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Report of the Strategic Planning Task Force

The Strategic Plan: Progress to Date

The Strategic Plan was launched in November 2012 and was intended to last for five years. We are thus at the three-year mark. It is time to take stock of progress thus far, and to devise a brief list of priorities for the remaining two years of the plan. This will help set the stage for the preparation of the next plan, due to be implemented at the end of calendar 2017.

At the beginning of our review we asked four questions:

- What has the AIA accomplished to date?
- What still needs to be done?
- Are there objectives that can be deleted?
- Are there new priorities that we wish to add to the current list?

The current plan has 10 goals. Under each, there are varying numbers of strategies, some 60 in all, with six sub-strategies, a total of 66. We learned at the outset of our review that the AIA had completed 30 of these (45 percent), and had made solid progress with another 21 (32 percent). Thus 77 percent of the strategies have been addressed. That leaves just 15 (23 percent) to be implemented, if still relevant. This is unusually good progress. The Task Force has reviewed every goal and strategy in the plan and has determined a set of priorities for the next two years. We list next the goals with a brief commentary on each, and then the priorities for future action.

The Goals

1. To recommit the AIA to **advocating** the importance of archaeology in public understanding and the preservation of the world's archaeological heritage.

The AIA has implemented this goal comprehensively. Advocacy is now a major objective of the AIA. We should, however, publicize our efforts more broadly.

2. To design, pilot, and replicate more **education** offerings for both K–12 and interested adults.

Much progress has been made. We noted in particular the popularity of the Educators' Conference at the last two Annual Meetings. There is still more to do, particularly in coordinating the efforts made by Societies through better communication.

3. To increase **membership** and inspire AIA members to greater levels of engagement.

Here progress has been mixed. Several of the original strategies have been achieved, others are in progress, and a few have scarcely been addressed. We note that membership overall is

currently in decline. This is the opposite of what was intended in the plan. Particular concern was expressed over the need to recruit younger members. The Task Force discussed various ways in which membership could be expanded. These included introductory video infomercials for use in lectures as a means of encouraging support for the AIA. The potential role of ARCHAEOLOGY magazine was particularly noted. Building membership must be a major priority for the future.

4. To increase professional services for our core constituency of professional archaeologists.

Here most of the strategies have been achieved or are actively being addressed. We have raised considerable sums of money to support grants for fieldwork. We have also expanded the number of endowed funds to provide for the professional development of our members. The Task Force considered that we should be doing more to foster the professional aspirations of student members. Now that the Career Center has been in operation for a while, we should review its efficacy. The agreement between the AIA and Oxford University Press provides a further publication outlet for scholars.

5. To improve AIA's ongoing initiatives and successes with site preservation and publications.

This goal has been addressed with vigor and effectiveness. Site Preservation is now a standout signature program of the AIA. Our publication program continues to make solid progress, with the assistance of donors. Both ARCHAEOLOGY and the AJA have a significant web presence, and are available electronically. The new agreement between the AIA and Oxford University Press provides a further outlet for publication by AIA lecturers.

6. To promote and invigorate AIA's **Society system**.

Much has been achieved in this domain. Members have been surveyed to ascertain their views, with an excellent response rate. The Societies Task Force, currently at work, is addressing an array of difficult issues concerning the relations between the AIA and its constituent societies. It is also looking at the viability of societies of varying sizes. Expansion of the current lecture program through dedicated fund-raising remains a priority.

7. To foster **collaborations** and **partnerships** as a core competency that advances our mission.

This has been a hallmark of our recent activities. We now regularly collaborate with the leading archaeological organizations in North America, Europe, and beyond. There are at least a dozen organizations in this ongoing conversation. The thinking here is that we need to speak to the public with a single voice to make the case for the significance of archaeology. We have also established partnerships with federal agencies to secure funding for our various efforts.



8. To reinforce and sustain the **financial strength** necessary to support the AIA's mission.

This continues to be a major preoccupation of the AIA. We have made significant progress in raising endowment and other funds to support existing programs. Indeed, our fundraising in recent years has reached a new level. However, we continue to be challenged by the lack of unrestricted funds, both operating revenue and income from endowments, to support core operations. We have made progress in preparing the ground for a major fundraising effort to address this problem. Now we need to launch a capital campaign to achieve this objective.

9. To repurpose and redesign the **governance**, volunteer, and management structure of the AIA around mission fulfillment.

We have made significant progress in this area, particularly in addressing issues concerning the Governing Board. We make regular use of ad hoc task forces and other groups to address particular issues as they arise. Outstanding priorities are the activities of committees and their accountability. Their charges need comprehensive revision and they should be responsible for setting goals annually. The role of Council remains a major preoccupation. While it may be possible to take some steps to address issues concerning Council in the remaining two years of the Plan, it is likely that this will need to be addressed more comprehensively in the next quinquennial.

10. To expand the role of **technology** as a core component within the AIA's activities that aspires to be best in class for learned societies.

This has been addressed in a variety of ways. Implementing technology in all the AIA does is a continuing process that we embrace with enthusiasm.

Priorities for the Next Two Years

The AIA should continue to implement the policies and initiatives that will advance progress towards the 10 goals set out in the Plan.

Within these goals, there are some items that are priorities. These are listed below. They should be the focus of renewed attention in the months ahead.

1. The AIA is making outstanding efforts to advocate for preserving the world's **archaeological heritage**, to draw attention to its destruction, and to mitigate such losses. We should reinforce these efforts and seek wider recognition for them.
2. **Education.** The AIA should leverage its efforts in the field of education to achieve more significant results. In particular, it should improve communications among Societies to spread the word about best practices.

3. **Membership.** We need to reinvigorate our efforts to grow the membership of the AIA in all categories of supporting members: enthusiasts, professional archaeologists, and students. We should use all available means to achieve this objective, including digital media. ARCHAEOLOGY magazine should be a key element in this endeavor. We need to rethink the role of the magazine in membership recruitment efforts. We should use ARCHAEOLOGY magazine to convert subscribers to supporting members. We should invite the magazine committee to assist in this effort.
4. **Students.** We should reach out to our student members and encourage them to play a greater part in AIA affairs. We should define roles for students in the governance structure that give them a formal say in AIA business.
5. **Career Services.** We should review the Career Service to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of professional archaeologists and students.
6. The **Lecture Program.** We should strengthen the existing program and seek funding to expand it.
7. **Finances.** It is critical that the AIA increase unrestricted income. This includes contributed income, earned income, and income from the endowment. We must raise additional funds for the unrestricted portion of the endowment. The proposed capital campaign will address these issues, as must regular development efforts.
8. **Governance.**
 - Committees.** Committees should revisit their charges and devise annual goals. Progress towards these goals should be evaluated by each committee and the overseeing officer each year. Revisiting the number of committees and their responsibilities should be a priority for the future.
 - Council.** As stated in the Plan, we should evaluate the role and function of Council. Council should be invited to participate in this process. As this is likely to take some time, this priority may require attention in the succeeding Strategic Plan.

Respectfully submitted,

The Strategic Plan Task Force

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