

MISSION

Board members should know the organization's mission and goals and work proactively to serve them. They should be knowledgeable about the Association's programs, priorities, and funding, and participate in advancing them, refining them, and periodically transforming them through strategic planning. They are to accurately represent the Association's work and values to the public. Board members provide leadership to the organization and while they are not required to donate funds to the organization, they may wish to show leadership in this regard.

ETHICS

Board members will be required to sign a code of conduct to remain on file with the Association. Board members are to serve the organization as a whole, and not favor special interests or groups. Board members cannot take decisions on behalf of the organization without board approval. Board members work productively with the Executive Director and offer support, and refrain from asking for preferential treatment or special favors.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Board members assure the Board fulfills its governance responsibilities and maintains effective organization, procedures, and recruitment.

Board members serve three years, starting after the Fall board meeting in the year elected and continuing through the Fall board meeting of the third year. Board members are required to attend all scheduled board meetings and participate actively in all assigned committee work. They are to prepare for meetings by reading all relevant materials in advance, and help shape them by suggesting agenda items. They are to maintain confidentiality of the Board's executive sessions.

COMMITTEE WORK

Most Board of Directors' work takes place on an array of committees designed to oversee and carry out the Association's activities and procedures. Selection to committees is made by the President and past President in consultation with other officers and board members, and with the goal of matching board member interests and expertise to the current and long-term needs of the Association. Committee assignments are generally made each year during the final Fall general board meeting. Board members may serve on the same committees for more than one year, or move to another committee where their expertise meets a particular need. Committees meet primarily between board meetings via teleconferencing. Every board member can expect to serve on **a minimum of two** committees, which may change during the course of their term. In the case that any board member or board executive is unable to or does not perform their board responsibilities, the board may appoint one of its members to act in that capacity until the following election when an additional person will run to fill their seat.

LEGAL OBLIGATIONS

The duties outlined above per the organization's Policies and Procedures are part of a greater legal obligation set forth by the Attorney General's office. Any individual that agrees to accept their Board of Directors seat does so with the understanding that this is a legal obligation with legal ramifications if they do not meet their Duty of Care, Duty of Loyalty, or Duty of Obedience. Failure to meet the aforementioned responsibilities of the Board of Directors puts the Association at risk of losing its 501(c)3 status, violates the signed Code of Conduct, and can result in a request for resignation.

REPRESENTING THE ASA

The Board of Directors is the most public facing group within the ASA. It is the responsibility of every member to participate as such, engaging in social activities and volunteering time to be present at functions where they represent the ASA's interests in accordance with Policies and Procedures and the Code of Conduct. This can include workshops, receptions, seminars, or related functions organized by donors or Coordinate Organizations. The President and/or Executive Director may request a brief summary of the event as it pertains to the ASA. Fostering positive public relations on behalf of the ASA rests upon the Board of Directors, the Executive Director, and the Secretariat's marketing campaigns and public messages. This includes on social media, where Board Members must maintain their Duty of Care and are therefore **not** permitted to denounce or contradict an ASA decision in any post. It is paramount to the success of the organization that all Board members prioritize ASA events and engage them with interest and enthusiasm.

VICE PRESIDENT

ROLE & RESPONSIBILITIES

- The incoming Vice President sits on the Board as a voting member, is part of the Executive Committee, chairs two committees, and is given specific projects by the President, Executive Director, and Board members. The position constitutes a year of preparation and experience prior to becoming the ASA President the following year.
- The VP chairs two of the most important committees of the Board, the **Annual Meeting Committee** and the **Nominations Committee**. They also works closely with the President offering support and advice on day-to-day matters of the Association.
- As a committee chair, it is the responsibility of the VP to accurately author their Board reports in a timely manner and encourage the engagement and participation of other committee members in this activity.
- In the absence of other volunteers, the VP is responsible for organizing and facilitating the Board Sponsored Panels. Board Sponsored panels that do not have enthusiastic organizers already attached are strongly discouraged as it unduly taxes the VP.
- It is necessary that the VP take a long-term view of the Association while presiding over their two committees. This is complementary to the role of the President who is primarily concerned with the current state of the Association.
- The VP must make themselves available, at least periodically, to join the President-ED meetings for continuity and clarity.
- The VP must be available the Monday following Labor Day to attend the ACLS Leadership/Governance Seminar in New York.
- The VP with the Past President comprise the HR Subcommittee which reviews the Executive Director's performance each January.

PRESIDENT

ROLE & RESPONSIBILITIES

- The ASA President, together with the Executive Director, presides over the Association, oversees and helps carry out all of the Association's initiatives and activities, and organizes and chairs the biannual Board meetings.
- The President is ultimately responsible for ensuring that the Board fulfills its governance and fiduciary responsibilities. Considerable time, energy, and resourcefulness is required to fill this position, and great care is taken to nominate candidates who will be able to give the Association a great deal of attention and hard work.
- The specific responsibilities of the ASA President are as follows: Organizing the monthly or bi-monthly meeting of the Executive Committee; following through on decisions made by the Executive Committee; working with the Executive Director to determine the agenda for the bi-annual board meetings; chairing the board meetings; chairing the business meeting at the annual meeting; working closely with the Executive Director on implementing the Association's strategic objectives; establishing and maintaining the Association's relationship with other learned Associations; communicating with the membership as issues arise; and communicating on behalf of the Association to various audiences.
- The President meets with the Executive Director weekly or bi-weekly to learn more about the functionality of the organization and receive operational updates.
- During the ASA Annual Meeting, the President is required to attend all keynote events and several social functions and receptions on behalf of the ASA.
- Each year, the outgoing President of the African Studies Association gives a lecture on the state of African studies at the Annual Meeting. A written version of the lecture is then published in *African Studies Review*.
- The President is required to either submit a written draft of the lecture, or give the drafted lecture via Zoom in May, for feedback.

PAST PRESIDENT

ROLE & RESPONSIBILITIES

- The Past President continues to sit on the Board for one year and is often selected to organize and facilitate specific ASA initiatives and programs. The continuity provided by three years of very active participation in the Association's activities, staggered across the terms of two other ASA Presidents, is very important to the effective running of the Association.
- The specific responsibilities of the ASA Past President are as follows: serves as a member of the Executive Committee, chairs the Prize Committee (a committee of the whole), and leads mentorship efforts for the ASA's Emerging Scholars Network.
- The Past President is responsible for proposing, soliciting, and securing individual prize committee members to serve a specified rotation. Similar to other committee roles, such as the Program Committee, the prize committees are used as a pipeline to other leadership positions. Therefore, care and consideration must be taken in these selections as they will impact the outcome of ASA's Prizes and highlight individuals for potential Board service in the future. The Past President must select proactive and available individuals with a commitment to serve the Association.
- The Past President must take an active interest in the activities of the Emerging Scholars Network and support them through mentorship and attendance at some of their annual events. Careful attention must be paid to the overarching themes that arise from these events, as it helps the association adapt to the shifting needs of students and recent graduates.
- The Past President will support fundraising efforts for the ESN where appropriate, including supporting an annual giving campaign on their behalf in the form of signing letters or sending emails.
- The Past President with the VP comprise the HR Subcommittee which reviews the Executive Director's performance each January.

FINANCE COMMITTEE CHAIR

ROLE & RESPONSIBILITIES

- The Finance and Investment Committee is chaired by a Board member and includes the Treasurer and two other members of the Board. The ASA Executive Director serves as ex-officio.
- The Finance Committee's work represents one of the most important Board of Director fiduciary roles outlined in the incorporation of a non-profit. This is a legal obligation of the full Board, and selection to sit on the Finance Committee represents faith in an individual's care and concern for this legal obligation.
- Together with the Executive Director, the Finance Committee and specifically the chair must take a visionary role in the financial health of the organization. In practical terms, this means understanding the ways in which costly programming that no longer serves the strategic agenda of the association can be retired, and funds reallocated to appropriately identified growth opportunities.
- The Finance Committee and specifically its chair helps the Treasurer, President, and Executive Director oversee the finances of the Association. The Committee reviews all financial and investment statements, and makes recommendations on ways the Association can economize, raise money, and strengthen its general financial position.
- The Finance Chair is obligated to call regular meetings of the committee with sufficient time to review the proposed budget.
- During times of financial strain, the Finance Chair may be asked to review existing policies to reduce annual spending temporarily or permanently.
- As with all other Committee Chairs, the Finance Committee Chair is responsible for authoring and submitting their biannual report of activities in a timely manner.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

ROLE & RESPONSIBILITIES

The Executive Committee is responsible for making decisions on behalf of the entire Board during the intervals between the biannual Board meetings.

Chaired by the President, this committee also includes the Vice President and Past President, the Executive Director, Committee Chairs, and the Treasurer. The ASA Executive Director serves as ex-officio.

In accusations of harassment, one member of the Executive Committee in conjunction with an ombuds person and the Executive Director comprise the decision making team, specifically in regards to consequences.

PROCESS

Because most of its business transpires between the biannual meetings, much work is carried out via email and, when necessary, conference calls. Because critical issues must sometimes be discussed and important decisions made, committee members must always make their travel plans and contact information known to the Executive Director.

It is critical that minutes of these meetings be kept for the Dropbox archives, therefore one person should be designated to take notes.

Like other committees, the Executive Committee must have a 2/3rds majority to reach quorum. As a deliberative body, unanimous committee voting is never required unless otherwise specified by state law.

The EC may request operational or financial updates from the Executive Director and likewise, the ED may raise an issue to the level of the Executive Committee after consulting with the President.

ADVOCACY COMMITTEE CHAIR

ROLE & RESPONSIBILITIES

- The Advocacy Committee is chaired by a Board member. The chair is expected to be familiar with U.S. policy on area studies funding and will be given opportunities to participate in advocacy trainings and workshops, budget and schedules permitting.
- The Chair with the committee utilizes the Advocacy Policy to assess all advocacy agenda items or proposed Coordinate Organization statements.
- ASA may sign onto statements from other organizations. The Chair, with the support of the Secretariat, circulates these for approval.
- The Advocacy Committee Chair drafts advocacy statements with the support of the Executive Director. Based on the expertise within the committee, and familiarity with particular issues, any member of the committee can volunteer to author the initial statement draft. The Chair may make similar requests of advocacy committee members.
- In addition to statements and engagement with U.S. governmental advocacy, the Advocacy Chair also chairs and convenes the Task Force for the Protection of Academic Freedom. This committee is made of up representatives from Coordinate and Affiliate organizations and meets once or twice a year.
- The Chair, with the support of the Secretariat, has a duty to help communicate to the membership how they may advocate for a particular issue within the confines of the advocacy policy. An effective platform might be an editorial, virtual seminar, or Annual Meeting session on the topic.
- As with all other Committee Chairs, the Advocacy Committee Chair is responsible for authoring and submitting their biannual report of activities in a timely manner.

PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE CHAIR

ROLE & RESPONSIBILITIES

- The Publications Committee is chaired by a Board Member. The composition of the committee consists of three members of the ASA Board of Directors who are voting members; as well as several nonvoting members including the executive director of the ASA secretariat; editor or editors of the *African Studies Review*; the editor or editors of *History in Africa*.
- The committee oversees publications and African Studies Association Press activities.
- The Publications Chair reviews, supports, and promotes the effective implementation of publications related programming throughout the year and during the Annual Meeting. This may include special sessions, keynotes, online seminars, and information campaigns to promote ASA publications.
- The Publications Chair in conjunction with the Executive Director must assess the health of ASA's publications, review their profitability, and support operational changes that increase efficacy or positive work culture.
- The Publications Chair serves an essential communication role with ASA Journal Editors and Editorial Review Boards. As such, they should work to help foster a sense of community, open dialogue, and willingness on behalf of the Board of Directors to acknowledge, support, and celebrate the efforts of those teams.
- During times of public, financial, or operational strain on ASA Publications, it is the duty of the Publications Chair to fact find either as an individual or with committee members, and then communicate with the Executive Director and President on possible solutions.

NOMINATIONS & MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

START OF THE YEAR-SPRING BOARD MEETING

- Identify 3 non-Board members to participate on the committee, get Board approval, and invite selected individuals to participate on the committee (this task should be done by the end of January)
- At the Spring Board Meeting, present to the ASA Board of Directors a recommended list of candidates for the election slate for the next year (for example, the 2025 Nominations Committee will present recommended candidates for the 2026 elections). The committee should present 6-8 candidates for the Board, and 4-6 candidates for the Vice President.
- At the Spring Board Meeting, the list of candidates will be discussed, and a final ranking will be approved.
- At the Spring Board Meeting, present any recommended changes to Policies and Procedures for Board approval.

BETWEEN BOARD MEETINGS

- Between the Spring and Fall Board Meetings, the Nominations Committee Chair will reach out to candidates and finalize the slate by October.

FALL BOARD MEETING

- Present the final slate for the coming year, which is also announced at the Business Meeting of the Annual Meeting.
- Present any recommended changes to Policies and Procedures.

NOMINATIONS & MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE CONT.

WHAT MAKES A GOOD SLATE CANDIDATE?

- **Commitment to ASA:** The ASA's membership is expansive. Committed members renew annually and often early in the calendar year, regularly submit proposals to the Annual Meeting CFP, and engage others in ASA activities such as encouraging student participation. All slate nominees should have at least 4 years of recent membership and annual meeting participation (must have min. 2 years, presentations preferred) in addition to a history of service and other considerations.
- **History of Service:** The ASA is a complex organization that runs largely on the generous volunteerism of its members. ASA uses the Program Committee, Prize Committees, and Coordinate Organizations as a pipeline for the Board of Directors slate. These types of service give the current Board members and the Secretariat a chance to evaluate working styles, activity within the association, willingness to mentor, etc. that help determine whether they are a good fit.
- **Available to Contribute:** If elected, Board members provide both time and service work to the association. All slate nominees should demonstrate availability and interest in providing ASA with the necessary labor to succeed including attending ASA meetings and events, promoting ASA programs, actively engaging in committee work and meetings to which they are assigned, & willingness to occasionally take on ad hoc or special projects.
- **Special Skills:** Some slate nominees may have special skills such as a history of grant writing, finance management, donor cultivation, etc. While understanding of and commitment to ASA is a greater priority, special skills may be strategically considered.
- **Balancing Perspectives:** ASA is committed to diverse perspectives which must include balancing gender, race, discipline, country of origin, and age. A projected election outcome must be considered when building to slate to ensure continued diversity and balance.

ANNUAL MEETING COMMITTEE

START OF THE YEAR-SPRING BOARD MEETING

- Draft a list of recommended Program Chairs and Local Arrangements Committee Chairs for the next year's Annual Meeting (for example, the 2023 AMC will present recommendations for the 2024 Meeting) to be presented at the Spring Board Meeting for approval.
- Draft a list of recommended keynote speakers (Hormuud and any other noted lectures) for the Meeting the year of (for example, the 2024 AMC will present recommendations for the 2024 Annual Meeting) to be presented at the Spring Board Meeting for approval.
- Present any approval/denial recommendations to the ASA Board on requests for ASA Board Sponsorship at that year's Annual Meeting.
- Present any recommended updates or changes to plans for the current year's Annual Meeting.
- Present any recommended changes to Policies and Procedures.

BETWEEN BOARD MEETINGS

- Reach out to possible chairs and confirm participation.
- Meet as necessary to address Annual Meeting related issues.
- Work with Program Chairs to finalize CFP and subtheme chairs by October

FALL BOARD MEETING

- Present final committees and CFP to the Board.
- Present any recommended changes to Policies and Procedures.

ANNUAL MEETING COMMITTEE CONT.

WHAT MAKES A GOOD PROGRAM CHAIR?

- **Annual Meeting Experience:** Prior knowledge of the breadth and depth of the Annual Meeting programming, especially in recent years, is essential. Awareness of developing trends in the field is also required. Prior presentation at the ASA meeting is required.
- **Broad Internal Networks:** Identifying and securing subtheme (co)chairs can be taxing. Having broad networks within ASA through mentorship, Coordinate Organization affiliation, and prior Annual Meeting attendance is essential.
- **Coordinate Org or Other Service:** Leadership positions in ASA Coordinate Organizations or other types of committee service should be strongly considered, including reviewing proposals for previous Annual Meetings.
- **Additional Considerations:** The Annual Meeting is the primary income stream for the ASA. As such, the Program Chairs must be strategically chosen from among the active membership to engage the broadest constituents within and adjacent to the membership. Emerging scholars, non-members, and over-committed members are not good selections for the type and volume of work. Success of the Program Chairs is directly correlated to the success the Annual Meeting.

WHAT MAKES A GOOD LAC CHAIR?

- **Comfort Asking for Money:** The Local Arrangements Committee is primarily a fundraising committee. In addition to asking for money, a high degree of organization, strong communication skills, and a commitment to transparency are required.
- **Broad Local Networks:** Encouraging the engagement of local academics and their institutions as well as local businesses, organizations, & diasporic communities is central to this work. Knowledge of and access to local graduate students interested in volunteering is a major plus.
- **Coalition Building:** LAC Chairs build a small network of volunteers to fundraise, organize panels, secure entertainment, etc. so demonstrated teamwork as well as leadership skills are required.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

START OF THE YEAR-SPRING BOARD MEETING

- Meet with the Executive Director and the Financial Manager to go over the final figures from the prior year.
- Present to the ASA Board of Directors a final narrative and wrap-up of budget expenditures from the previous year.
- Present to the ASA Board of Directors a final operational budget for the current year.
- Review the audit report or 990 when received ahead of the Board Meeting.
- Present to the ASA Board of Directors the audit report and financial forms for the previous year.
- Present to the Board any new recommendations for budget and financial related items to be set into place the following year (for example, new membership rates and/or categories, etc.)
- Present any recommendations to Policies and Procedures

BETWEEN BOARD MEETINGS

- Meet as necessary to address financial related issues.
- Review the ED's proposed budget for the next year ahead of the Fall Board Meeting and work with Secretariat to address any concerns.

FALL BOARD MEETING

- Present final operating budget for the coming year to the Board for approval.
- Present any recommended changes to Policies and Procedures.

PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE

START OF THE YEAR-SPRING BOARD MEETING

- Check with editors of both journals about plans for the upcoming year.
- Review and approve editor recommended appointments to the Editorial Board and editor teams.
- Identify Publication-related programming to be held at the Annual Meeting, present proposal to the Board at the Spring Board Meeting.
- Review and approve ASR proposed Distinguished Lecturer.
- Review journals finances from the previous year.
- Present any recommend changes to Policies and Procedures.

BETWEEN BOARD MEETINGS

- Work with the ASA Secretariat to finalize publications related programming at the Annual Meeting.
- Meet as necessary to address Publications related issues.
- Review the Cambridge Publisher's Report ahead of the Fall Board Meeting to lead discussion.

FALL BOARD MEETING

- Lead discussion and Q&A on Cambridge Publisher's Report.
- Present publications related updates and recommendations to the Board.
- Present any recommended changes to Policies and Procedures.

AWARD COMMITTEE

START OF THE YEAR-SPRING BOARD MEETING

- Identify Award Committees that are missing members and identify candidates to fill those slots.
- Circulate candidates for Exec. Committee approval. The Award Committees should be finalized no later than February 15.
- Work with Secretariat to share timelines, expectations, and any changes to the award from past years for all Award Committees.
- Present any recommended changes to Policies and Procedures related to award cycles for approval.

BETWEEN BOARD MEETINGS

- Monitor status of Award Committees work and outcomes.

FALL BOARD MEETING

- Present yearly overview of award activity to the Board.
- Present any recommended changes to Policies and Procedures.

START OF APPOINTMENT

- Develop a theme for the meeting and draft a theme statement (**1000 word maximum**).
- Identify subthemes with Program Manager (**no more than 20**).
- Identify co-chairs for each subtheme (**no more than 20**). **Did you know?** Subtheme chairs get **free** meeting registration, with ASA membership renewal!
- Share the theme statement, subthemes, and proposed subtheme chairs with the Secretariat Program Manager and Annual Meeting Committee for feedback and approval.

CFP AND REVIEW PROCESS

- Work with the Secretariat Program Manager and subtheme Chairs to promote & circulate CFP.
- Propose your own sessions before the CFP closes and encourage subtheme chairs to do the same.
- Work with the Secretariat Program Manager to identify deadlines and processes for review, and communicate those expectations to the subtheme chairs.
- Pick up any slack from subtheme chairs - if they cannot complete the tasks by the deadlines, it is the responsibility of the Program Chairs to finish their work.
- Work with the Secretariat Program Manager to finalize panels made up of individual papers.
- Assist Secretariat Program Manager in any reformation of sessions due to withdrawals, etc.
- Give 20-minute presentation at the Spring Board Meeting.
- Submit a proposal for the **optional** Current Issues Plenary session by **May 31**.

ANNUAL MEETING

- Finalize the Current Issues Plenary presenter(s) by **September 1** (if moving forward).
- Write a welcome letter for the Annual Meeting Program.
- Submit written reports for Fall Board Meeting.
- Meet with the next year's Program Chairs to share best practices.