



OAH24: STRATEGIC PLAN, 2020-2024

VISION: We aim to become a public-facing, dynamic example of a 21st-century scholarly society – one that honors the accomplishments of previous generations while advancing the study of American history in the current era. This means transforming the OAH from an inclusive association long focused on the interests of tenured and tenure-track faculty into a community for a broad range of people now interpreting the nation’s past and a hub, host, and incubator for excellent and trusted American history.

MISSION: Our mission is to promote excellence in the scholarship, teaching, and presentation of American history, and to encourage wide discussion and the equitable treatment of all practitioners of history.

Goal 1: Develop a robust strategy to increase OAH relevance and advocacy efforts.

- a. Maintain a “seat at the table” among major history and humanities organizations such as ACLS, NHA, and NCH. Money should be budgeted to enable the OAH’s executive leadership to attend a set of annual professional meetings.
- b. Develop and find funding for “big ideas” that concretize the OAH’s leadership role in the nation’s civic life and showcase its role in crafting American history. Rethink the Annual Meeting, and consider next-generation regional, local, and online events.
- c. Undertake a marketing/communications campaign that would publicize the work of the OAH and promote the DLP program and NPS Collaborative. Update the website, build relationships with the media, and manage social media.
- d. Publicize and expand the Experts Database to include more journalists and more experts; promote and advertise this program.
- e. Take a larger leadership role in the History Relevance Campaign.

Goal 2: Promote outstanding instruction in American history at multiple levels and in multiple teaching venues.

- a. Conduct interviews with history teachers, in all venues and in the broadest sense, to find out what types of materials are needed.

- b. Use the results of interviews and surveys to determine what type of materials are needed by various teachers and how best to reach them. Develop materials to meet teachers' needs.
- c. Develop an education program on "Our National Parks" to provide an overview of the NPS and why it is important to our country.
- d. Develop a Wikipedia style editor on the digital hub where teachers can create and share lesson plans and syllabi.
- e. Include articles about teaching methods in *The American Historian*. This would not only include teaching methods and curriculum for grades 10-12 and at the college/university level but also for museums, historic sites, and national parks. Feature Tachau award winners and their methods for teaching history.
- f. Explore the possibility of creating a series of short 10-15 minute historical podcasts for teachers as well as for public consumption.

Goal 3: Increase the organization's support for the production and dissemination of historical scholarship in all fields of American history.

- a. Broaden the readership and enhance the perceived value of the *JAH* by developing original genres or formats for content, acquiring or developing new infrastructures for digital publication, and building a more robust social media presence.
- b. Expand and develop the blog, *Process*, and the *JAH* Podcast by establishing editorial boards, creating novel features and columns, improving search engine optimization, collaborating with other historical institutions, publishing more frequently, and marketing more aggressively.
- c. Develop revenue streams and budgetary models so as to protect OAH publications against sudden transformations in both the discipline of history and the industry of academic publishing.
- d. Improve and expand the OAH Annual Meeting by exploring new types of programming. Ensure that the conference has something for all membership segments – graduate students, tenure- and non-tenure-track faculty, grade 10-12 teachers, public historians, independent scholars, etc.
- e. Explore scope, system and functionality requirements, options, and costs for the establishment of a digital hub that would serve as a centralized, curated, and vetted U.S. digital history library for scholars, teachers, public historians, and the public.
- f. Promote and expand the OAH Distinguished Lectureship Program and ensure that the lecturers represent and promote the OAH when presenting their lectures.
- g. Promote and expand the OAH/NPS Collaboration in a strategic fashion that allows for the growth of projects contingent on the growth of staff to manage them. Strategically grow the entire public history program and produce quality research and scholarship in the public history arena.

Goal 4: Increase and expand the demographic and professional diversity of OAH's membership and leadership.

Qualities of diversity include age, generational cohorts, racial, ethnic, gender and sexual orientation, as well as the various specialties of American history and the occupational categories of tenure-track professors at universities and four-year colleges, community college professors, K-12 teachers, part-time and adjunct

professors, public historians, archivists, historians working in the federal government, museum curators, as well as those whose avocation is history.

- a. Develop value propositions (not just the value of membership benefits) as a persuasive rationale for different constituencies to join and retain affiliation with our professional association, irrespective of field of interest.
- b. Update the visual identity of the organization and develop guidelines to unify the OAH brand in ways that reflect the value propositions of the organization.
- c. Use information obtained from in-depth interviews and surveys to determine how the OAH can best meet the needs of all stakeholders.
- d. Indicate “professional status” in database to enable targeted communication and benefits.
- e. Increase the number of public historians, history educators, non-tenure track faculty, and graduate student members by increasing resources of value to them such as online mentoring, online communities (through a system such as Higher Logic), Career COACH and career services, new and expanded avenues for publication and exposure, useful articles in *The American Historian*, conference programming, and travel funds. Ensure that members of these groups can participate in leadership positions on committees.
- f. Explore the feasibility of offering joint memberships at a deeply discounted rate to members of other related associations. Such associations might include the American Studies Association, National Association of African American Studies, Political Science Association, and National Council for Public History.

Goal 5: Develop new revenue streams, increase membership, and grow the endowment to provide necessary resources to properly staff and implement various OAH programs.

- a. Determine the costs of hiring staff and providing resources for the goals outlined above. Then determine to what extent the goals and objectives of this plan can be funded and executed through a re-allocation of staff and resources at the OAH and to what extent a new infusion of cash is needed.
- b. Continue to conduct an annual fund campaign, but concentrate efforts on planned giving and large unrestricted gifts to build the endowment fund to at least \$1 million in five years and \$2 million in 10 years.
- c. Obtain grants only for projects that can be self-sustaining and for which the grant funding properly provides for staffing and resources during the grant period.
- d. Grow NPS in a responsible manner that does not jeopardize the long-term success of the program or organization.
- e. Grow membership revenue by increasing the membership retention rate (through a regular effort to engage members beyond the dues billing statement), recruit lapsed members with benefits and value that meets their needs, and develop member benefits that attract and keep member historians.
- f. Raise the profile of the Distinguished Lectureship Program and increase revenue to the OAH to \$115,000 per year.

Goal 6: Continue self-assessment and self-study of the organization and its goals.

- a. Review the OAH Bylaws and Constitution to ensure that they provide the organizational structure for a dynamic and nimble, 21st century scholarly society.
- b. Continually review various programs and projects, develop metrics for determining a project's success, and acknowledge the necessity of eliminating projects that no longer meet the mission and goals of the organization or are not economically feasible or sustainable.
- c. Monitor all revenue streams and seek new ones.