

ASOR Chairs Coordinating Council
Conference Call, 2:00pm, May 28, 2015

Present: Andy Vaughn, Cynthia Rufo, Sharon Herbert, Susan Ackerman, Laura Mazow, Geoff Emberling, B.W. Ruffner, Danielle Fatkin

Absent: Tom Levy, Randy Younker, Chuck Jones

I. Approval of Minutes from April

The minutes from the April meeting were approved.

II. Case Study on Implementation of Professional Conduct Policy

The Program Committee encountered a paper submission that served as a test case for the implementation of the recently-adopted Professional Conduct Policy. A paper abstract was submitted that dealt with unpublished ostraca that appeared on the antiquities market in the 1990s. The paper was approved by the session chairs in spite of Section III.e.4 of the Professional Conduct Policy. This section states that the Annual Meeting will not be the initial venue in which unprovenanced objects are discussed or presented.

The abstract circulated among the Program Committee and a discussion ensued regarding how to parse the Conduct Policy as it related to this abstract. The person who proposed the paper was asked for clarifying details. The author stated that the proposed paper would not be the first presentation of these ostraca – he has published two volumes that included the contents of the ostraca through Eisenbrauns. It is a grey area whether those volumes constitute “publishing” the ostraca. This case shows that if people want to present on unprovenanced materials, they can get them published somewhere first.

The PC, the session chairs, and Lynn Swartz Dodd examined the Conduct Policy extensively for guidance on this situation. Conclusions:

- The session chairs had a more liberal reading of the policy.
- Non-cuneiform text scholars seem to consider the ostraca exception to be unfair.
- Several of the PC members thought we shouldn't be too forceful in implementing the policy. This wasn't the dominant perspective, but it was present.

Susan will be appointing a subcommittee of the board to review the policy annually and hear complaints.

One item that needs to be addressed is that the way that the policy is currently worded, objects that were acquired by an institution after 1972 are included.

Susan mentioned that the key part of section III.e.4, is the vagueness of the word "acquired." Objects that came from a legal excavation that were legally turned over to a national antiquities authority cannot be considered acquired, because they never went anywhere. She feels that there is too much to intuit from that one word and Lynn has agreed. The subcommittee will certainly revise this section to be more transparent, and will address other instances in which the wording needs greater specificity.

The subcommittee will make recommendations to the board, which the board would vote on. Susan envisions a three person committee, with a member of the board as chair.

It was asked what pool of people the subcommittee would be drawn from, and whether the members would have a scholarly background.

Susan – The board has both scholarly members and member from other backgrounds. For this committee, I thought scholarly members would make most sense.

It was asked if it would be most useful to have both a cuneiform scholar and a non-cuneiform text scholar, and whether we have one of each of these on the board.

Susan – We could set the charge for this committee that they are encouraged to solicit opinions outside the committee.

III. Discussion of Working Document for 2016-2020 Strategic Plan

Susan - The current strategic plan runs from 2011-2015. The new one will run from 2016-2020. The strategic plan task force has nine members; Susan, Sharon, B.W., Ed Wright, Gary Arbino, Sten LaBianca, Vivian Bull, Fred Winter, and Heather Parker. The working document that has been distributed came out of a retreat we took in February, and I'm soliciting feedback from the CCC. Hopefully the board will approve this in November, if not, it will hopefully be approved in April. Susan requested that the working document be distributed to committees for feedback.

Describing ASOR's Geographical Focus

Regarding the question about geographical focus that is raised in the document, the PC chair stated that ASOR has always been about the Middle East, so the Mediterranean terms do not describe the historical core of ASOR. The second PC chair agreed that the Middle East has been the focus of ASOR's work, but also felt that "eastern Mediterranean basin" and "west Asia" are the most accurate terms, even though they are not the most accessible.

Susan mentioned that Fred Winter was really pushing that Cyprus felt excluded from "Near" and "Middle East."

Annual Meeting

The Program Committee chair stated that he was pleased by the PC section, particularly not expanding the size of the meeting, but increasing the quality of the papers.

B.W. asked if younger scholars might get excluded if the papers get more exclusive?

The PC stated that this year, only twelve papers were rejected, so exclusion is not going to be an issue in the near future.

The PC stated that last year was the biggest poster session yet, with 46 posters, which was almost too many for the meeting space to accommodate. Limiting posters may become a practical issue.

Susan – At other meetings, they rotate posters. That would be a way to include more people in the poster session.

Andy – Posters cost us more than papers, since we have to pay to rent to easels. Rotating posters would be helpful for the bottom line.

The Awards Committee chair states that she would like to be part of that conversation, so that if there were rotating posters we could have a way to judge them.

Publication Oversight

B.W. requested some clarification regarding transferring oversight of the e-newsletters to the Membership and Outreach Committee.

Susan – Right now there isn't a lot of oversight of *News@ASOR* and *ANE Today*. I don't think we're doing a bad job, but these newsletters should have a committee that is responsible for their direction and their editor, like we do with our print journals.

IV. Other Committee Reports

The Program Committee states that 466 paper abstracts have been accepted. The session chairs are formulating the timing of all the papers. The committee has started building the academic schedule and expects to have it done within two weeks.