



*Association for
Asian Studies*

STRATEGIC PLAN

2022-2026

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Under the leadership of 2021-2022 AAS President Hy Luong, the AAS Board of Directors (BOD) established a Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) to develop a five-year strategic plan for years 2022 to 2026. The strategic planning process began in Spring 2021 and carried through to the March 2022 BOD meeting in Honolulu, where the Board voted to approve the AAS Strategic Plan, 2022-2026.

The approved document developed by the Strategic Planning Committee in partnership with the AAS Board of Directors represents the first major strategic planning effort that the Association has undertaken since 2008. The SPC's work included a self-study report in May 2021; interviews with 16 focus groups comprising Asianists of diverse backgrounds and locations; and surveys of members, lapsed members, and non-members. Careful analyses of interview and survey data, a "self-audit" of all the aspects of AAS as an organization, and a subsequent series of planning meetings resulted in the final version.

The Strategic Plan is rooted in the mission and values of the Association for Asian Studies.

MISSION

The Association for Asian Studies, Inc. (AAS) is a non-profit professional association dedicated to the principled advancement of the field of Asian Studies through international intellectual exchange; network building; publications; scholarly projects; support for research, teaching, public outreach, and engagement; and career development, both within the academy and beyond.

VALUES

The Association for Asian Studies is committed to serving its members and engaging respectfully with its partners throughout Asia and other parts of the world by promoting academic excellence, free inquiry, professional integrity, diversity, equity, and inclusion within the academic study of Asia and in the Association's own work to advance the field of Asian Studies.

There are five overarching goals within this Strategic Plan:

- 1. Grow AAS engagement in Asia.** AAS will address the under-representation of South and Southeast Asia within its membership and activities. Such work includes expanding opportunities for and access to academic discourse, networking, supporting research projects, and mentoring and grants. AAS will place greater emphasis on the scholarship of Asianists based in Asia, and recognize the interests of previously marginalized scholars. The AAS will show solidarity with censored and harassed scholars and advocate on their behalf.

- 2. Grow new and maintain existing membership.** Along with growing engagement with Asia, our main strategy is to expand the pool of potential members and to increase the value of membership. Thus, we aim to enhance satisfaction among existing members while attracting new ones, especially from under-represented areas and disciplines, as well as among under-represented categories of Asianists.
- 3. Enact AAS' ongoing commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI).** AAS commits to making DEI principles intrinsic in its governance, leadership, and management. It also commits to supporting marginalized scholars and raising the profile of Asia-based approaches to and paradigms in Asian Studies.
- 4. Grow and maintain financial sustainability.** AAS will carefully manage the AAS endowment to balance risk and return and to support operations while conserving financial assets for the future. The active seeking of new revenue streams will enhance our capacity to pursue AAS objectives.
- 5. Enhance administrative efficiency and effectiveness.** Achieving all these overarching goals will depend on the effectiveness and efficiency of the Staff and Board of AAS, as well as the hardware and systems used to facilitate this work.

BACKGROUND TO THE STRATEGIC PLAN

During the last four years, the AAS has experienced a relatively high degree of turbulence that has tested the robustness of its governance capabilities:

- In 2018, the Indian government refused to grant visas to Asianists from Pakistan and of Pakistani descent, which prevented them from attending the AAS-in-Asia conference in New Delhi. The AAS' response to this situation caused a negative reaction from many members.
- In April 2019, there was a major transition in the staff leadership of the AAS: the then Executive Director (ED), who had served the Association for 22 years, retired and was succeeded by the current ED. As often happens in transitions of this kind in associations, this has been followed by questions, debate, and some tension about the respective rights, roles, and responsibilities of the Officers, the ED, and the Board as a whole.
- The Covid-19 pandemic has posed challenges to the Association. This began in March 2020 with the need for an immediate decision concerning whether or not to cancel the Annual Conference, at the risk of significant financial penalties. In the following years, the AAS has experimented with virtual and hybrid conferences for the first time, requiring the adoption of new technology and development of new skills for its staff members.
- Concerns over social injustice in the United States during the summer of 2020 prompted an unprecedented demand for a statement on Black Lives Matter, in the form of a petition signed by more than 1,400 Asianists (both members and non-members).
- Throughout the past decade, there have been significant changes in higher education in North America, including reductions in numbers of graduate students, reductions in state education budgets, and reductions in tenure-track positions at many universities in favor of instructor/adjunct positions, among others. However, a number of universities and colleges in North America have witnessed a significant increase in the percentage of students of Asian descent and international students from Asia, an increasing demand for courses on Asia, and more faculty members with Asia expertise. There has also been a marked increase in collaborations and work globally and, in some Asian countries, increases in funding for higher education and to support international collaborative efforts.

In this context, the 2021-2022 AAS President, Hy Luong, made it a priority for AAS to develop a strategic plan to provide a road map which takes into account the effects of these changes. To this end, the AAS Board of Directors established a Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) to develop a five-year strategic plan for years 2022 to 2026.

This document has been developed by the Strategic Planning Committee in partnership with the AAS Board of Directors and represents the first major strategic planning effort that the Association has undertaken since 2008. The Committee's work has included preparing a self-study report in May 2021, interviewing 16 focus groups of Asianists of diverse backgrounds and locations, and conducting surveys of members, lapsed members and non-members. Careful analyses of interview and survey data, a "self-audit" of all the aspects of AAS as an organization, and a subsequent series of planning meetings, resulted in a draft of the strategic plan. The AAS Board of Directors approved that draft for adoption at its March 2022 meeting prior to the Annual Conference in Honolulu.

THE AAS: ITS CURRENT MISSION, GOALS, ACTIVITIES, AND FINANCES

Pages 5 through 25 of this document represent the baseline of the strategic plan. Information included in this section includes AAS past and current programs, goals, and status. Beginning on page 26 this strategic planning document introduces key assumptions and new goals for the Association.

MISSION

AAS has not had a firm mission statement but rather an objective articulated in the constitution, which has been summarized on its website as follows:

The Association for Asian Studies, Inc. (AAS) is dedicated to the advancement of the field of Asian Studies through international exchange, networking, publications, research support, and career development.

Through the work of the Strategic Planning Committee, a mission statement is currently pending Board approval:

The Association for Asian Studies, Inc. (AAS) is a non-profit professional association dedicated to the principled advancement of the field of Asian Studies through international intellectual exchange; network building; publications; scholarly projects; support for research, teaching, public outreach, and engagement; and career development, both within the academy and beyond.

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GOALS

Although AAS does not yet have formal goals against which it systematically measures its progress, four broadly defined goals that were established by the AAS Board of Directors in 2008 have informed the Association's work:

- To internationalize the work of AAS, by bringing more Asianists from Asia to AAS meetings, exploring possibilities for hosting AAS meetings or events in Asia, and seeking to bring voices from other parts of the world.
- While maintaining current levels of participation, to diversify the voices of presenters and participants to include more: 1) policy makers, journalists, public intellectuals, and people from applied fields who study Asia; 2) social scientists, particularly economists, political scientists, and sociologists who have often been under-represented in the AAS; and 3) South and Southeast Asianists, who are also under-represented.
- To attract and retain more graduate students and younger Asianists.
- To increase the AAS' education and outreach work.

MEMBERSHIP

AAS membership has declined from its peak of 8,302 in 2012. At the end of 2019, the number of members, at 6,299, was very close to the number at the end of 2007. The number of members dropped to as low as 4,665 in April 2021, but then increased to about 5,500 as of early December 2021, in part because Asianists were taking advantage of a fully subsidized category of memberships through the Assist-a-Scholar program, as well as due to anticipation for the hybrid Annual Conference in March 2022. By July 2022, membership stood at approximately 5,700 individuals and eight institutions.

The majority of AAS members are based in the United States, although the proportion has changed over the last six years: the percentage declined from 71% of the membership in 2015 to 67% in 2021, while that of members based in Asia increased from 15% to 18% at the same time. The percentage of members based in Canada, Europe, Australia, and New Zealand has hovered in the 14%-17% range.¹

In terms of discipline, the membership is predominantly from the humanities: 30% from History, 15% from Languages, Linguistics, and Literature, 11% from Asian Studies/Asian American Studies, 6.5% from Art/Art History, and 6% from Philosophy and Religion. The percentage of AAS members from History has increased from 21% in 2014 to 30% at present. The percentages of members from the social sciences have remained stable. The percentages of members from under-represented disciplines (Economics/Business, Sociology, Health Studies), which the AAS Board in 2008 hoped to increase, have remained quite modest. The 11% from Asian/Asian American Studies is down from 15% in 2012.

¹ In April 2021, the number of individual members based the Middle East and Latin America stood respectively at 0.36% and 0.23%, while there was only 1 member based in Africa (0.02%).

The most significant imbalance is in the geographical areas of focus of members, with specialists in East & Inner Asia consistently representing over one-third of AAS membership:

	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013
East & Inner Asia	39%	40%	40%	40%	39%	39%	37.5%	37%	38%
Northeast Asia	34%	33%	32%	31%	32%	32%	28.5%	29%	29%
Southeast Asia	13%	13%	13%	12%	12.5%	12%	12%	12%	12%
South Asia	8%	8%	8.5%	9%	8.5%	9%	9%	9%	9%
Unspecified	6%	6%	6.5%	7.5%	8%	8%	13%	13%	12%

The low percentage of AAS members who specialize in South and Southeast Asia, relative to those specializing in China and Northeast Asia, has been a long-standing issue in AAS. Without a comprehensive database on the state of the field in Asian Studies, we do not know for sure whether South and Southeast Asianists are under-represented in AAS specifically, or in Asian Studies and academia in general. However, many South Asianists in North America reportedly find the annual South Asia conference in Madison, Wisconsin, more important than AAS-organized conferences.

PROGRAMS

The main programs of the Association for Asian Studies include:

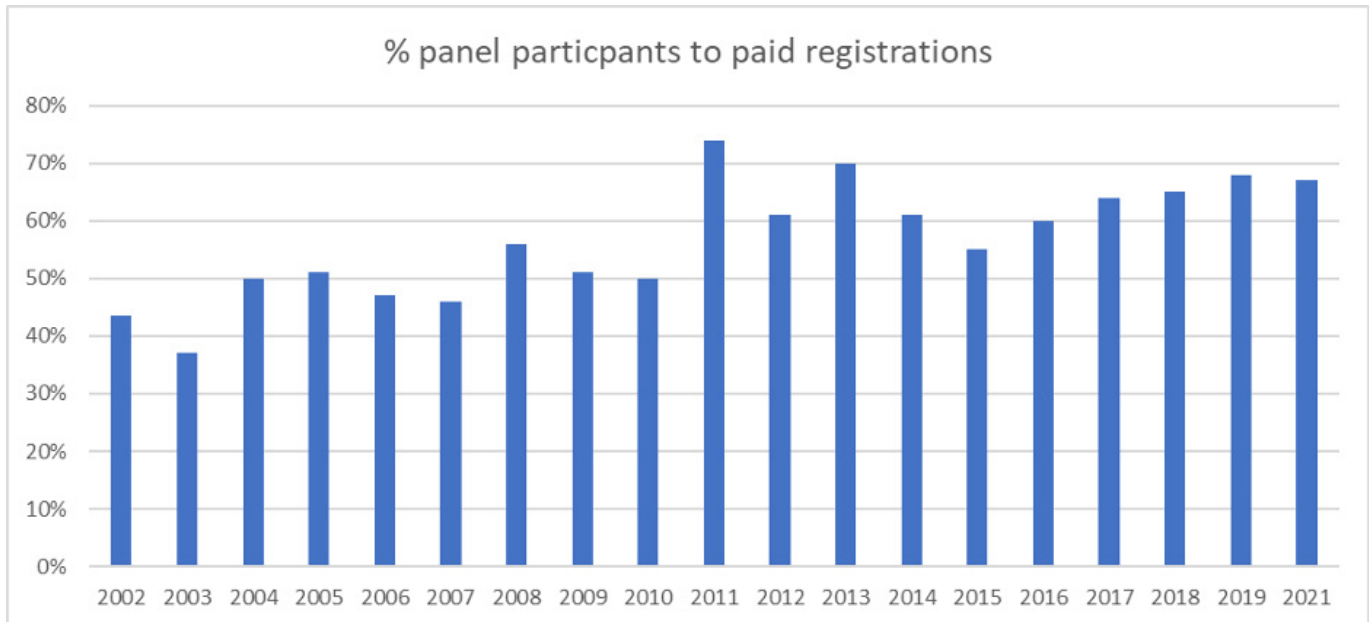
Annual Conference

The AAS Annual Conference consistently draws 3,000 or more participants. The exception to this pattern was 2011, when AAS held a joint conference with ICAS in Honolulu and the registration was nearly 4,700, more than 50% higher than normal. As at other academic association meetings, scholars, not only from North America but also from countries all around the world, participate in interdisciplinary dialogues in panel sessions, deliver papers, and network with their peers.

A critical driver of conference attendance is the number of session and individual paper proposals accepted (see chart below). The average percentage of general attendees (non-presenting registrants) declined from 52% in the first decade of this century to 35% in the 2010s, while the average of presenters and other official session participants (discussants, chairs) increased from 48% in the 2000s to 65% in the 2010s. While acceptance alone is not a factor in attendance for all attendees, the official acceptance of session and paper proposals has become more important in the decisions of many Asianists to attend the Annual Conference.

The acceptance rate for session proposals fluctuated between 59% and 74% from 2012 to 2019, while that for individual paper proposals fluctuated between 14% and 22% during this time. The effect of the pandemic has been marked: holding a virtual conference in

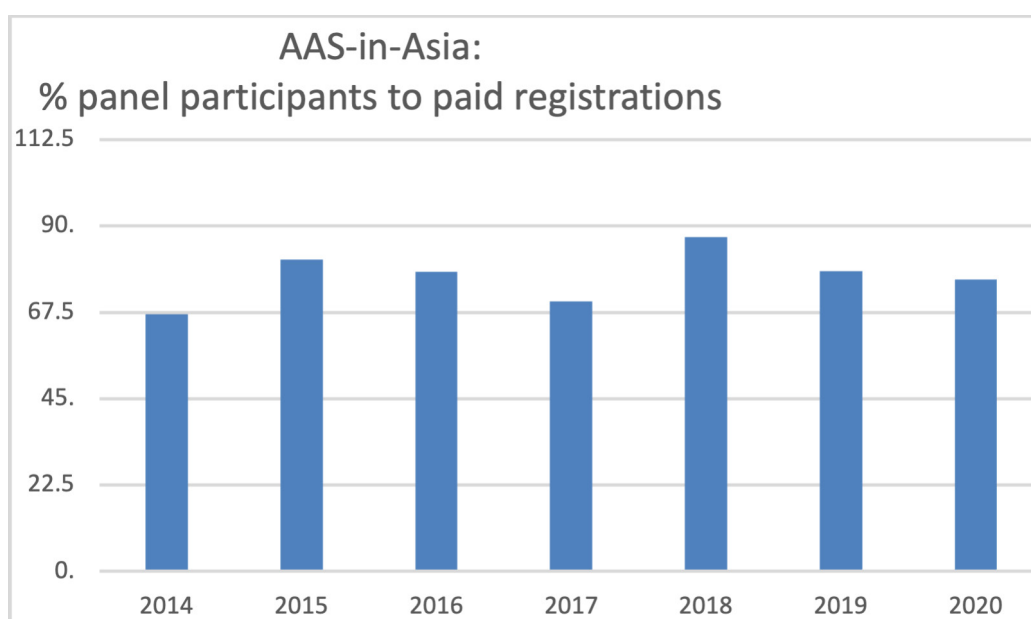
2021 increased acceptance rates to 84% for session proposals and 53% for individual paper proposals, reflecting the ability of the AAS Annual Conference Program Committee to accommodate more sessions and individual papers in a virtual conference format. This led to an increase in first-time and student attendees in 2021. The number of first-time attendee registrants was 762 in Denver in 2019, compared to 1,040 in 2021, and the number of students was 523 in 2019, compared to 777 in 2021. Another reason for the latter could be the relative accessibility and affordability of participation in a virtual event.



AAS-in-Asia

AAS-in-Asia started in 2014. It is the major activity of AAS in internationalization, one of the four goals that the AAS Board adopted in 2008. The conference has been held in Singapore (2014), Taipei (2015), Kyoto (2016), Seoul (2017), New Delhi (2018), Bangkok (2019), and online (2020). Starting with a modest number of 556 participants in Singapore, AAS has attracted 800-1,200 participants since 2016. The average number of proposals for AAS-in-Asia from 2014 to 2020 was 306 a year, amounting to about 60% of session proposals for the AAS Annual Conference. The average acceptance rate for session proposals at AAS-in-Asia has been 53%, which is below that for session proposals for the AAS Annual Conference. The primary reason for this is that the AAS-in-Asia conference was designed to be a more intimate, less intimidating environment than the conference held in North America. At AAS-in-Asia, the percentage of presenters and other official session participants to all paid registrations ranged from 67% at the first AAS-in-Asia in 2014 to 87% in 2018.

The average percentage of presenters and official session participants to all paid registrations at AAS-in-Asia has been 77%, which was higher than that at AAS Annual Conferences in the 2010s.



From a financial perspective, AAS-in-Asia has generated a small surplus in most years, which is divided between AAS and the Asian institutional co-host.

Two factors that have influenced decisions about AAS-in-Asia are the existence of other conferences that are sometimes located in Asia (ICAS, held every two years, and the Asian Studies Conference Japan [ASCJ] annual meeting) and the capacity of the AAS staff. In the Spring of 2019, the AAS Board of Directors voted to have AAS-in-Asia every two years. The Board then reconsidered this decision in 2022 with the receipt of a major grant from the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) that will facilitate annual AAS-in-Asia conferences.

Regional Conferences

Nine regional conferences, held in various regions of North America and Japan, are affiliated with the AAS. Each regional conference is organized and governed independently and is not a subsidiary organization of the AAS. The AAS sends an annual subsidy of \$3,000 to each regional conference to support its activities. The Council of Conferences (the AAS council representing regional conferences) also offers outreach grants for special events and projects by regional constituents. Attendance varies by region, from 75 to 300 or more participants.

These meetings attract more student participation and retain a strong focus on educational outreach. Regional conferences, as well, serve as important spaces for developing the Asian Studies pipeline, such as awarding student paper prizes (with the award of an AAS membership) and sponsoring a graduate student session at the North American Annual Conference. Regional conferences, therefore, strengthen two of the AAS Board's goals adopted in 2008.

PUBLICATIONS

- ***The Journal of Asian Studies (JAS)*** is the flagship journal of the AAS. *JAS* welcomes broad comparative and transnational studies, as well as essays emanating from fine-grained historical, cultural, political, or literary research and interpretation. The *JAS* also publishes clusters of papers representing new and vibrant discussions on specific themes and issues. The journal has experienced rising submissions, which has resulted in the acceptance rate declining from 12% in 2016 to 6% in 2020. The 2-year impact factor of the *JAS*, after increasing between 2015 and 2018 from 0.338 to 1.082, declined in 2019 to 0.645. For comparative purposes, the corresponding numbers for two other major Asian Studies journals in 2019 were 0.488 (*Modern Asian Studies*) and 1.171 (*Pacific Affairs*). *JAS* is roughly in the middle of the 65 journals that make up the Area Studies category. The distribution of *JAS* looks very different from the composition of the AAS membership: in 2020, there were 587 institutions that received the journal in North America, but 888 in Latin America, 1,502 in Asia, and 4,016 in the Middle East and Africa, the latter number driven by donated subscriptions.

JAS has been produced, marketed, and distributed by Cambridge University Press (CUP); beginning in 2023, *JAS* will be published in contract with Duke University Press (DUP). DUP partners with institutions and societies that share their not-for-profit mission and university-based value system, and financial arrangements are centered on the long-term commitment to provide publishing partners with the financial return that they require in order to maintain their current programs and build for the future. DUP works very closely with their partners to ensure that journals are published efficiently and effectively over the long term. DUP has proposed a financial arrangement that, beginning in 2023, will guarantee an annual payment to the AAS of \$100,000, plus 50% of any publishing surplus generated in the previous fiscal year for *JAS*.

- AAS publications include three **book series: Asia Past and Present (APP), Asia Shorts, and Key Issues in Asian Studies (KIAS)**.
 - The original goal of the APP scholarly monograph series was to support work in under-represented fields and emerging and/or under-represented disciplines. Submissions have been minimal for the APP series and it has essentially been put on hold.
 - Asia Shorts is the newest of the series (starting in 2018). It offers concise titles written by highly qualified authors on topics of significance in Asian Studies. *Burmese Haze: US Policy and Myanmar's Opening—and Closing* was recently published in the Asia Shorts series, and forthcoming titles include *Who Is the Asianist? The Politics of Representation in Asian Studies* and *New Threats to Academic Freedom in Asia*. Asia Shorts is well-positioned to align itself with AAS strategic goals with a focus on issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion; on academic freedom and censorship; and on multidisciplinary approaches, transculturalism, transnationalism, and Global Asias.

- With up-to-date scholarship on important topics in Asian Studies, Key Issues in Asian Studies (KIAS) are concise volumes designed to engage broad audiences, including undergraduate and high school students.

Books are distributed for the AAS by Columbia University Press. Between February 2020 and January 2021, print sales of AAS books were as follows: APP, 98 copies; Asia Shorts, 780 volumes; and KIAS, 1,782 volumes.

- ***Education About Asia (EAA)***

EAA began in 1996 as a peer-reviewed teaching journal with the objective of assisting professors and teachers who are responsible for humanities and social sciences to be more effective in their classroom teaching of Asia. Readers primarily consist of AAS members who are interested in undergraduate teaching, and high school and middle school teachers who have an interest in Asia. In spring 2014, the AAS Board decided to retain both the print version for subscribers willing to pay a modest annual fee, and to create online open access journal archives for all past and present *EAA* issues. There are currently only around 500 paid *EAA* subscriptions, for which there is a net cost for printing and distributing the print copies of *EAA*. All published issues are now available online, and the archives grant readers access to over 1,500 articles, essays, and reviews. The number of page views of online archive articles over 12 months to early 2020 was over 250,000. The open online access and the decline in subscriptions have required AAS to increase its financial support for *EAA*.

- ***Bibliography of Asian Studies (BAS)***

This bibliography of books and periodicals has been in existence longer than AAS. It encompasses a wide range of disciplines, including several that do not feature much in AAS' other work, like medicine, public health, geology, and the environment. Subscription is relatively low: *BAS* has 377 institutional subscribers, 113 of which have their subscription through a consortium arrangement. Subscribers are predominantly located in North America (67%), closely followed by Europe (15%). Approximately 9% of subscribers are from Asia. Regular users, however, find it very useful to their research. The AAS solicited a review of the *BAS* in 2019. The review team of professional librarians carefully reviewed data on the *BAS*' history, distribution, finances, and impact. Its report recommended *BAS* play to its strengths, such as prioritizing hard-to-find materials and to modernize its processes with technology in order to more efficiently and effectively broaden its reach and impact. An important feature of *BAS* is that sales from consortia bring in a profit, making the *BAS* one of the only AAS publications to pull in a profit from royalties (\$36,683 for 2020). *BAS* is distributed for the AAS by EBSCO.

GRANTS

- A significant source of revenue for AAS has been grants from federal and private foundation sources, which in turn are used by AAS to provide 50-75 awards supporting research, workshops, symposia, and distinguished speaker engagements. These grants are made through the East and Inner Asia and Northeast Asia Area Councils.
- Recently, AAS has decided to seek larger grants. In 2021, it succeeded in winning a large one-year grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, and in 2022 secured a four-year grant for work in South and Southeast Asia from the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA).
- The AAS Editorial Board awards approximately \$15,000 in book subventions each year (about \$7,500 per semi-annual round) to first-time authors who are AAS members.
- International Exchange Grants provide travel subsidies for active panel participants from non-high-income and non-OECD countries to attend both the AAS Annual Conference and the AAS-in-Asia conference. The International Exchange Grant program has been in place since 2006, averaging \$27,000 in distributed grants each year between 2006 and 2019.

BOOK PRIZES

Donations and Area Council funds support Book Prizes. Councils form committees for each book prize, which are listed on the AAS website, and publishers send books for consideration directly to the members of each prize committee. Criteria differ slightly according to the type of award. Award amount is normally \$1,000, and winners are honored during the award ceremony at the Annual Conference.

OUTREACH

- AAS has recently used technology to provide platforms for engagement of members and others interested in aspects of Asian Studies. These include the #AsiaNow blog and our Digital Dialogue webinar series. These have provided platforms for open dialogues on issues of race, a mentorship workshop for Black students of Asian Studies, and a publicly broadcast conference plenary on Race and Racisms in Asian Studies.
- Beginning with the 2021 Annual Conference, AAS has offered registration stipends for students from historically Black colleges and universities as well as universities which serve minority populations. In addition, AAS has made great efforts to increase accessibility to our programs, offering grants that enable furloughed and unemployed scholars to attend our Annual Conferences, and producing open access publications via *EAA* and the Asia Shorts book series.
- AAS is active on social media. We have over 13,000 followers on Twitter, which is used to post links to AAS announcements, events, member achievements, and blog posts. We also have more than 16,000 people currently following the AAS Facebook page.

- In 2021, the website received over 100,000 or more visits every month except July (when the number was 86,367). AAS website users are distributed somewhat differently from our membership—nearly 40% are located in the United States, but other significant areas are the Philippines, India, Japan, China, UK, Canada, Hong Kong, Singapore, and Australia. The majority of users are female and in the 18-34 age range.
- AAS sends two monthly email newsletters: the “AAS Member News & Notes,” which contains announcements and news about member achievements, and the “#AsiaNow Digest,” which is a summary of all posts published at #AsiaNow during the preceding four weeks.
- The AAS Digital Dialogues webinar series was launched in June 2020 with support from a Henry Luce Foundation grant. Digital Dialogues are online discussions that cover topics concerning professionalization issues, current events, the field of Asian Studies, and the mechanics of AAS. To date, AAS has held over 25 AAS Digital Dialogues and three “Meet Your Council” open houses. The average number of advance registrations for Digital Dialogues is 168 people, with an average of 103 actual attendees.

ADVOCACY

While the AAS has been non-political in principle since its inception, in recent years the organization has become much more proactive in speaking out about human rights abuses and academic freedom. Because public statements are a relatively new phenomenon, a protocol for the generation of and agreement to statements is continually forming. We have been, for the most part, reactive as an organization instead of proactive. In past years, however, the AAS has generated statements quickly in response to both Asianists’ demand and ethical responsibilities.

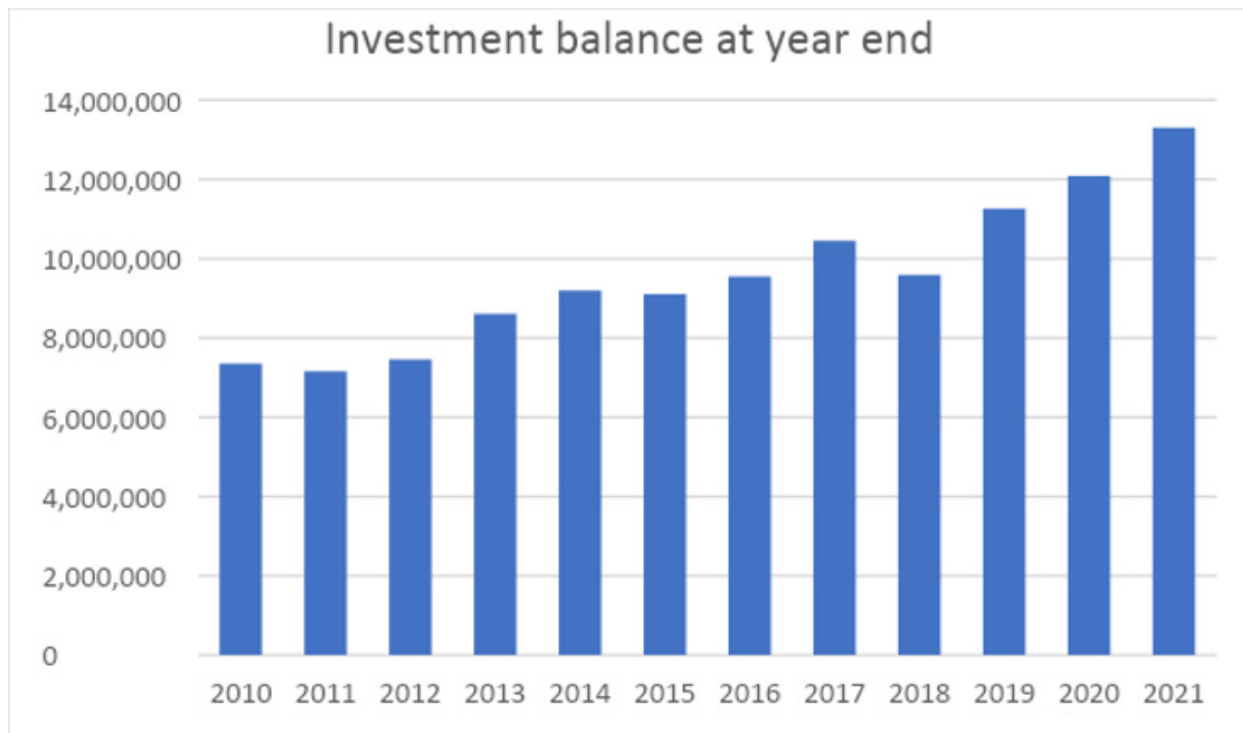
Since 2017, we have released 19 statements and signed on to five others prepared by partner scholarly organizations. The most significant of these was the statement on Systemic Racism and Action to Build Diversity and Equity in Asian Studies, which was a response to a petition signed by more than 1,400 Asianists (both AAS members and non-members). To ensure maximum impact, two recent statements were issued in bilingual format, including English and a pertinent national language (Thai, Burmese).

STAFF

AAS programs and administration are delivered through the efforts of a lean and flexible staff at the Secretariat in Ann Arbor, Michigan. There are currently eight staff members (not all of them full-time), including the Executive Director, Director of Conferences and Events, Membership Manager, Digital Media Manager, Publications Manager, Advertising and Marketing Manager, Grant Programs Manager, and Conference and Events Coordinator. In addition, AAS also has a full-time Director of Special Initiatives who is not based in the United States. Accounting and financial work was outsourced in 2021-2022, and, in 2022, transitioned to an in-house Director of Finance.

AAS FINANCES

As the U.S. and global economy bounced back from the Great Recession of 2008-09, the AAS investment portfolio value increased from \$7,353,740 at the end of 2010 to \$12,094,031 at the end of 2020. The average annual return on investment in this period was 8.52% (see appendix 1). After an annual payout of 4.5% to cover AAS' operating budget deficit in most years of this period, the remaining 4% was more than enough to cover the average inflation rate of 2.17%, allowing for a net increase in portfolio value.



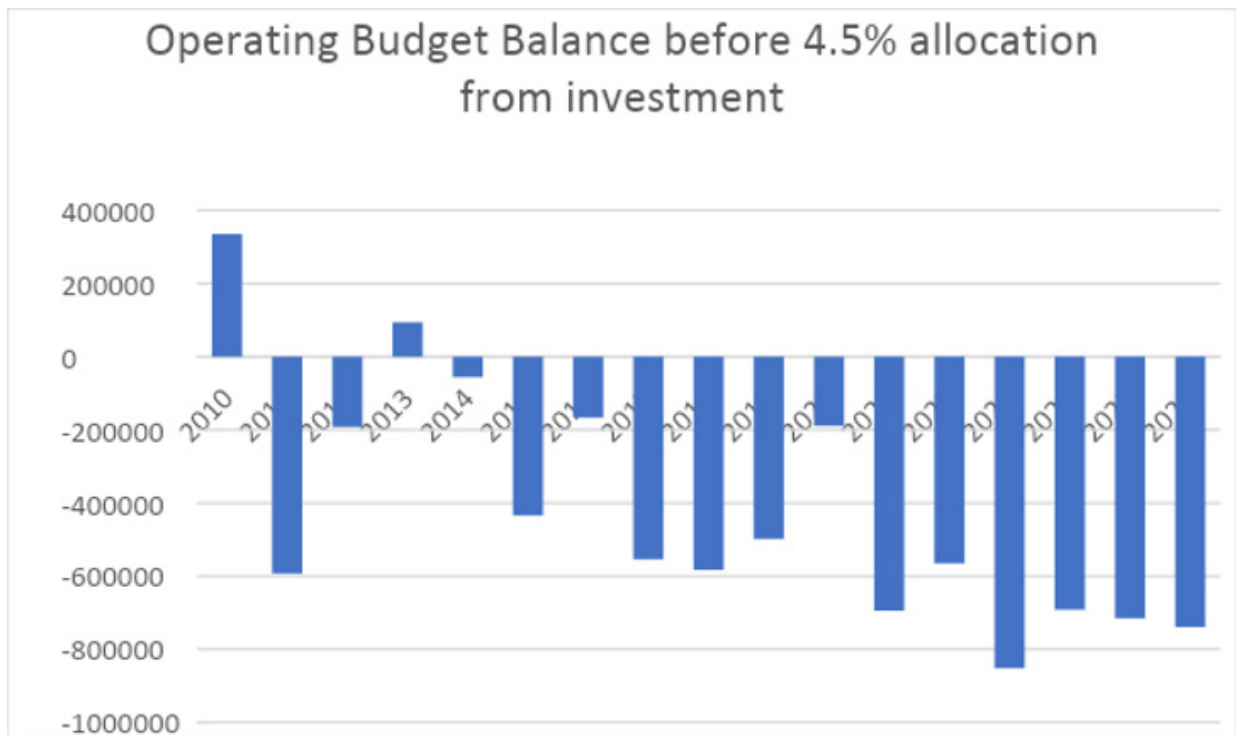
In setting the payout rate at 4.5% of the average portfolio value for three years more than three decades ago, the AAS Board in effect treated the investment portfolio as an endowment. In Board meetings, the term “endowment” has often been used to refer to this investment portfolio. The AAS Board can change this policy, including adjusting the payout rate. In fact, at its meeting on October 18, 2021, the AAS Board passed a motion to allow a 4.5% payout only from unrestricted funds in the investment portfolio for the following reason, as stated in the meeting minutes:

Our principle is that we take the value of the endowment for three years and multiply it by 4.5% to determine the drawdown amount, but we have been using the balance of our Vanguard account instead. That includes grant and prize money that is not part of the endowment, so we have been over-valuing the amount of the endowment.

At the end of 2021, unrestricted funds amounted to 75% of the investment portfolio. If this percentage does not change much, the motion adopted at the October 18, 2021 meeting will exclude about 25% (restricted funds) of the portfolio value from payout calculation.

This decision was implemented in 2021, and will be phased in over three years. Other things being equal, the payout from the investment portfolio will be reduced by about 25% by 2023 (see below for the payout forecast).

From 2010 to 2021, AAS had an operating budget surplus in two years, and a deficit in nine years. If we exclude 2020 and 2021 due to the unusual impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, the average annual deficit increased from (\$149,836) in 2010-2012 to (\$523,866) in 2017-2019 (see appendix 1). In consultation with AAS Executive Director and with Consultant Richard Brewster, the AAS CFO has forecast that for the 2022-2026 period, if AAS adopts a hybrid conference model, the average annual deficit *before payout from investment* will average (\$712,440) (see appendix 2). The annual payout from the AAS investment fund, which depends on the continuation of a sound investment strategy, is thus vital for AAS operations.²



² For 2020, AAS had over half a million dollars in grants, most of which were not disbursed due to the pandemic. This amount is counted as income, leading to an *artificial* budget surplus of \$280,700, reported in appendix 2. If the temporarily undisbursed grant money is removed according to the new accounting method adopted at AAS, after including the annual payout, AAS had a budget deficit of \$188,958 in 2020.

Since the investment portfolio had 75% in equity shares at the end of 2021,³ and since the stock market can be volatile, the Chair of the AAS Finance Committee and another member of this committee have suggested considering a high-growth scenario of 7% annually for AAS investment in the next few years, and the worst-case scenario of a drop in portfolio value by 15% in year one, 10% in year two, and no growth in the subsequent three years. Accordingly, a calculation of the investment portfolio value and the payouts from investment under the impact of the October 18, 2021 motion is as follows:

Vanguard account (\$ million)	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
Actual year-end figures	11.01	11.61	13.30					
High projection (7% annual after payout)				13.75	14.24	14.75	15.28	15.83
Low projection (-15% in 2022, -10% in 2023, zero thereafter, after payout)				11.11	9.61	9.27	8.96	8.65
Assume unrestricted funds at 75% of the total throughout								
Year-end payout (\$1000s)	474.1	492.7						
High projection-new method			499	483.9	469.8	486.3	503.7	521.8
Low projection-new method			499	453.9	387.2	341.3	316.8	305.8

The AAS CFO has independently assumed a constant annual payout of \$432,766 from investment for the 2022-26 period (see appendix 2). On the assumption of a hybrid conference model, after we include this payout, the AAS operating budget still has a projected average annual deficit of (\$279,674) during this period.

Financial Aspects of Major AAS Programs

- Key revenue sources include memberships, income from our Annual Conference, and sales of publications, especially *JAS* and *BAS*. Key cost areas include membership services and other functions undertaken by the Secretariat staff, payroll, and other costs of AAS publications, and costs associated with our Annual Conference.
- In the 2010s, the Annual Conferences generated an average annual surplus of \$23,671 (see appendix 1). The revenues from Annual Conferences normally covered both the direct costs of the event and the costs of the staff time devoted to it. This was achieved with registration fees that were among the lowest in the association conference market. AAS-in-Asia has also normally generated a small surplus that has been split equally between AAS and the local host. For the 2003-26 period, if AAS Annual Conferences are held in-person only, after staff time cost re-allocation, the AAS CFO projects that they will have an annual deficit of \$46,019. If AAS adopts a hybrid conference model, the Annual Conferences are forecast to have a deficit of \$204,091 in 2022 and an annual deficit between \$200,000 and \$250,000 between 2023 and 2026 (see appendix 2).

³ This percentage was about 60% from 2013 to September 2018, and 80% from September 2018 to November 2021.

- Publications have a “gross margin”—their revenues more than cover the cost of the direct expenses they entail, but not the cost of the staff time required to produce them, resulting in net deficits. The average annual deficit increased from \$77,584 in 2010-12 to \$165,525 in 2017-19 (see appendix 1). One important reason is the decision of the AAS Board to make *Education About Asia* a free online resource for teachers and students, leading to a significant decline in subscriptions and in revenues. The budget forecast is that the annual deficit in publications will increase to the mid-\$200,000 range for the 2022-26 period (see appendix 2).
- In this context, membership dues constitute the one substantive source of operating revenue that is available to cover the general costs of running and governing the association and planning for its growth. This makes the organization’s health particularly vulnerable to significant falls in membership revenues. In the 2010s, despite a 25% decline in membership between the peak in 2012 and 2019, membership revenues were fairly stable, achieved through an increase in membership dues in 2015 and 2019. From 2019 to the end of 2021, although AAS raised funds in 2021 and launched the Assist-a-Scholar program to provide complimentary memberships to about 400 Asianists, the number of members still declined by 800. Membership revenues dropped from \$532,809 in 2019 to \$440,000 in 2021. They are projected to remain in the mid-\$400,000 range for 2022-26.
- AAS seeks out grants for its work, which are generally restricted to the purposes for which they are made. In other words, AAS creates programs and seeks the funds to cover them, or seeks out funders with programs that (hopefully) further its mission. Although some of these grants will contain an element to cover “overhead,” most do not generate a surplus for AAS. Recently, AAS has been awarded a major one-year grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities and a major multi-year grant by the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA.) Both are designed to support under-represented scholars and students, and the SIDA grant would entail new forms of work and partnership with under-resourced institutions and Asianists in South and Southeast Asia.

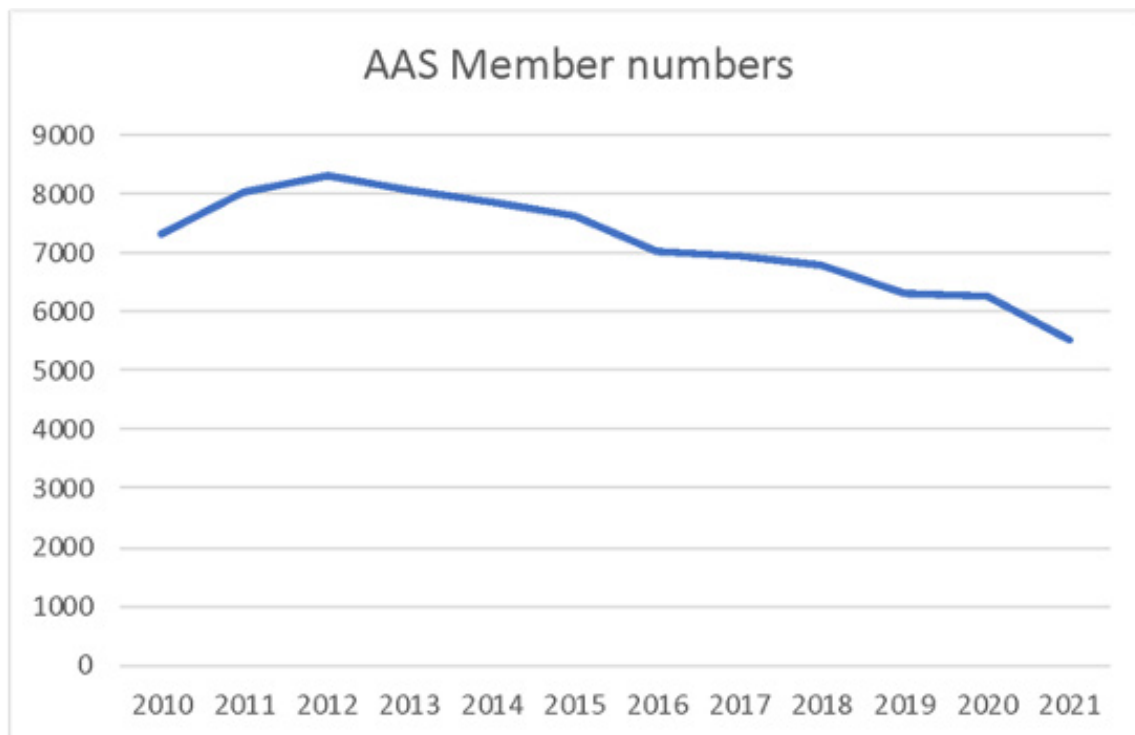
FACTORS AFFECTING AAS STRATEGIC DECISION-MAKING

In seeking to identify the main assumptions on which to base decisions about AAS' future direction, the Strategic Planning Committee considered the following factors to be particularly important:

- Trends in the number of members.
- Possible explanations for the directions evident in these trends, including what members have told us in the focus groups and surveys.
- The state of the field of Asian Studies.
- Social and political changes that have and/or will impact AAS members and AAS.
- Trends in the sources of revenue and factors that drive expenses in AAS, as well as factors that might affect our investments.

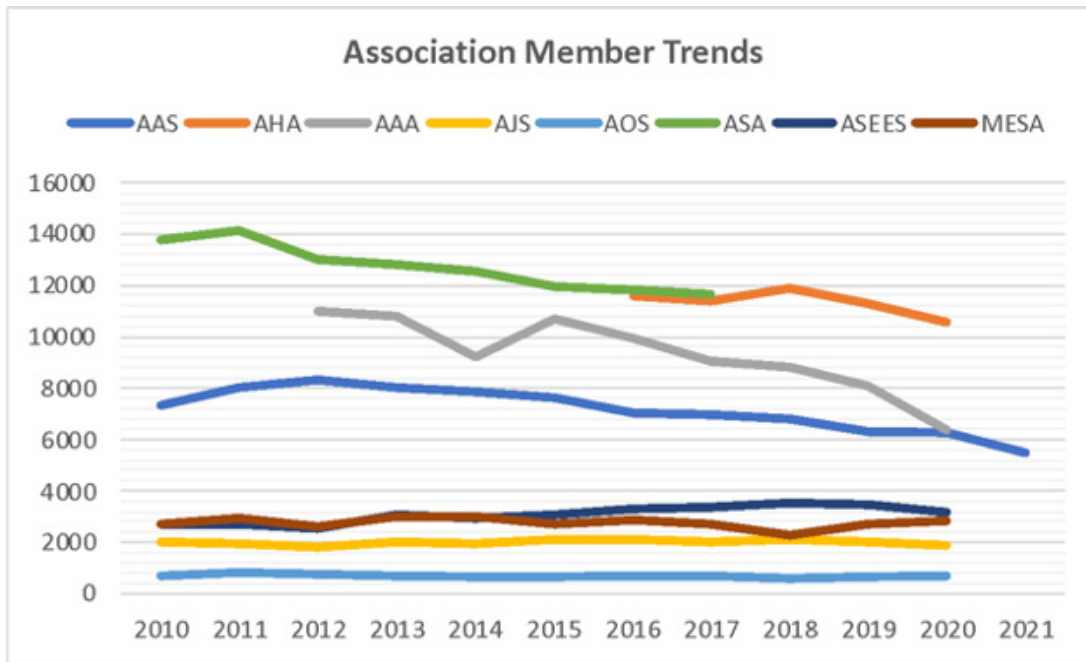
Critically, the SPC has also sought to identify the implications of the ongoing pandemic for each of these factors.

TRENDS IN MEMBERSHIP

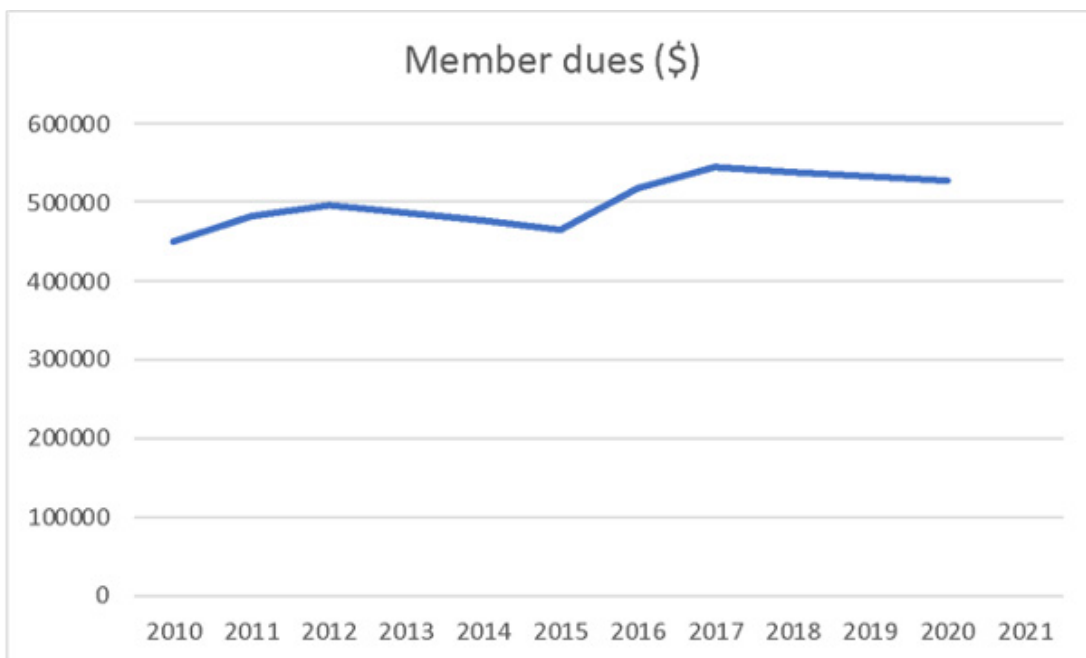


From 2012 to April 2021, the decline in AAS membership by more than 40% was comparable to that of the American Anthropological Association, and significantly higher than those in the remaining discipline-based and area-studies associations for which we have obtained data. American Historical Association membership, for example, declined by less than 10% between 2016 and 2021, while AAS membership declined by one third in

the same period. Smaller area studies associations for which we have data seem to hold up better than the larger discipline-based organizations: Association for Jewish Studies (AJS) had a membership decline of about 10% in the last decade; American Oriental Society (AOS) had a stable membership in this period; the Middle Eastern Studies Association (MESA) had a small increase in membership; while the Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies (ASEES) witnessed a 20% increase in its membership in the last decade.

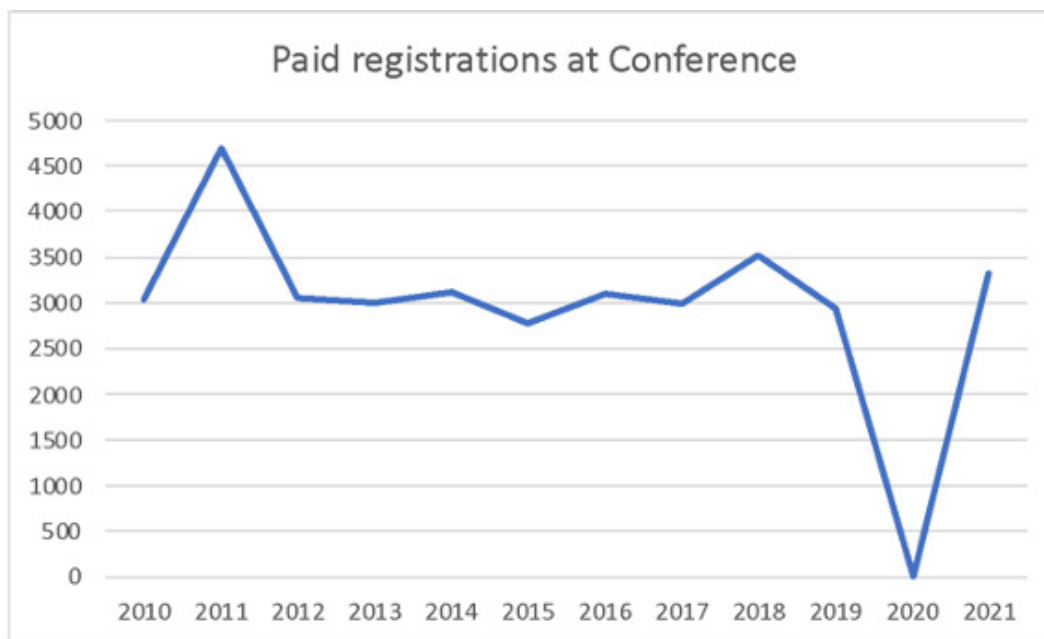


Until 2019, AAS revenues from membership dues did not reflect the decline in membership because of increases in membership dues in 2015 and 2019, as well as an increase in the proportion of members paying a higher rate of dues.



EXPLANATIONS OF TRENDS IN AAS MEMBERSHIP

- It is not entirely clear why the fall in AAS membership has been fairly steep since 2012 and so precipitous in 2020-21. Survey data indicate that to members, non-members, and lapsed members, conferences are the most important part of an academic association membership (see p. 13 of appendix 3). The pandemic and conference cancelation/uncertainty seem likely to be the main reasons for the decline in 2020-21: AAS canceled its 2020 Annual Conference in March that year, after any participant who took out membership mainly to get the discount on conference registration would have already paid their dues. For 2021, however, people were making their decisions about attending the conference, and probably also about their membership, when AAS decided that the event would be virtual only—an unprecedented decision, and a necessary one in the face of severe lockdowns and travel restrictions and all the uncertainty that accompanied those. As previously discussed (p 8), attendance at the 2021 Annual Conference matched those of previous years, but with marked changes in the status of the attendees, with significantly more first-time attendees and students.



- As AAS conference attendance numbers have remained fairly stable (see chart above), some other possible causes of AAS membership decline are:
 - The level of available institutional support: more than a third of respondents to the surveys of members, lapsed, and non-members reported that institutional support for membership fees and conference attendance had been reduced over the previous five years, in contrast to 5% to 11% who reported that it had increased in this time. The lack of institutional support was the highest ranked reason for lapsed membership. However, this factor is also at work in other academic associations whose membership numbers have not declined as much, or even increased in some cases.

- A large majority of the AAS members, lapsed members, and non-members who responded to the survey are also members of other associations. In the context of declining institutional support for membership fees and conference attendance, a number of people have to make hard choices about which membership to keep and which one to drop.
- Many institutions provide financial support for conference attendance only when their members officially participate in a conference as a paper presenter or a discussant. Facing declining institutional support, in all likelihood, many academics would keep membership in associations where they stand a good chance of official conference participation as paper presenters and discussants. We do not have data from other associations about their conference session/paper acceptance rates, but if their acceptance rates are higher due to their arrangements accommodating most members' official conference participation demand, we will need to re-examine our conference logistical practices and session/paper acceptance rates.
- Our conference registration number has remained stable despite declining membership, likely due to high demand for official conference participation, because those able to participate officially tend to keep their AAS membership, and because those with session and paper proposals rejected tend to keep their membership in other associations in which they can present papers or attend these associations' conferences in some official capacity.
- In interviews conducted as part of the AAS governance review, there was general agreement that a number of members canceled their membership in protest at AAS' response to the Indian Government's refusal to grant visas to scholars of Pakistani nationality or descent to attend the AAS-in-Asia conference in New Delhi in 2018. AAS membership dropped by almost 500 between 2018 and 2019, which was greater than in many previous years, but still less than the membership decline from 2015 to 2016. There is no hard evidence for how much of this decline from 2018 to 2019 can be attributed to the controversy over AAS-in-Asia in New Delhi.
- There has been a suggestion that what was perceived initially as AAS' slow response to the events of the summer of 2020, especially Black Lives Matter-related issues, may have caused some reluctance to renew. However, we are only aware of a handful of canceled memberships, and AAS' eventual response attracted praise.
- The apparent increasing popularity of the Annual Conference on South Asia, presented by the Center for South Asia at the University of Wisconsin at Madison. It is not clear exactly how this might have affected AAS member numbers, but those focusing on South Asia are underrepresented in our membership and programming (see page 7).

FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS AND SURVEYS

Given the fairly steep decline in AAS membership in the recent past and the additional volatility created by Covid-19, it has been critical to identify what members and other Asianists value in AAS and what might motivate them to remain or become members of the Association. This helps AAS to plan for its future effectively.

The Strategic Planning Committee focused its analyses on three areas of focus group and survey questions and answers:

1. The activities that members, lapsed members, and non-members see as important in being members.
2. Members' perceptions of how AAS helps them achieve their objectives.
3. New activities that might attract sufficient interest to justify joining AAS.

1. Importance of Activities

- The AAS Annual Conference stands out as the activity that members, lapsed, and non-members all regard as more important than others. For respondents in all three categories, online access to the *JAS* is ranked either second or third, although it should be pointed out that online *JAS* is available to many Asianists through their institutional libraries, and that people do not need to maintain their AAS membership for access. For member respondents, advocacy on academic issues ranked third, followed by AAS-in-Asia, with the priority among these two activities reversed among non-members and lapsed members.
- By far the three most important experiences at the Annual Conference are the sessions, social functions and networking, and book exhibits. Other aspects, like keynote talks, award ceremonies, mentoring and job search seem much less important, at least to the respondents to the survey.

2. Helping Members Achieve Their Objectives

In the survey responses, there are six factors that are statistically significant in members' perceptions of how AAS helps them achieve their objectives:

- Belonging to community of like-minded Asianists.
- Establishing/maintaining professional relationships.
- Engaging in regular academic discourse.
- Keeping abreast of research and methodology.
- Networking with Asianists in different parts of the world.
- Having cross-disciplinary discussion.

This information is entirely consistent with what survey respondents see as valuable at AAS-organized conferences as discussed above.

3. New Activities

In the survey responses, of greatest interest, especially among members and non-members, are online access to a database of syllabi and other teaching resources and discounted daily conference registration for educators and passes for a number of students (see p. 20 of Appendix 3).

Given the importance of AAS-organized conferences to members, lapsed members, and non-members alike, we have also analyzed respondents' attitudes towards virtual versus in-person conferences. Nearly three-quarters of members see in-person conferences as very important, compared with close to a third who see a virtual conference as very important; a clear majority of lapsed members express a similar bias, while non-members are more evenly divided. This would suggest, subject to practical considerations, that, at least in the short term, an approach incorporating both a virtual and on-site component is most likely to appeal to the widest range of preferences.

This has major implications for AAS, in terms of expenses and organizing efforts: the AAS CFO has indicated that hybrid conferences incur greater expenses because the AAS is paying for both an on-site location and a virtual conference platform. However, there have not been corresponding increases in revenues, as of yet, leading to an assumption that this can lead to greater AAS budget deficits. This is another area in which uncertainty prevails for planning purposes: how long, post-Covid, will this fairly large minority comfortable with virtual conferences remain? Will environmental concerns about the travel involved in attending conferences that were in evidence before the pandemic make a preference for hybrid arrangements permanent?

THE STATE OF THE FIELD OF ASIAN STUDIES

One key point noted by the Strategic Planning Committee is the lack of a comprehensive database for Asian Studies in North America and elsewhere, making it difficult to determine the size of the field itself. At this point, we must rely firstly on indirect indicators, such as Asian language enrollment primarily at the undergraduate level, the number of dissertations on Asia at the graduate level, the number of positions advertised through AAS as an index of job opportunities for PhDs specializing in Asia, and the numbers of panel and individual paper proposals for AAS Annual Conferences and of *JAS* article submissions as indices of scholarly activities. The comments of our members and other participants in focus group interviews also offer indirect data on the Asian Studies field.

• Indirect indicators on the state of the field in Asian Studies:

- There was a significant rise in the enrollment of those studying Asian languages from the 1950s to 2009, and an overall small decline from 2009 to 2016. The main exceptions to this decline from 2009 to 2016 are the enrollment in Korean and some Southeast Asian languages like Vietnamese. The reasons for the decline in the enrollment in most Asian languages from 2009 to 2016 are unclear.

- Jobs advertised through AAS declined from the low to mid-300s in the 2014-2016 period to mostly high-200s from 2017 to 2020. This decline indicates a possibly contracting job market for recent PhDs specializing in Asia, although it may also reflect the proliferation of job announcement options to employers. Even if the job market for recent PhDs specializing in Asia has contracted, it does not necessarily mean that the total number of Asia specialists in North American academia has declined. It might reflect a long-term cycle in academia: rapid expansion of higher education with many jobs from 1960 to the mid-1970s (cohort A), a much smaller number of jobs from the late 1970s to mid-1990s as a result, more jobs in the next decade and a half due to the retirement of cohort A, and then fewer academic job openings again. Furthermore, a number of Asianists are hired into positions advertised without stated preferences for Asia expertise. We need a good database on the number of Asia specialists in academia, among other indicators, to have a clearer picture of the state of the field in Asian Studies.
- The evidence regarding the level of scholarly activities, in the form of data from AAS programming, is mixed: The number of Annual Conference session proposals to AAS remained in the 500 range from 2012 to 2019. It declined to 414 session proposals for the 2021 Annual Conference, but this decline may reflect the special circumstances of the on-going pandemic and the concern of many researchers about travel and big gatherings. The number of individual paper proposals, however, declined from the average of 485 in the 2012-2014 period to an average of 382 from 2015 to 2021. This may reflect a smaller number of PhD dissertations and a contracting job market during this time. On the other hand, the number of original article submissions to the *Journal of Asian Studies* increased from 256 in 2016 to 339 in 2020. This reflects a stronger interest in publication in a flagship journal in Asian Studies.
- **Perceptions of members and other respondents in focus group interviews:**
 - There are major concerns about the constraints on scholarship: censorship and harassment (for example, in relation to scholarship concerned with the study of WWII-era Japan, and harassment directed at organizers of the “Dismantling Global Hindutva: Multidisciplinary Perspectives” conference in September 2021).
 - There are specific concerns about difficulties of access to China, both for archival research and for fieldwork, due to current tensions in international relations and the global Covid-19 pandemic.
 - Many participants in focus group interviews noted inequality in access to resources, especially ever-more-important digital resources, to the disadvantage of Asianists at smaller institutions and limited access to collections for independent scholars.
 - There is an agreed need for much better information about the field, including an authoritative database.

- Some respondents pointed to a breakdown of traditional disciplinary boundaries, with a growing emphasis on multidisciplinary and historically nuanced approaches to issues of heterogeneity, diasporas, trans-culturalism, transnationalism, and Global Asias.
- An emphasis was placed on recognizing the importance of approaches to Asian Studies emerging from Asia and other parts of world.
- Respondents also stressed the critical importance of enabling active participation and a full sense of belonging in the Association for women scholars and scholars from other historically excluded communities.
- There is a need to internationalize scholarship in Asian Studies, connecting Asianists in all parts of the world (not just Asia itself).
- Some expressed concern about institutional pressures on, or the elimination of, Asian Studies departments and of the decline in language class enrollment as well as the second-class status of language teachers. This concern is most pertinent for those who work in sparsely-funded institutions.
- Several participants noted the increase in the number of Asianists of Asian descent, and saw this as a positive development for future levels of activity in Asian Studies.
- Positive trends were noted in the increasing number of submissions to journals by Asianists working in non-Anglophone environments, and the shift, now almost unstoppable, to open access, which makes publications accessible to a much wider audience, but which carries major financial risks for publishers and associations.
- Respondents spoke of a need for resources and support for K-12 teachers via a database of teaching materials.
- Librarians and educators alike expressed concerns regarding the sustainability of current positions after the retirement of long-standing professionals.
- Librarians expressed concern over institutional undervaluing of collections. The 2019 announcement by the National Library of Australia that it would close its Asian Reading Rooms and cut resources directed toward Asian Studies collections is one example, and an indication that this could be a real possibility on a widespread scale. Proposed mergers of specialty collections into the general collection are a real and present threat to Asian materials as well as the work and livelihood of Asia Studies librarians.

Overall, the comments of members indicated the fundamental importance of maintaining and growing an international intentional community of Asianists.

AAS 2022 to 2026

KEY ASSUMPTIONS

In seeking to define overarching goals for AAS for the next five years, the Strategic Planning Committee carefully reviewed the self-study report as summarized in this plan document, the views of member and non-member Asianists in surveys and focus group interviews, data on the state of the field, and trends in the economic environment. It has identified the following key factors and assumptions:

Critically, although there is some uncertainty about the reasons for the decline in AAS membership, the responses of the focus group and survey participants suggest strongly that, as long as the Association seeks to stay relevant and is sensitive to opportunities, especially to the changes that have occurred and are occurring in its environment, AAS can have a positive future. In particular:

1. The self-study report shows that it remains the case, as in 2008, that there are significant areas of Asia and particular disciplines where scholars have not yet found AAS activities and membership sufficiently attractive. These include the geographical areas of South and Southeast Asia, and the disciplines of economics and sociology, among other social sciences, and health sciences. The goals and strategies that AAS adopts should therefore contribute to increasing the number of Asianists from these areas and disciplines.
2. The basic needs and interests of Asianists—from engaging in academic discourse, finding research support and mentorship, networking and so on—remain the same. To stay relevant and attractive to members and prospective members, an association must increase the quantity and quality of experiences and impactful and well-supported resources for scholarship and career development that it offers to Asianists.
3. The context in which these needs exist and are articulated has changed since 2008. There is even greater emphasis now on the need to recognize the breakdown of traditional academic boundaries, and the academy's response to social change in the form of a stronger demand for greater emphasis on the scholarship of Asianists based in Asia, and the recognition of the interests of scholars from historically excluded communities. To stay relevant and attractive, we have assumed that AAS must be seen to respond to these changes. (However, one theme of recent discussion in AAS, about shifting its center of gravity as an organization toward Asia from the U.S., is not a step the Committee believes AAS is ready to take during the period of this plan.)

4. AAS has already committed to a major change in its approach to its work and in how it governs and manages its affairs: in response to the members' petition concerning social justice, it created a Diversity and Equity Committee. Ensuring that this overall change is effected will require specific changes in the way AAS manages all aspects of its work, not only its programming but also its governance, leadership, and administration.
5. Given the increasing pressures on scholars engaged in Asian Studies, especially in non-democratic states, carefully considered advocacy on behalf of affected scholars with a focus on how this advocacy can be leveraged to have real world effects, is an important activity for an academic association.
6. Financially, AAS is at some risk. As earlier discussed in the section on finances, our projections suggest that AAS may incur large operating budget deficits in 2022-2026 that exceed anticipated payouts from the endowment. Moreover, the investment outlook is challenging in the short term due to high inflation, rising interest rates, and stock market volatility. These risks will require AAS to exercise very tight control of expenditures and to emphasize generating unrestricted revenue.

PLANNING FOR THE NEXT FIVE YEARS

The goals and strategies of AAS for the next five years will be rooted in its mission and values.

MISSION

The Association for Asian Studies, Inc. (AAS) is a non-profit professional association dedicated to the principled advancement of the field of Asian Studies through international intellectual exchange; network building; publications; scholarly projects; support for research, teaching, public outreach and engagement; and career development, both within the academy and beyond.

VALUES

The Association for Asian Studies is committed to serving its members and engaging respectfully with its partners throughout Asia and other parts of the world by promoting academic excellence, free inquiry, professional integrity, diversity, equity, and inclusion within the academic study of Asia and in the Association's own work to advance the field of Asian Studies.

OVERARCHING GOALS

The committee has used the assumptions described above and the analysis of AAS operations and trends, and members' and other respondents' feedback to define AAS' main overarching goals for the next five years. All of these are designed to achieve our main overarching goal of increasing the number of members, of enhancing their experiences and helping them achieve professional development and fulfillment as members of a global community of Asianists.

1. **Grow AAS engagement in Asia.** In terms of the assumptions described above, this can help address the under-representation of South and Southeast Asia; expand opportunities for and access to academic discourse, networking, research projects, mentoring and grants; place greater emphasis on the scholarship of Asianists based in Asia, and the recognition of the interests of previously marginalized scholars; show solidarity with censored and harassed scholars; and enhance AAS' credibility in advocating on their behalf.
2. **Grow new and maintain existing membership.** Our main strategies are to increase the pool of potential members through growing AAS' engagement in Asia and to increase the value of membership, and thus to increase satisfaction among existing members and to attract new ones, especially from under-represented areas and disciplines, as well as among under-represented categories of Asianists. This increase in the value of membership will be achieved by expanding and enriching AAS' Annual Conference and AAS-in-Asia conference, partnering with other associations to access their constituents, enhancing the quality and marketing of *JAS* and our other publications, and developing new resources that will offer value to members—for example, databases of teaching resources and the state of the field of Asian Studies. We will also continue to respond to the concerns and needs of Asianists that relate to the intellectual and social shifts that have affected the field, and to increase the openness and effectiveness of the AAS Board and staff leadership.
3. **Enact AAS' ongoing commitment to DEI.** This goal relates to assumptions 4 and 5, about AAS following through on its response on DEI and doing so in its governance, leadership, and management, but will also be fundamentally important in supporting marginalized scholars and raising the profile of Asia-based approaches to Asian Studies.
4. **Grow and maintain financial sustainability.** This goal relates principally to assumption 6 above. Carefully managing the AAS endowment to balance risk and return will support AAS operations while conserving financial assets for the future. Actively seeking new revenue streams will enhance our capacity to pursue AAS objectives.
5. **Enhance administrative efficiency and effectiveness.** Achieving all these overarching goals will depend on the effectiveness and efficiency of the Staff and Board of AAS, and of the hardware and systems that are used to support their work.

STRATEGIES

For each of these overarching goals, the strategic planning committee has identified strategies and, in some cases, sub-strategies and tactics.

Grow AAS Engagement in Asia

To ensure optimal access and involvement of scholars in Asia, AAS will build on its recent experience of running a virtual conference and years of successful operation of in-person events in order to organize the AAS Annual Conference as a primarily in-person event with a virtual conference planned as a separate but related event.

- AAS will make its Annual Conferences more inclusive by:
 - Accepting more papers and panels of high quality from academics based in Asia.
 - Using designated panels to achieve a balance of disciplines, scholarly interests, and Asianists of all backgrounds.
 - Encouraging the submission of papers and presentation of panels in non-English languages, recognizing that this will require active support from conference and panel organizers.
 - Actively seeking ways of reducing the cost of conference participation for scholars and students from low-income Asian countries, where fees and related expenses are found to act as disincentives to participation.
- AAS will present AAS-in-Asia annually, beginning in 2023. To do this effectively, we will develop a feasible model, including a cost-effective staffing configuration and sustainable funding (for example, that provided by the SIDA grant).
- In organizing the AAS-in-Asia conference, the Association will:
 - Use designated panels to achieve a balance of disciplines, scholarly interests, and Asianists of all backgrounds.
 - Explore the possibility of hybrid options to increase inclusivity and participation.
 - Encourage the submission of papers and presentation of panels in non-English languages, recognizing that this will require active support from conference and panel organizers.
 - Establish a pricing structure that ensures that all Asianists who wish to attend can do so. The pricing structure should include a “member rate” to encourage increased interest in joining the Association.
- AAS will expand its global presence and connection, using the Global Asias concept—for example, Africa in Asia and Latin America in Asia, and vice versa, Asia in Africa and Latin America—and by building partnerships in Europe, Latin America, Africa, and Oceania, as well as in Asia.
- AAS will coordinate with Duke University Press to develop strategies for *JAS* to reach a broader community of institutions and Asianists in Asia and develop new forms of academic engagement that complement the Journal’s primary mission.
- Through publication workshops presented at the Annual and AAS-in-Asia conferences, and online, AAS will support the development of skills for Asia-based, early-career scholars in seeking publication in peer-reviewed international journals.
- AAS will pursue more initiatives like the Gosling-Lim Postdoctoral Fellowship, through which scholars based in Asia will be supported so that they can concentrate on publishing their dissertation research, and/or embark on new post-dissertation research, without the distraction of having to teach, consult, or shoulder administrative burdens, and with the opportunity to expand their scholarly networks and expertise.

- If external funding is available, we will create a new postdoctoral fellowship program to bring recent doctoral graduates from South and Southeast Asia to North America and to send recent North American doctoral graduates to South and Southeast Asia.
- AAS will take concrete steps to open up to diverse approaches to scholarship, including research foci, writing styles, theoretical frameworks, and methodologies. This would include workshops for Asia-based Asianists to provide support for publication readiness.
- AAS will build on the links that it has developed in South and Southeast Asia and solicit input, suggestions, and participation from the SIDA hubs, their target regions, and AAS-in-Asia partners (Singapore, Japan, Taiwan, South Korea, Thailand, South Asia) targeted in the programs described above.
- AAS will sponsor at least two workshops working with local scholarly contacts primarily based in South and Southeast Asia. These workshops will be led by faculty members from institutions both outside of Asia and within Asia who are experts in particular disciplines or thematic areas of academic practice. Each workshop will be co-taught by one colleague based in an institution outside of Asia and one based in Asia.
- To reinforce the programmatic engagements described here, AAS will seek to include Asianists based in Asia in its governance structure.

Grow New and Maintain Existing Membership

- AAS will expand the scale of AAS Annual Conferences through increases in the number of sessions and papers accepted.
 - We will explore holding AAS-in-Asia on university campuses to lower costs for both conference organizers and participants.
 - We will also explore venues that will accommodate a larger program for the Annual Conference and, when feasible, for the AAS-in-Asia conference.
 - We will expand the criteria and ranking categories for submissions with the goal of accepting more diverse styles of scholarship for our Annual Conference and AAS-in-Asia conference programs.
 - AAS will explore holding joint conferences, which will enable us to offer more varied experiences for members and non-members.
- AAS will enrich participant experiences of its conferences by: expanding pre-conference professional development opportunities; offering Annual Conference networking lunches by region or theme, sponsored by Area Councils, peer organizations, and/or foundations/government/NGOs; and providing additional opportunities for invited roundtables and sessions; among others.
- AAS will restructure registration pricing for its conferences to strike the right balance between inclusiveness and access and their financial viability. This could include, for example, maintaining the lower rates already in place for people on low incomes, including students, and adding special rates for preferred groups like librarians and educators, but introducing higher rates for people in new higher income brackets.

- AAS will increase the Association's access to a wider range of individuals and institutions by securing more institutional memberships—for example, by offering trial period memberships for institutions.
- AAS will coordinate with Duke University Press to develop a plan to leverage *JAS* subscriptions and Open Access to support and build membership.
- AAS will advance the strategic goals of the Association through publications (especially the Asia Shorts series) by (1) prioritizing issues of DEI in Asian Studies through the topics and authorship of series titles; (2) encouraging connections with Asia by promoting the submission of manuscripts by scholars working in Asia, accelerating efforts to find Asian publishers for translations of books from our series, and considering translations of valuable works of scholarship from Asian languages into English; and (3) promoting perspectives on Asia from other world regions, including Latin America, Africa, Europe, and Oceania.
- AAS will explore cost-effective means of expanding sales, distribution, and marketing of series titles and of compensating series authors through royalties rather than a fixed honorarium.
- AAS will reaffirm a commitment to teaching and to serving K-12 educators; seek more engagement from authors based in Asia in *EAA* publication; and offer outreach events at conferences such as film screenings.
- AAS will expand the reach of the *Bibliography of Asian Studies* through the following actions: recruit more members of the *BAS* Advisory Committee; explore other kinds of engagement and partnership with library organizations (Center for Research Libraries, BTAA, NERL, etc.); enhance focus and prioritization of materials for Associate Editors within the scope of enhanced production capacity; and work with partners to develop more pro-active outreach, marketing to potential new subscriber institutions, and materials to highlight and further promote the use of *BAS* among students and scholars at institutions already subscribing to it.
- In all areas of its work AAS will maintain ongoing relationships in building programs and collaborations with institutional partners who offer enhanced benefits for AAS members.
- AAS will seek funding in order to build a database of teaching resources, including syllabi, for members as a direct contribution to their ability to fulfill their teaching obligations effectively.
- AAS will seek funding for a database focused on the state of the field. The database will focus on North America and explore collaboration with institutions in other parts of the world to cover these geographical areas. This will offer benefits to members in the form of enhancing their ability to navigate and contribute to the field.

Enact AAS' Ongoing Commitment to DEI

- Our overall aim will be to create a community of Asianists that fully recognizes and implements diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- The AAS Board will ensure that the newly established Diversity and Equity Committee's work is supported and staffed sufficiently to function effectively. This will include the development and approval by the Board of its charter.
- AAS will identify specific structural inequities in the field, including underrepresentation of non-Western perspectives and voices, and develop and promote structural changes which address these inequities.
- AAS will integrate the philosophy of DEI into its governance, planning, and delivery of programming:
 - We will extend shared goals and partnerships to Asian American communities in the locations of our Annual Conference.
 - We will work with Local Arrangements Committees in conference cities to identify local resources and partners and to ensure that diversity, equity, and inclusion principles are applied.
 - We will fully recognize indigenous lands and communities in the locations of AAS' conferences and other activities.
 - We will work with the organizers of AAS regional conferences to the same end.
 - We will promote and support participation in all AAS programming of Black and other Asianists from historically marginalized communities.
 - There will be a particular emphasis on mentoring activities for graduate students—for example, regarding racialized field experiences, including dealing with racism in Asia.
- AAS will apply the principles of DEI to its own governance and management to increase representation of Asianists from underrepresented areas and backgrounds in its Board and all its committees and councils. The steps we will take will include reviewing AAS' recruitment, selection, and election processes and monitoring their results, and requiring all AAS committees, Councils, and other groups involved with its work to do the same.
- We will develop the means of creating “pipelines” for Asianists from historically excluded communities by, for example, securing funds specifically to support their research endeavors.

Grow and Maintain Financial Sustainability

- AAS will conservatively manage its investment portfolio with careful attention to balancing risk and return in accordance with the AAS Investment Policy Statement.
- AAS will need to reverse its membership decline by increasing the value of membership and actively responding to members' and prospective members' needs, as described in the section "Grow new and maintain existing membership," above.
- AAS will seek private foundation grants and other institutional funding to cover the costs of the measures that will ensure its events and other programs are inclusive.
- AAS will leverage its new grants (such as the NEH and SIDA grants) and funding opportunities (such as council grants and the Gosling-Lim Postdoctoral Fellowship) in ways that optimize our relationship with those agencies, to attract other grantors' interest and secure long-term funding from them, and to enhance AAS' credibility in the eyes of current and potential members.
- AAS will develop and execute a grant and contribution strategy that maximizes unrestricted revenue, and which helps to pay for organizational infrastructure, planning for growth, and managing unexpected opportunities and challenges.
 - AAS will explore the potential of unrestricted grant writing and individual contributions, including bequests.
- The ED will work with the Special Initiatives Committee and DOSI to seek out and secure major program grants that further the goals of this strategic plan.
 - In the case of such program grants, AAS will ensure the maximum contribution to its organizational infrastructure costs.
- AAS will maintain consistent and strong relationships with our existing donors and leverage these, when that opportunity presents itself. We will, for example, engage with those donors if they restructure and change some of their strategic priorities so that we can be a part of the change.
- We will maintain tight control over expenses and explore virtual formats for meetings and other programming, along with other technology applications, to reduce the costs of programming where that is appropriate.
- AAS will consider creating the position of Treasurer, along with a revised charter for the Finance Committee, to strengthen the Board's oversight of AAS finances as we seek to make prudent and impactful investments in enhancing our work.
- AAS will include in the Finance Committee's charter the responsibilities of an audit committee to work closely with ED, Director of Finance (DF), and auditors in establishing a firm audit timeline and allow for a timely review by ED, DF, audit committee, and AAS Board of Directors.

Enhance Administrative Efficiency and Effectiveness

- AAS will continue to enhance its governance:
 - We will implement agreed changes that extend Council Chair terms to two years and establish a functioning Executive Committee, if approved by the AAS membership.
 - We will ensure Board members are prepared for their roles via orientation.
 - The Board will follow through on its commitment to the annual review of Executive Director that includes agreed-upon goals for the ED for that year.
- The Board, inclusive of the ED, will ensure its decisions are aligned with AAS institutional goals recognizing the importance of responding creatively—and flexibly—in light of changing circumstances.
- The Special Initiatives Committee will play a central role in supporting the development of new initiatives and securing grants.
- The ED will ensure staff capacity is efficiently and effectively directed to realizing AAS institutional goals—both in administering new initiatives and grants, as well as more generally.
- Over the long term, AAS will invest in the most cost-effective technology solutions to ensure the highest quality of service and access to members and the highest level of administrative efficiency, and invest in the training and guidance on how to use it.

STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

Keisha Brown, *Tennessee State University*

Siddharth Chandra, *Michigan State University*

Hilary V. Finchum-Sung, *Association for Asian Studies* (Executive Director)

Richard Fox, *University of Victoria* (SEAC Chair)

Hy V. Luong, *University of Toronto* (2021-2022 AAS President)

William M. Tsutsui, *Ottawa University* (Editorial Board Chair)

Krisna Uk, *Association for Asian Studies* (Director of Special Initiatives)

Christine R. Yano, *University of Hawai'i* (2020-2021 AAS President)

CONSULTANT

Richard Brewster

SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS

- [Appendix 1: 10-Year Comparative Financial Analysis](#)
- [Appendix 2: Strategic Planning Financial Analysis](#)
- [Appendix 3: AAS Survey Data](#)