

DEVELOPMENT

Margaret E. Sears

The Oriental Institute Office of Development was established in October 1990 in anticipation of the long-awaited approval by the University administration for the Institute to embark on a major museum climate control and renovation project and the Institute's official participation in the University of Chicago's Campaign for the Next Century. The Institute and the University recognized that such a project would require a long-range fundraising strategy, and an assessment of various sources of support not previously sought by the Institute. Moreover it was important that funds for this project be sought without taking money and sources of support from other long-standing projects at the Institute—such as the dictionary projects, archaeological field work, and the Epigraphic Survey at Chicago House—whose current levels of funding needed to be maintained.

Much of the infrastructure for this effort was put in place during the 1990-91 fiscal year. First, staff had to be hired. In addition to my appointment as Assistant Director of the Institute for Development, two additional new staff members came to the Institute as part of the newly restructured membership and development office: Melanie Jansen Marhefka as Membership Coordinator and Dionne Herron as Development Office manager.

In the spring 1991, the membership office began the painstaking process of classifying its records for conversion to the central University Alumni Data System (ADDs). This was done so that membership records could be placed on a

centrally-integrated on-line membership system, supported by the University Information Systems department in the University's Development Office. This effort involved extensive staff training as well as many hours of original programming and assistance by the University Information Systems staff. This is described in detail in this annual report under the membership section.

The advantages to the Institute of ADDS are multifold: membership record keeping and data management are now shared by the Institute and the University Information Systems staff using a state-of-the-art centrally designed system that the University has spent over one million dollars to create and maintain; this includes access to in-depth development information compiled by the University's Central Development Office that is shared by all fundraising units on campus. And with the new on-line membership screen, the Institute will be better able to process membership renewals, track membership trends and—we hope—free the Institute staff to spend more time creating new programs and special events for members.

In addition to building a new infrastructure, the Development Office began to work closely with the University's Central Development staff, to work out procedures for gathering and sharing information about prospective donors for the Institute. Closer cooperation between the Institute, the Central Development Office, and various fundraising units on campus increases the likelihood that the University will receive the maximum contribution for the most appropriate division of the University. The offices of Special and Major Gifts and Corporate and Foundation Relations are especially important to the Institute's fundraising efforts, and these units too have undergone restructuring including the hiring of new staff, many of whom have come aboard with new geographical assignments for the University's Capital Campaign. These changes have been positive and have created opportunities for the Institute to take new initiatives in fundraising, both collaboratively and independently of the Central Development Office.

Perhaps the most important role of the Institute's new Development Office is continuing to focus on the Institute's fundraising goals while maintaining a strong sense of direction for the future. In embarking on the most ambitious fundraising effort in its history, it is necessary for the Institute to prioritize and coordinate its funding requests and resources so that the Institute speaks to its supporters and friends with "one voice." And whether the Institute is seeking funds for a critically important climate control and renovation project, or any other one of its vital projects, the Institute must draw attention to the importance of its primary mission — that of a unique research institution whose resources and commitment to long-term scholarship and research on the ancient Near East that make possible the range of activities that benefits the academic community and the public at large.