ATS Programs & Services

for theological education



The Association of Theological Schools
The Commission on Accrediting

ATS Program



The Association of Theological Schools (ATS) is a membership organization of more than 270 graduate schools of theology that educate leaders for communities of faith as well as scholars and teachers of the theological disciplines. **ATS Programs & Services** shares best practices, builds peer networks, gathers data, engages in research, and develops resources that help leaders in theological education to excel in their work.

In addition to the following regularly scheduled events, ATS hosts supplemental webinars for which announcements are sent electronically and posted on the ATS website, www.ats.edu.

ns & Services



ATS Programs & Services supports the improvement and enhancement of theological schools through leadership education, research, focused initiatives, and resources for institutional assessment.

ATS Programs & Services: Education, Information, Research, and Resources

The following gives a general overview of
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For Administrators

Administrator programs gather as many as 900 theological school leaders annually for peer education in communities of practice.

ATS/COA Biennial Meetings

By registration. Biennial Meetings not only offer the opportunity to participate in the business sessions of the Association and the Commission but they also invite the leaders of member schools and related organizations to discuss current issues and to think critically about how their institutions will offer theological education in the most effective ways possible—ways that respond to the changing world, embrace innovation, promote collaboration, and offer truly sustainable solutions.

Academic Officers

By registration. Annual meetings provide educational and professional development opportunities, a collegial network, and a context for nurturing the vocation of academic officers and visioning their future development.

New Deans

By application. Designed for academic deans in their first year or two of service, the annual School for New Deans provides new deans with important information and nurtures the development of the skills that will make their work more effective and fulfilling. It acquaints new deans with the resources available to theological schools through ATS, facilitates connections among academic deans serving within the distinctive world of theological education, and continues the process of formation into the vocation of the academic deanship.

the offerings of **ATS Programs & Services**.
ATS website, www.ats.edu, for details.

For Administrators

African American, Hispanic Latino/a, Asian Descent Presidents and Deans

By invitation. Annual meetings provide African American, Hispanic Latino/a, Asian descent presidents and deans the opportunity to discuss areas of common interest and concern.

New Presidents

By registration; limited to those in their first three years in office. Annual seminars feature experienced leaders who guide new presidents through issues associated with the president's role as CEO. Speakers address economic stability, institutional advancement, faculty relations, and team building.

Presidential Leadership Intensive Conference

By registration; open to all ATS presidents. Annual intensives focus on timely issues related to the role of the president and on building skills for effective performance. Conference sessions cover topics featured in the *Handbook for Seminary Presidents*, and occasional preconferences address the needs of those who lead schools with distinctive characteristics.

Development Officers

By registration. Annual conferences offer workshops on topics related to annual giving, planned gifts, personnel management, internal and external collaboration, and communications, with opportunities for professional development and peer interaction in a distinctly theological context.

The following gives a general overview of
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For Administrators

Financial Officers

By registration. Plenaries and workshops provide tools and peer learning annually to enhance the financial officer's skills. Topics cover issues such as financing theological education, budgets and modeling techniques, faculty and staff compensation strategies, financial dashboards and ratios, investment spending rates, and HR compliance issues.

Student Personnel Administrators

By registration. Annual conferences provide a collegial network for support, information sharing, and professional development for admissions directors, financial aid officials, registrars, deans of students, housing officers, and career services personnel among others. The conferences include practical how-to workshops, complemented by presentations common to those who work with students in theological education.

Technology Professionals

By registration. Periodic webinars and events facilitate interaction and collaboration among technology professionals and provide a venue to discuss issues such as knowledge of available technical tools and learning theory models.

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For Faculty

Faculty programs support the vocation of theological educators.

Newly Appointed Faculty

By nomination of academic dean. Designed for faculty who have completed their first or second year in an ATS member school, roundtable seminars address the unique vocation—both individual and corporate—of theological educators. Academic deans reflect on what they have learned from working with faculty, and faculty members share their experiences of surviving and thriving as theological educators.

Midcareer Faculty

By nomination of academic dean. Designed for faculty in the middle stages of their careers, roundtable seminars offer the opportunity to discuss issues of common concern and explore next steps as they experience life after tenure and emerge into leadership positions in their institutions.

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Student Data

ATS offers member institutions several resources related to student data and assessment.

Student Questionnaires

ATS has developed three online questionnaires focused on student data useful for institutional evaluation and enhancement:

- Entering Student Questionnaire
- Graduating Student Questionnaire
- Alumni Questionnaire

Questionnaires gather data related to student demographics, educational debt levels, professional plans, pathways to seminary, and student perceptions about the effectiveness of their education.

Participating schools receive institutional peer reports, access to customized reports, and inclusion in the Total School Profile that provides representative data on students in theological education in the United States and Canada.

Workshops and webinars are held regularly to provide ongoing training in the use of the questionnaires.

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Research

The research function of ATS includes three categories of work: (1) research support for existing work groups and projects, (2) ATS database research, and (3) research on theological education, which addresses larger questions in the world of theological education, both for member schools and for broader publics.

Two values guide the work of this new function: humility and hospitality. Good data can inform good decisions, but data must be approached with a critical openness to learning and growth, an informational humility. And, while good data will provide institutions with the information they need to improve, institutions also need to know what kinds of data are available, which data will help them, and how to interpret the data. A sense of hospitality ensures that we continue to make ATS data usable by all institutions (e.g., future plans include interactive data tables and more constituent-specific webinars).

ATS collects and interprets a broad range of data in support of the member schools and the Association. The ATS research function, a strategic priority of the Association's work plan, ensures that basic institutional and student data are accessible and comprehensible but also that additional research is conducted on topics of special interest to theological educators. This effort is overseen by a staff research team. The work of the research function is informed by the Association's Research and Data Advisory Committee.

The following gives a general overview of
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Initiatives in Theological Education

Initiatives focus on issues of particular interest through research, publications, and educational programs.

Committee on Race and Ethnicity (CORE)

The goal of this work is to provide member schools with resources that (1) enable schools to define success in their efforts related to racial/ethnic diversity; (2) help schools think critically and theologically about issues related to race, ethnicity, and diversity; and (3) guide schools with regard to practical institutional or educational steps to take on issues related to race and ethnicity.

Economic Challenges Facing Future Ministers (ECFFM)

ATS serves as the coordinator for Lilly Endowment's ECFFM Initiative, a grant program designed to help reduce educational debt and increase financial literacy for seminary students through research, education, institutional strategies, and collaborative partnerships.

Organizational and Educational Models in Theological Education: Supporting the 21st Century Missions of Theological Schools

This project will employ research, study and resource groups, and grants to member schools to engage four areas of work: 1) organizational models; to better understand and employ organizational structures, business models, allocation of resources, partnerships, measures of institutional and student financial health, and resources and tools to help schools attain and sustain financial viability, 2) adaptive educational work; building on the findings of the Educational Models and Practices project, to enable schools to implement promising educational models and practices, 3) faculty development; assisting schools to support their

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Initiatives in Theological Education

faculties in the midst of dramatic changes in organizational and educational models and practices; and 4) formation of students and faculty; helping schools clarify, implement, and assess programs and processes of intellectual, human, personal, spiritual, and vocational formation as appropriate to each school's distinctive mission and heritage. The four areas of work will be coordinated to enhance their integration within schools.

Global Awareness and Engagement

The ATS Board of Directors adopted a long-term strategic commitment to programming for global awareness and engagement with particular concern about care for activities and disciplined responsiveness to majority world requests and guidance. The history of the Association's work reflects the need for ongoing research about what North American theological education should do with global partners, as well as how it should be done.

Science for Seminaries

ATS partners with The American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) in a project for which the AAAS has received grant funding from the Templeton Foundation. Through this collaboration, ATS member schools receive major funding to develop ways to integrate science into their core theological curricula.

Women in Leadership (WIL)

WIL hosts conferences designed for women currently serving as presidents or deans in member schools, and for women advancing in professional roles. The conferences include attention to distinctive skills needed by women to effectively function in theological schools.



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