

Membership Committee

The function of the Membership Committee includes “the recruitment of new members and subscribers, the retention of existing members and subscribers, and the review and recommendation to the Executive Council of membership policies and practices.”

In the past, the Membership Committee has taken responsibility for mailings to solicit new members, particularly using lists from other societies that involve the sociology of religion directly or indirectly. There was also an annual effort to have members of the Committee contact personally individuals who had let their memberships lapse in the previous year and encourage them to reconsider and renew.

The functions of the Membership Committee still include these, but they have expanded to also include the following:

- Analysis of trends in membership across various categories of members (constituent members, student members, international members, etc.) for the purpose of identifying segments which are in special need of recruitment. In 2012 and 2013, for instance, the Membership Committee reported that the percentage of ASR’s members who are students is lower than that found among comparable associations, such as the ASA Religion Section and SSSR. The committee recommended that ASR develop strategies to attract and retain student members. The committee could continue this work by discussing possible strategies, and once those are identified, carrying them out.
- Periodically conduct a survey of ASR members and other sociologists of religion to determine whether their needs are being met and ascertain how ASR could better serve their interests.
- Identify students in the social sciences and religious studies in the cities where our annual meetings will be held (e.g., Los Angeles in 2022, Philadelphia in 2023, Montreal in 2024) and then invite such students to attend our meetings or become part of a Student Coordinating Committee which could help plan events for the conference or help with meeting registration during the conference itself.
- Explore/undertake cooperative endeavors (e.g., joint receptions) with the Religion Section of ASA that would promote membership and participation in ASR.
- Attend the New Members’ Breakfast during the annual meeting to welcome the new members of the Association and first-time attendees of the conference.
- Explore ways to enhance the participation of graduate students and international scholars in our annual meeting, including the possibility of establishing a “room-sharing” service that would enable students and international scholars to identify potential roommates to share the cost of their hotel room.

Each February, the committee meets to review the Executive Officer's report of gains and losses in membership and to determine what actions are needed to promote membership.

The Chair of the committee reports to the Council each year on the committee's activities.