service of Carolyn Strange on the committee from 2022 until her death earlier this year. Carolyn was the heart of our committee in so many ways. She set a tone of openness, genuineness, and lifelong learning and unlearning. As committee member Debora Heard shared upon news of Carolyn’s passing in early October, Carolyn was “one of the most genuine, sincere, and quietly impactful persons I have ever met. She not only continued to push and challenge her own understanding of inequity and discrimination but actively worked to educate and challenge others. This is how change is made. Carolyn was a truth-seeker, a truth-teller, and a real ‘change maker.’ Not only that, she was a tremendous encourager.” Carolyn will be deeply missed, and the committee is honored, humbled, and committed to carry forward her legacy.

Key Accomplishments for 2024

- Successfully recruited and onboarded four new committee members and a new committee co-chair to take over from Erin Darby. New members were recruited both through personal networks of current committee members and an open call for participation. This successful transition represents an important step in ensuring the committee's sustainability beyond the initial Task Force group, and bringing the DEI Committee into administrative line with other standing ASOR committees.
- Researched, outlined, and developed preliminary scripts for cultural competency videos for fieldwork participants and directors of ASOR-affiliated projects.
- Finalized templates of service letters for the ASOR office and ASOR committee chairs to use as acknowledgment and appreciation for those who volunteer to serve on ASOR committees. In addition to the expression of gratitude, the letters are designed to be shared with department chairs or added to tenure files to demonstrate the nature and significance of ASOR volunteerism as a professional service to the field.
- Tried several initiatives aimed at providing resources to those who attend the Annual Meeting with infants and children and helping this segment of the meeting attendee population be more visible, including "Family-Friendly Ideas" on the "Getting to Know Boston" Annual Meeting page (compiled with the assistance of the ASOR office); building awareness of designated lactation spaces in the meeting hotel; and introduction of a "Family Room" during the Annual Meeting. We will evaluate use of these resources, particularly the Family Room, to determine how to better serve the needs of this constituency.
- Developed "Top Tips for Presentation Accessibility" for Annual Meeting presenters, in response to requests from membership about information on accessible presentations (see below). This resource was made available through the Annual Meeting website under "Presenter Information" and sits alongside the "Best Practices for Inclusive Session Moderation," which we developed last year and shared again with session chairs with the support of the Program Committee.
- Researched the history of the Boston area's Indigenous, enslaved, and immigrant communities and developed resources for Annual Meeting participants to learn about and support those communities today as Land Acknowledgement and History. The DEI Committee is grateful to the Executive Committee and Board of Trustees for their thoughtful feedback and encouragement to cast a wide gaze over land histories and generate awareness of the complexities of American history in the spaces in which we hold our meetings for our domestic and international membership.
- Issued a formal recommendation to the ASOR office, based on past ASOR practices and research into differential impacts on pregnant scholars, to introduce a sliding scale based on the presenter's membership status in the event of an annual meeting cancellation due to a range of personal, medical, or geo-political emergencies.
- Participated in member-organized workshop session "Diversifying West Asian Archaeology: Accessibility Barriers and Mitigating Strategies" by sharing the work of ASOR's DEI Task Force and Committee since 2020 with workshop audiences, and listening closely to presentations and discussion to identify themes of areas of concern and potential solutions as discussed by ASOR's general membership.

- Ensured visibility of the DEI Committee and helped build awareness through a dedicated DEI Table in the Annual Meeting registration area, to meet with and hear from meeting attendees and share resources. Dedicated maps highlighting key spaces such as gender neutral bathrooms, lactation spaces, Family Room and Early Career hub, and other accessibility features. We are grateful to the ASOR Office for making this possible and working with the Park Plaza to ensure these spaces can be available and appropriately labeled.

Preliminary Objectives for 2025

The DEI Committee will formulate and finalize its 2025 objectives during our committee meeting in Boston; the projects currently underway are listed below.

- Working with a video production team, continue to develop content for resource videos for ASOR-affiliated excavations that address safety, accessibility, and cultures of respect and shared accountability for fieldwork participants and excavation directors.
- Complete audit of existing ASOR policies for gendered language and recommend changes.
- Develop land history and acknowledgment resources for the ASOR office in Alexandria, Virginia.
- Leverage the results of the Survey on Field Safety conducted by Beth Alpert Nakhai in October 2024 to identify and address issues of safety and accessibility in the field.
- Evaluate the impact and success of DEI initiatives at the 2024 Annual Meeting (e.g., Family Room, DEI table, accessibility maps, Boston land history and acknowledgment) and iterate and improve for the 2025 Annual Meeting.



TOP TIPS FOR PRESENTATION ACCESSIBILITY

ASOR's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee

Prose

Avoid large blocks of text and limit the number of words on each slide. Use bullet points instead of prose.



Suggested Fonts

Use familiar sans serif fonts like Arial, Verdana, Tahoma, Helvetica, Arial, Calibri, Lucida, or Tahoma.



Use of Color

Ensure that color isn't the only way information is conveyed and that there is a strong contrast between the text and the background. Pastel backgrounds help remove glare.

Font size

Use minimum 18pt, sans serif fonts, and sufficient white space. Avoid ALL CAPS, *italics*, and underlines that cause letters to run together.



Animations and Transitions

Keep transitions and animations simple or avoid completely as these only can be seen visually and can be distracting or affect users with print or other learning difficulties.



Charts, Graphs, Templates

Use built in options for creating graphics. Accessible templates are available, but be sure the template is serving you and you're not making your research fit the template.



Jargon

Define your terms. Explain acronyms before using them.



Accessibility Checker

Use built in accessibility checker tools where available.



Contact us ...

 <https://tinyurl.com/ASOR-DEI>

 info@asor.org



Accessible Presentation Best Practices developed by ASOR DEI Committee for Annual Meeting presenters