TRANSITIONS

2017 ANNUAL REPORT

Promoting the improvement and enhancement of theological schools to the benefit of communities of faith and the broader public.

TRANSITIONS

We are in a time of transition in theological education and at ATS as we adjust to new realities in the broader landscapes of higher education and the public religious sphere. Transitions take many forms:

- Staff leadership changes in the Association

- A shift from one dominant educational model to many others

- Changes in the sequencing and location of theological education

- Increased global engagement among member schools

- Shifts in student demographics, including age and racial/ethnic identity

- A shift from peer-group study to grant-funded projects in the Educational Models and Practices project

- A shift toward sustainable practices and programs in the Economic Challenges Facing Future Ministers project

- Increased movement toward mergers and collaborations among member schools

- Planning toward redevelopment of the accrediting standards

- A change in leadership at nearly a quarter of ATS member schools with new presidents (39), new deans (36), or both (11)

"The right leader at the right time…"

- Daniel O. Aleshire

Daniel Aleshire retired in June 2017. With his ability to read the ever-changing landscapes of religion and higher education and to recognize emerging trends and discern new directions, Dan served as the voice of theological education for more than 27 years. His influence as a thought leader and advocate for theological education has garnered respect across the globe from those looking to him for inspiration, guidance, and his power to convene others who share his commitment to excellence, collaboration, and inclusiveness. In passing the baton of leadership to Frank Yamada, Dan has left a legacy that will continue to serve all of the Association's constituents in their work for years to come.

A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

"Do not remember the former things, or consider the things of old. I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert."
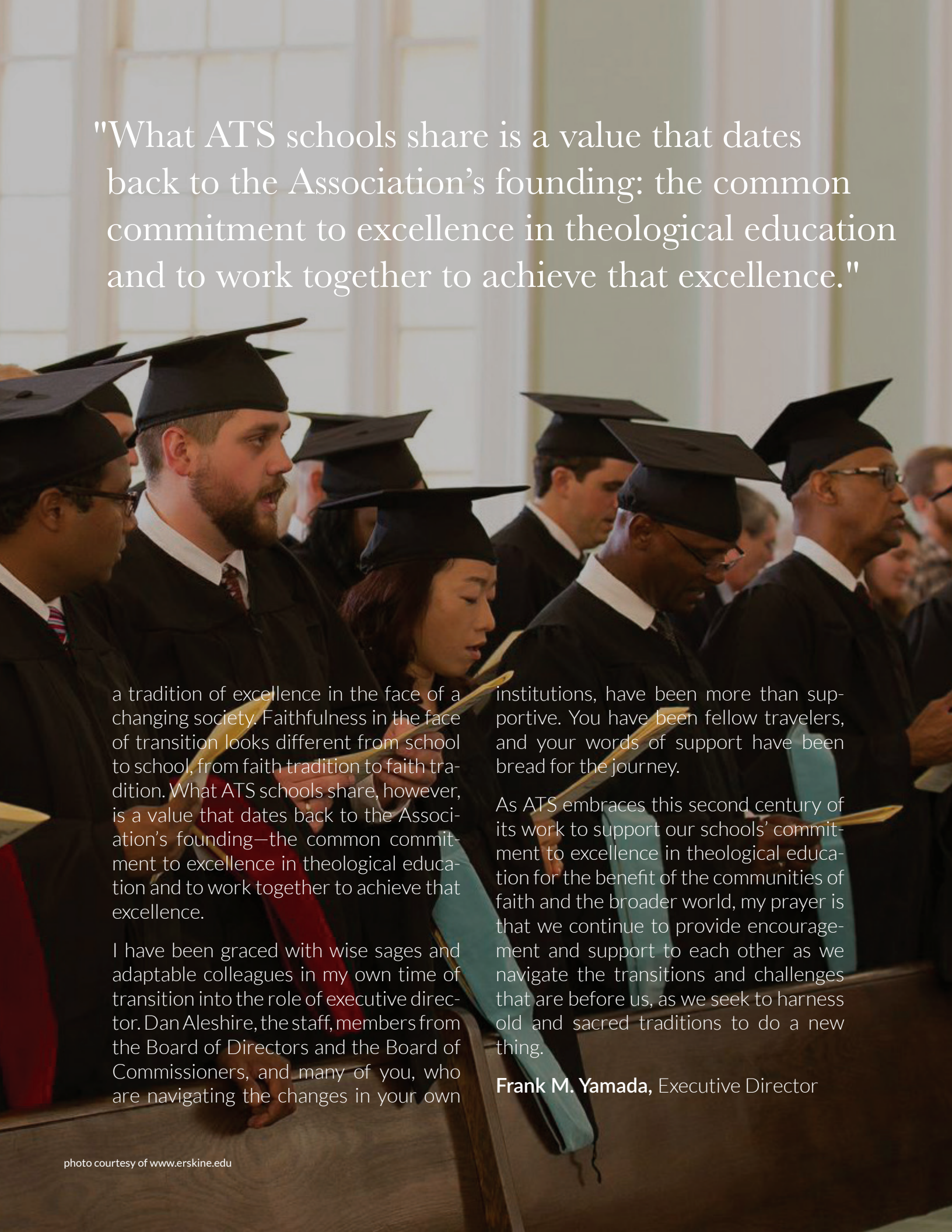
Isaiah 43:18–19 (NRSV)

Transition. It is perhaps one of the most common aspects of human life and within the life of faith, and yet it seems to always leave us short of breath. Transition is both difficult and holy. It marks the passing from one state to another or one place to another. Perhaps this is why it causes us to lose balance. Transition is the last and most intensely painful phase of labor before a child is born. Without transition, however, things stagnate. New life is not born. The children of Israel do not make their way through the wilderness or cross the sea. Transition happens; and it is both a challenge and an opportunity.

This passage from Isaiah, one of my favorites in the Bible, captures one of the ironies of transition. Note that the prophet exhorts the people not to hold on to things of the past and to consider the new thing that God is doing. However, once that new thing is described—God making a way through the wilderness with waters in the desert—those new things look very familiar to the biblical imagination. God's new thing always seems to be rooted in something old and sacred.

To say that theological education is in a state of transition would be an understatement. Schools are changing. Student demographics are changing. Religion's influence within our society is changing. With these changes come new challenges and also fresh ways that ATS schools seek to address or adapt to those challenges. Sometimes this means that schools seek to change a centuries old model of delivery for theological formation. Sometimes these changes mean adapting systems so that they best support the student of the 21st century. In some cases, a school responds by committing more deeply to

"What ATS schools share is a value that dates back to the Association's founding: the common commitment to excellence in theological education and to work together to achieve that excellence."

a tradition of excellence in the face of a changing society. Faithfulness in the face of transition looks different from school to school, from faith tradition to faith tradition. What ATS schools share, however, is a value that dates back to the Association's founding—the common commitment to excellence in theological education and to work together to achieve that excellence.

I have been graced with wise sages and adaptable colleagues in my own time of transition into the role of executive director. Dan Aleshire, the staff, members from the Board of Directors and the Board of Commissioners, and many of you, who are navigating the changes in your own

institutions, have been more than supportive. You have been fellow travelers, and your words of support have been bread for the journey.

As ATS embraces this second century of its work to support our schools' commitment to excellence in theological education for the benefit of the communities of faith and the broader world, my prayer is that we continue to provide encouragement and support to each other as we navigate the transitions and challenges that are before us, as we seek to harness old and sacred traditions to do a new thing.
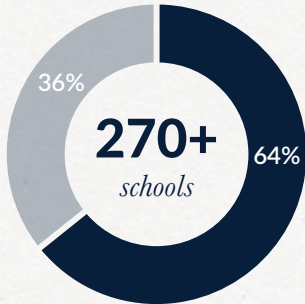
Frank M. Yamada, Executive Director
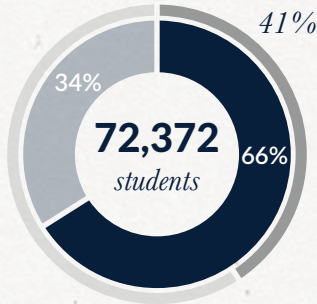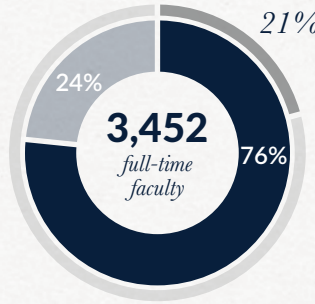
STATE OF THE ENTERPRISE

ATS BY THE NUMBERS

After nearly a decade of decline, enrollment has stabilized in the last two years, with an uptick in full-time equivalent students.
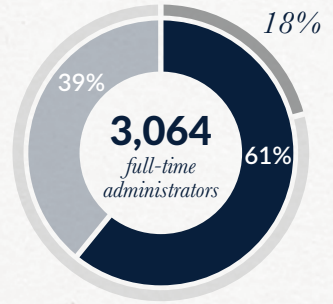
270+ *schools*
36% | 64%

64% freestanding
36% embedded/affiliated
250 extension sites

72,372 *students*
41% | 34% | 66%

66% men
34% women
41% racial/ethnic

3,452 *full-time faculty*
21% | 24% | 76%

76% men
24% women
21% racial/ethnic

3,064 *full-time administrators*
18% | 39% | 61%

61% men
39% women
18% racial/ethnic

NEARLY 2/3 OF MEMBER SCHOOLS OFFER ONLINE COURSES OR FULL DEGREE PROGRAMS.

RESOURCES AMONG THE SCHOOLS

> **$1.7 BILLION** in total annual revenue
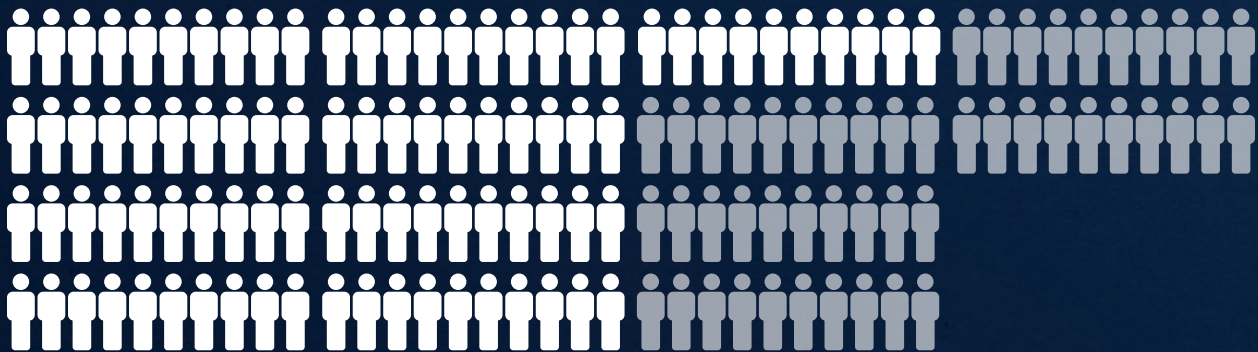
$8 BILLION in total long-term investments

PORTRAIT OF A MEDIAN SCHOOL

10 FULL-TIME FACULTY

**14** FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT FACULTY

140 HEAD-COUNT STUDENTS | **90** FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT STUDENTS

$4.1M IN EXPENDITURES

* Data reflects school input from the fall 2016 Annual Report Forms. For more details, see www.ats.edu/resources/institutional-data/annual-data-tables.

SEMINARY ENROLLMENT STABILITY

HEADCOUNT ENROLLMENT

Year	Enrollment
2012	74,223
2013	72,658
2014	71,790
2015	72,150
2016	72,372
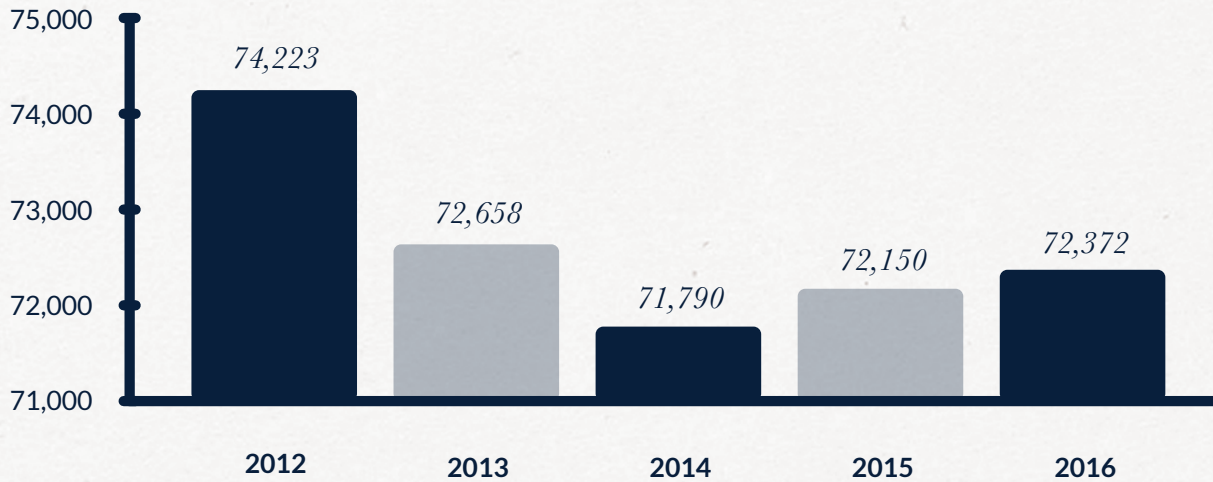
UPWARD TRENDS OVER THE PAST DECADE

+10% RACIAL/ETHNIC STUDENTS

+16% STUDENTS OVER 50

+11% PROFESSIONAL/ACADEMIC MAs

DOWNWARD TRENDS OVER THE PAST DECADE

-19% WHITE STUDENTS

-6% STUDENTS UNDER 30

-14% MDivs

FINANCES

The ATS/COA financial figures continue to signal stability, with minimal changes year over year. The most notable change in Association revenues and expenses for the FY2017 is an increase in grant activities to $7.4 million from $2.7 million in FY2016. This shift reflects the re-granting activities of the Educational Models and Practices project.

Grants Received

July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2017

LILLY ENDOWMENT
Educational Models Supplement

$1,200,000

LILLY ENDOWMENT
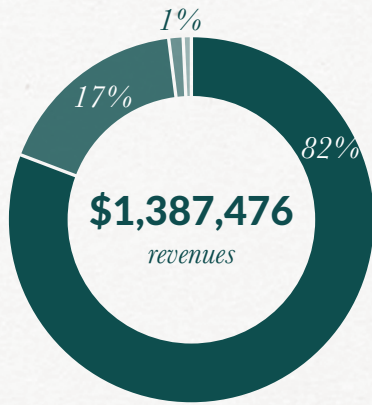*Economic Challenges Facing
Future Ministers supplement*

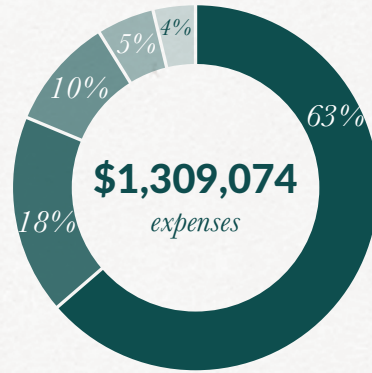### $1,195,000

CARPENTER FOUNDATION
Women in Leadership

$150,000

COMMISSION ON ACCREDITING
Fiscal Year 2017

1%

17%

82%

$1,387,476
revenues

4%

5%

10%

63%

18%

$1,309,074
expenses

- Member Dues: $1,121,434
- Accrediting Fees: $241,964
- Petition Fees: $19,970
- Investment: $4,108

- ATS—Personnel: $834,800
- ATS—Indirect: $231,600
- Accrediting Travel: $127,526
- Board: $65,635
- Other: $49,513

ASSOCIATION OF THEOLOGICAL SCHOOLS
Fiscal Year 2017

15%

3%

4%

10%

68%

$10,790,070
revenues

3% 3%

10%

7%

53%

24%

$8,541,961
expenses
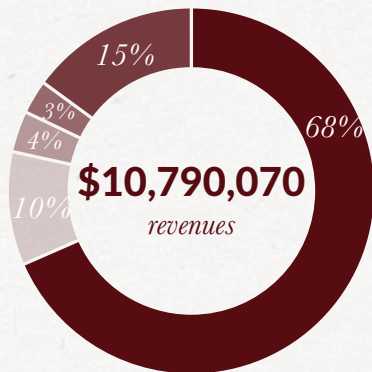
- Grant Activities: $7,395,227
- Investments: $1,623,183
- Tuition & Fees: $323,037
- Dues: $382,223
- COA: $1,066,400
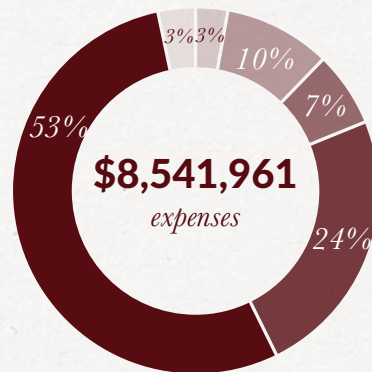
- Issues & Initiatives: $4,622,581
- Leadership Education: $2,024,343
- Communications and Data: $566,815
- COA: $834,800
- Association Support: $215,300
- New Century Fund: $278,122

photo courtesy of www.stctw.org

THE WORK
OF THE
ASSOCIATION
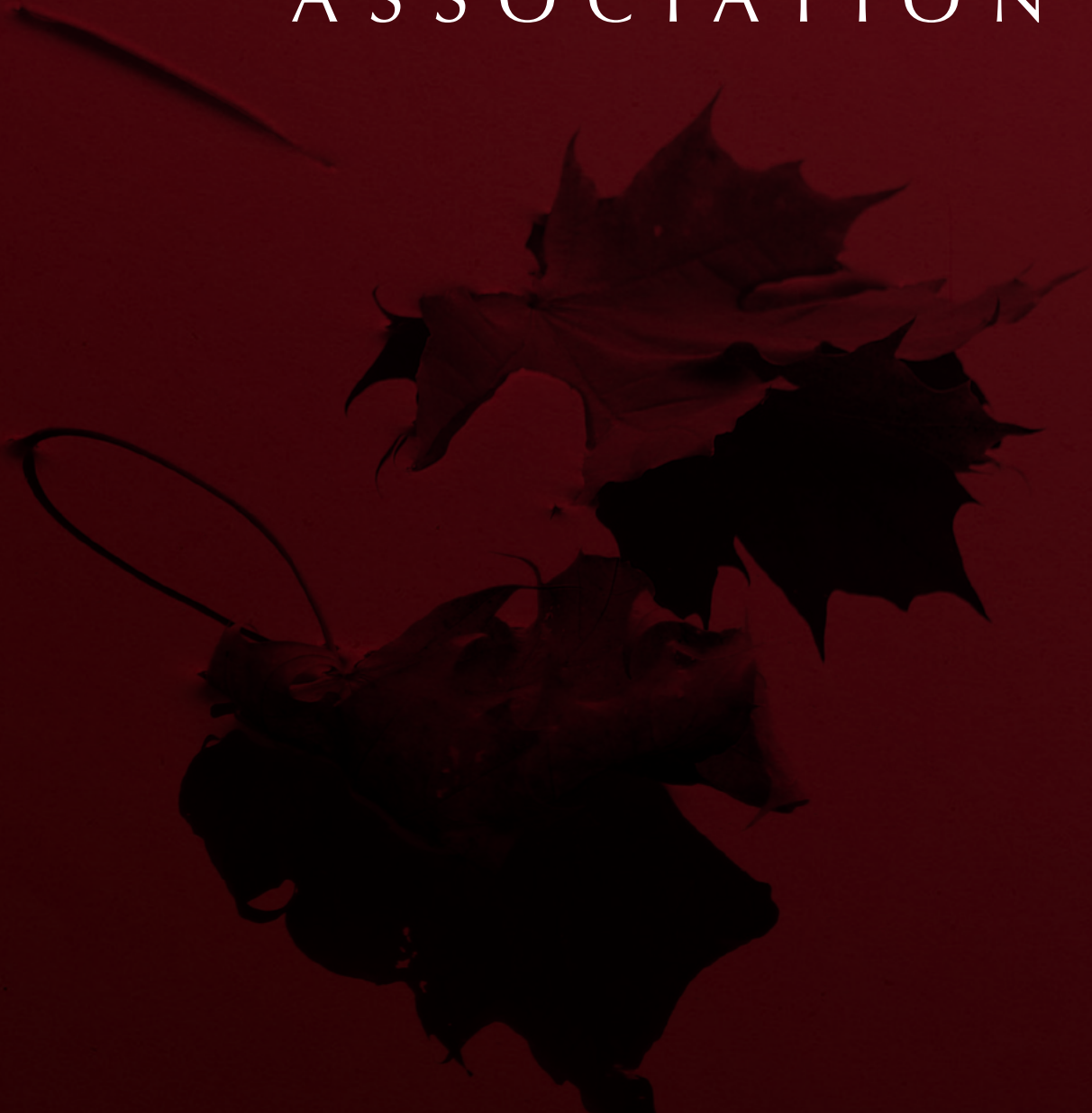
EDUCATIONAL MODELS AND PRACTICES PROJECT

Through the extraordinary generosity and vision of Lilly Endowment, Inc., ATS continues its work on the Educational Models and Practices project, involving more than 220 member schools. The four-year initiative (2015–2018) transitioned over the course of the past academic year into new phases of its work. Earlier work on the project focused on research—exploring current practices at member schools and examining the nature of the current religious workforce—and the opportunities it suggests for the future. This year, the initiative moved into a more active implementation mode through 102 funded projects.
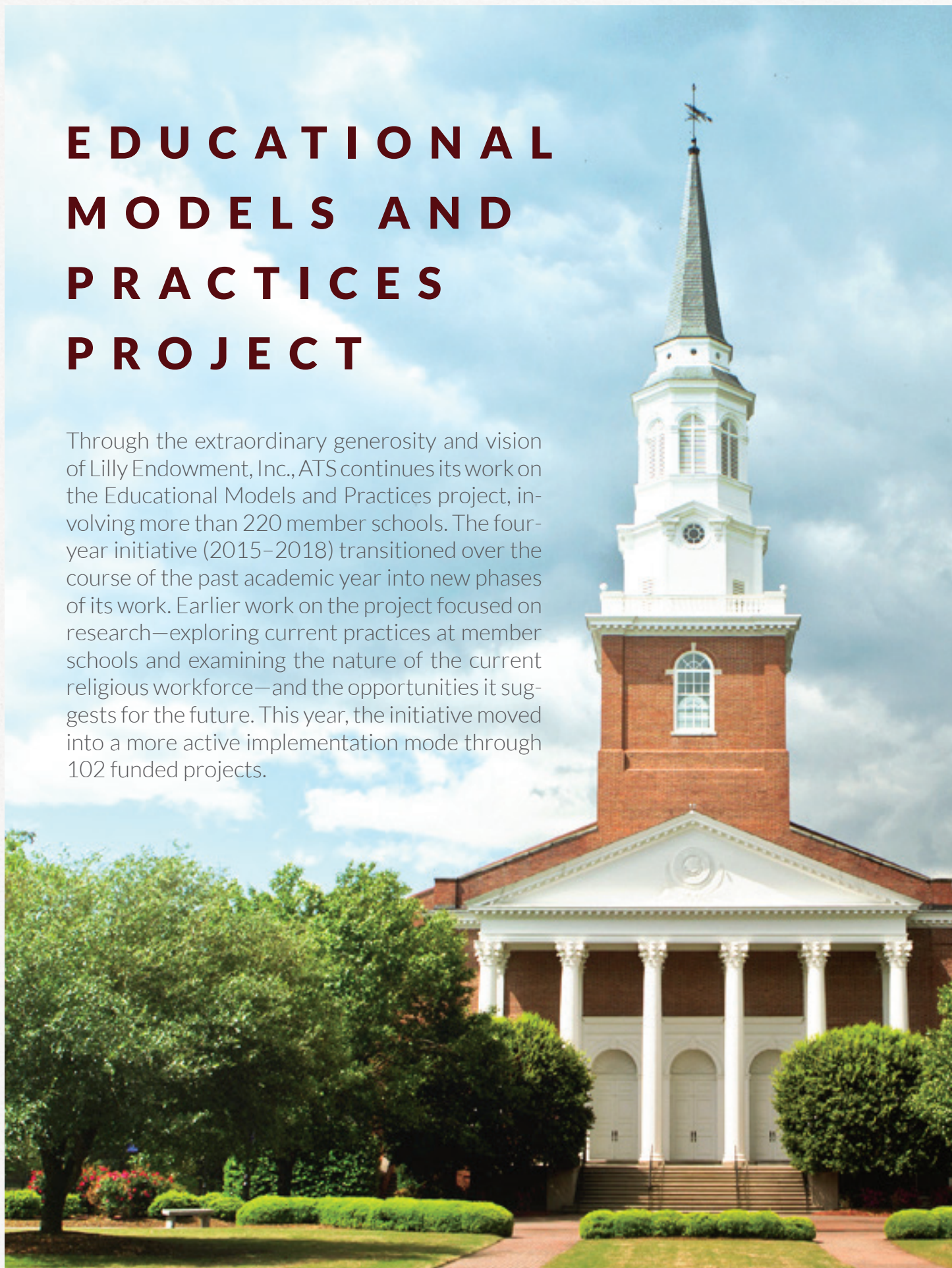
Each of the project's 18 peer groups has gathered data and best practices, concentrating on a particular model or practice in preparation for reports to be completed in fall 2017. In April, they embarked on a new set of inter-group conversations in which they engaged both similarities and difference.

Peer groups representing Asian Schools, Historically Black Schools, and Programs for Latino/a Students discussed how they might collaborate around shared issues. The two groups studying facets of the DMin degree compared notes and identified many common themes, as did the two groups exploring global partnerships and the two examining facets of online theological education.

At the same time, other peer groups met to challenge one another around key differences while identifying shared values. Groups examining residential theological education and formation in online contexts shared insights from their contrasting models of theological education and how they each pursue the same learning goals. Those exploring competency-based education discovered that some elements of that model might be adapted to serve students around the globe and those preparing for the Roman Catholic permanent diaconate.

In June, ATS awarded $3.4 million in grants to support schools as they implement new models and practices and equip faculty to work with them. Included were 58 innovation grants of up to $50,000 each and 44 faculty development grants of up to $15,000 each.

Ultimately, findings from the Educational Models and Practices project will inform the next redevelopment of the Standards of Accreditation.

"We all sensed a strong purpose in what we were trying to accomplish together."

project participant

Funded Innovation Grants

Ambrose Seminary of Ambrose University
The Seminary @ Large

American Baptist Seminary of the West
Multi-/Inter-Cultural Pedagogies

Andover Newton Theological School
The Embedded, Tradition-Specific Seminary in the Ecumenical Research University Divinity School

Associated Canadian Theological Schools (ACTS) of Trinity Western University
Design and Implementation of a Next Generation Doctor of Ministry Program

Azusa Pacific Seminary
Blended Learning for Transformational Urban Leadership

Barry University Department of Theology and Philosophy
Employing Media as a Tool for Christian Formation and Evangelization

Boston College School of Theology and Ministry
In the Footsteps of Jesus: An Immersive Biblical Experience

Boston University School of Theology
MicroMasters in Religious Leadership

Calvin Theological Seminary
Family Counseling Certificate Program

Candler School of Theology of Emory University
Implementing a Criminal Justice Ministries Concentration

Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School
The Community Learning Platform and Accredited Graduate Theological Education

Columbia Biblical Seminary of Columbia International University
Developing a Meta-Curriculum

Concordia Theological Seminary (IN)
Re-Envisioning, Expanding, and Integrating Contextual Education for Pastoral Formation Programs

Denver Seminary
Enhancing a Master of Arts Online Academic Degree in a Local Church Setting

Drew University Theological School
Drew Open Doors: Innovating the Place of Theological Education

Earlham School of Religion
Faith Forward Innovation Center

Eden Theological Seminary
Assisting the United Church of Christ to Implement Change in the Preparation and Formation of Ministers

Fuller Theological Seminary
Deepening the Quality of Integrative Studies Course Content

Gateway Seminary
A Faculty-Centered Model of Instructional Design for an Age of Blended Delivery Systems

Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary
Digital Live: Virtual and In Class Students Learning Together

Hazelip School of Theology of Lipscomb University
Developing and Launching a Competency-Based MA Program

Holy Apostles College and Seminary
Advancing Intercultural Competencies in Preparation for the US and Global South

Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology
Jews, Christians, and Muslims Interacting: An Inter-Religious Course

Hood Theological Seminary
The Center for Chaplaincy at HTS

Institut de Formation Theologique de Montreal
Collaborative Online Learning and Field Research as a Basis for Formation of Religious Leaders

Lancaster Theological Seminary
A New Model of Education for a New Path for Ministry

Lincoln Christian Seminary
Filling a Huge Hole: Bringing Seminary Education to Megachurch Leaders

Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary
Restorative Justice for Ministry

Loyola University Chicago Institute of Pastoral Studies
Reimagining Theological Contextual Education: Theological Action Research Teams

Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago
Network-Driven Sharables for Public Church Leadership

Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg
Implementing an Integrative, Experiential, Empowering MDiv Curriculum

McCormick Theological Seminary
Launching a Spanish Language Track in the Master of Arts Program

McMaster Divinity College
Cultivating Practice-Led Research for Theological Education

Meadville Lombard Theological School
Globalizing Low-Residency Contextual Theological Education

Nazarene Theological Seminary
Entrepreneurship and Ministry in the 21st Century

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary
Mentorship Training for Inmates Serving those Sentenced to a Re-Entry Initiative

Northwest Baptist Seminary
International Conference on Competency-Based Theological Education

Oblate School of Theology
MA in Pastoral Ministry Offered in Spanish

Pacific School of Religion
Creating an Innovatitve, "Stackable" Single Path Curriculum

Pentecostal Theological Seminary
Developing a Fully Integrated Digital Campus

Pittsburgh Theological Seminary
Expanding the Role of Integrated and Contextual/Experiential Learning in the Theological Curriculum

Regent College
GoGlobal Program Development and Expansion

Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology
"Cor Unum" Initiative: Evangelizing and Healing a Fractured World

Saint Mary Seminary and Graduate School of Theology
Forming Missionary Disciples: Advanced Technology Applications for Seminary Formation

Saint Meinrad School of Theology with Immaculate Conception of Seton Hall University
Spanish Curriculum for Permanent Deacon Formation

Samuel DeWitt Proctor School of Theology of Virginia Union University
Serving Vulnerable Contexts: A Pilot for Developing a Social Enterprise-Informed Model for Theological Education and Ministry Enhancement

Seminary of the Southwest
Latino/Hispanic Counseling Concentration

St. Bernard's School of Theology and Ministry with Pontifical College Josephinum
Formation Programming Model for Permanent Deacons

The Seattle School of Theology and Psychology
Engaging Global Partnerships

Toronto School of Theology
Interdisciplinary and Community Partnerships to Support an Academic Stream in Theology, Spirituality, and the Arts

United Theological Seminary
Developing a Liturgical Academic Calendar

United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities
Using Narrative to Cultivate and Assess Spiritual, Vocational, and Identity Formation

University of St. Mary of the Lake Mundelein Seminary
Expansion of the Advanced Pastoral Leadership Certificate Program through Collaboration with Kellogg School of Management

Vancouver School of Theology
Studio for Entrepreneurial Leadership

Virginia Theological Seminary
Digital Literacy Across the Theological Education Curriculum

Wake Forest University School of Divinity
Collaborative for Religious Leadership and the Common Good

Wartburg Theological Seminary
Building Teaching and Learning Community in Collaboration among Seminary, Congregations, and Synods in Master of Divinity Education

Wesley Theological Seminary
Creating Short-Term Intensive Immersions in Public Theology

"I am energized by listening to how other institutions have creatively engaged theological education and have adapted it to the many different contexts represented here."

project participant

Funded Faculty Development Grants

Ambrose Seminary of Ambrose University
Writing for the Web

Asbury Theological Seminary
Theological Education Learning and Teaching (TELT) Digital Seminar
Series

Associated Canadian Theological Schools (ACTS) of Trinity Western University
Faculty Development for Competency-Based Education

Bexley Hall Seabury-Western Theological Seminary Federation, Inc.
Designing, Developing, and Teaching High-Quality Online Courses

Boston University School of Theology
Implementing the Intercultural Development Inventory

Carey Theological College
Global Faculty & Staff Development

Church Divinity School of the Pacific
Faculty Training with the Intercultural Development Inventory and
the Intercultural Conflict Style Inventory

Columbia Theological Seminary
Integrating Columbia Theological Seminary's Integrative Courses

Concordia Seminary (MO)
Improving Classroom Assessment Techniques Using Rubrics

Concordia Theological Seminary (IN)
Faculty Mentoring; Technology in Teaching

Denver Seminary
Developing and Engaging Our Next Generation Online Course Model

Drew University Theological School
Cultivating and Measuring Innovative and Courageous Capacities in
Theological Education

Duke University Divinity School
Engaging Issues of Race and Identity in the Classroom

Eden Theological Seminary
Strengthening Infused Capacities of the MDiv Curriculum

Fuller Theological Seminary
Developing Faculty in Integrative Studies

Grace Theological Seminary
Training Faculty in Competency-Based Education

Iliff School of Theology
Faculty Social "Presence" in Hybrid Courses

Institut de Formation Theologique de Montreal
Establishing the Flipped Classroom for the Masters in Pastoral Theology Program

Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary
Teaching Restorative Justice for Ministry

Loyola University Chicago Institute of Pastoral Studies
Forming Faculty for Integrated Ministerial Formation

Luther Seminary
Helping Faculty Build Community within the Online Classroom

Meadville Lombard Theological School
Global Pedagogy for a Global Educational Model

Memphis Theological Seminary
Hybrid Class Development

Multnomah Biblical Seminary of Multnomah University
Creating a Mutual Learning Community between Seminary Faculty
and Pastors in the Local Community

Nazarene Theological Seminary
Re-Imagining Faculty's Formative Engagement with Distance Students: A New Model for Residency

Northern Baptist Theological Seminary
A Faculty Development Plan for the New MDiv

Northwest Baptist Seminary
Developing the Innovative Immerse Model

Oblate School of Theology
Faculty Development to Teach Students from Hispanic Cultures and
Non-Catholic Students

Oklahoma Christian University Graduate School of Theology
Training and Certification from The Online Learning Consortium

Pittsburgh Theological Seminary
Curriculum Revision and Implementation

Princeton Theological Seminary
Theology, Art, and Community Transformation

Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology
Curriculum Review, the Flipped Classroom, and Millenial Seminarians

San Francisco Theological Seminary
Developing Skills for Digital Neophytes

Seattle University School of Theology and Ministry
Contextual Education Program Training

Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary
Distance Learning Training

St. Andrew's College
Teaching in Changing Contexts

Union Presbyterian Seminary
The Vocational Identity of the Faculty

United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities
Training to Cultivate and Assess Formation through Personal Life
Story

University of St. Mary of the Lake Mundelein Seminary
Certification from The Seminary Formation Council

Virginia Theological Seminary
Developing an Online Teaching Certificate Customized for Theological Education

Wake Forest University School of Divinity
Interdisciplinary Course Development and Teaching

Wartburg Theological Seminary
Facilitating A Learning Community Across Synchronous and Asynchronous Classrooms

Wesley Theological Seminary
Launching an Online Course Training Program

Western Seminary
Teaching Formation in Variable Learning Environments

Ten Things for Consideration in the Next Accrediting Standards

Findings from the Educational Models and Practices Project:

1. The Standards should emphasize educational outcomes across all programs. There is widespread agreement that the Standards of Accreditation should focus emphasis on quality theological education, regardless of format, delivery system, location, or educational model.

2. Some numbers in the standards are not necessarily appropriate for all realities. Additional thought should be given to some of the quantitative thresholds such as the 15 percent limit on students without baccalaureate degrees or the number of contact hours required for "hybrid" courses to count as residential.

3. A number of issues related to faculty work and roles will need to be addressed. What constitutes "regular and substantive" interaction between faculty and students? What should the standards say about other "educators" who serve students in addition to regular faculty, such as adjunct faculty, mentors, spiritual directors, and volunteers who bring a range of skills and expertise to the enterprise?

4. ATS might consider broadening its scope beyond accreditation of graduate theological degrees. Many schools offer certificates, especially to provide credentials for particular constituencies. Should the Association enhance the credibility of these programs through accreditation? Could there be a particular degree to meet the distinctive needs of those incarcerated?

5. Competency-based education is of great interest among member schools. What are the implications of an educational model that in some forms breaks free from the standard "coin of the realm," the credit hour? The impact of CBE on faculty roles and work is momentous.

6. Assessment of Prior Learning is also a topic of interest to many groups. As schools serve increasing numbers of students whose move into ministry is their second career, those whose theological education comes into the midst of ongoing service in ministry, and students whose "undergraduate" education took place in contexts other than North America, new understandings of how to assess prior learning are needed.

7. The redeveloped standards should encompass a broadened definition of "ministry." The variety of ministries and vocations utilizing theological studies for purposes other than service in congregations have pushed schools to expand their missions beyond those that tend to be emphasized in the standards.

8. Student "formation" for religious leadership has many facets that should be addressed in the redeveloped standards. Schools of a variety of types and utilizing a range of educational models are working to define what formation—intellectual, ministerial, personal, and spiritual—means in their particular traditions and contexts.

9. ATS should continue exploration of the concept of "stackable credentials." Such programs award credentials that give students a number of entry points as well as markers of completion, enabling students to progress smoothly from one to the next level of credential.

10. Some traditional models remain highly effective. The standards should encompass and affirm additional educationally effective models, but not at the expense of those of longer standing and proven effectiveness.

# ECONOMIC CHALLENGES FACING FUTURE MINISTERS (ECFFM)

Since 2012, ATS has been coordinating the work of 67 schools to conduct research into financial issues facing students, to develop new strategies for decreasing their financial burdens, to create and strengthen educational programs in financial literacy for pastoral leaders, and to use partnerships to address these issues.

The participating schools have generated research findings and course syllabi as well as financial coaching materials such as guidelines, workbooks, videos, and training resources. These materials are being made available to all member schools to broaden and deepen their impact.

"…the program is beginning to ripple beyond the immediate shore of the seminary and into the larger pond of the surrounding ministry community."

project participant

DEBT INCURRED IN SEMINARY
MDIV VS. ALL GRADUATES

$40K —
$35K —
$30K —
$25K —
$20K —
$15K —

2013-14   2014-15   2015-16   2016-17

● Borrowers Only   ● All Graduates
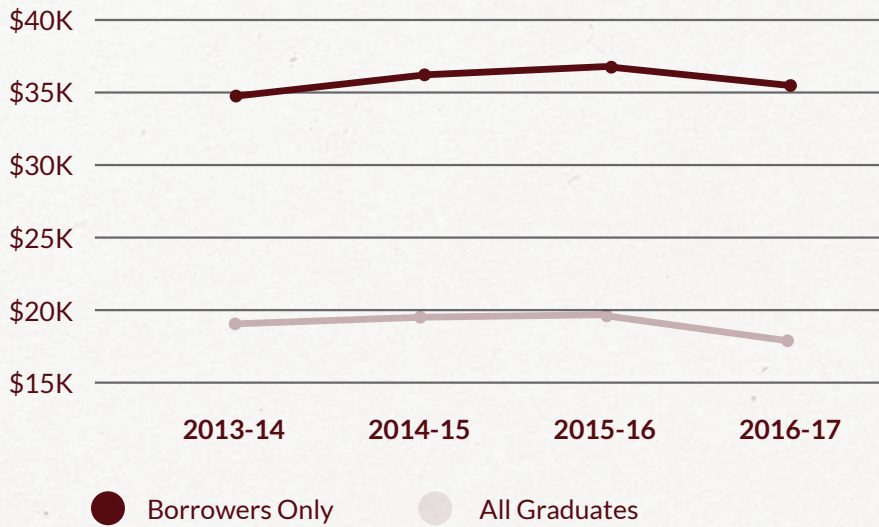
AVERAGE EDUCATIONAL DEBT INCURRED IN SEMINARY 2016–17 GRADUATES

$35,625
borrowers only

$17,842
all graduates

Debt incurred by all graduates in seminary decreased by 9% in 2017. For borrowers only, debt decreased by 3%.

Over the past year, the project has transitioned into a phase of more research and planning to ensure that the positive impacts it is realizing are sustainable, and ATS is working to embed the project's findings and resources into the broader ecology of theological education. In addition, 90 percent of the schools involved in the project have received sustainability grants that will support them as they permanently integrate new approaches and resources into their institutional culture, their administrative practices, and their curricular offerings.

"If nothing else, this program has placed fiscal understanding and planning at the beginning of the seminary journey, rather than allowing it to be an unpleasant surprise at the end."

project participant

A forthcoming issue of *Theological Education* will showcase the impact of the ECFFM project on 11 participating schools.

LEADERSHIP EDUCATION EVENTS

More than 500 people gathered at various events designed to sharpen leadership skills and build communities of practice in support of the work of faculty and administrators at member schools:

- New President's Seminar
- Consultation for Presidents of Embedded/Affiliated Institutions
- Presidential Leadership Intensive
- African American Chief Executive and Chief Academic Officers' Meeting
- Latino/a Chief Executive and Chief Academic Officers' Meeting
- School for New Deans
- Academic Officers' Conference
- Financial Officers and Technology Professionals' Conference
- Development Officers' Conference
- Student Personnel Administrators' Conference
- Seminar for Advancing Women Leaders
- Roundtable Seminar for Newly Appointed Faculty
- Roundtable Seminar for Mid-career Faculty

The Governance Project

Good governance has emerged as an increasing challenge for member schools. To address the growing need for sound oversight, accountability, and shared decision making, ATS collaborated with the In Trust Center for Theological Schools on a Governance Project over the course of the past year. The project engaged 10 coaches with representatives from 21 schools, each committing its president, a denominational official, and a board member.

After an initial meeting in September, at which each school identified a core governance issue, they then engaged with their coaches throughout the year to tackle those issues. A concluding conference in May focused on what schools had learned and how those learnings might benefit peer institutions.

In the process, the project generated a new group of senior leaders of theological schools equipped to consult on issues related to governance going forward.

"It was a good shot in the arm. It stimulated us to undertake something that needed to be done."

school participant

RESEARCH

This year, research projects centered around four current initiatives: **Educational Models and Practices**, **Economic Challenges Facing Future Ministers**, **Women in Leadership**, and **Engaging Science in Seminaries**. In-depth coverage of all of these research efforts will be published in future issues of *Colloquy Online* and the *Theological Education* journal.

Educational Models and Practices

Of the 18 peer groups at work as part of the Educational Models and Practices project, three surveyed schools about their current programs for the Doctor of Ministry degree, online education, and global engagement. What they discovered can be helpful to other schools involved in or anticipating similar programs.

In addition, a Mapping the Workforce survey was distributed to alumni/ae from the graduating classes of 2011 and 2015, with a total of 42 schools and 942 respondents participating. This, the largest survey ATS has conducted under its new research function, is revealing much about the kinds of positions graduates are finding and the challenges they are facing.

SOME OF WHAT WE'RE LEARNING FROM SCHOOLS SURVEYED IN EDUCATIONAL MODELS PEER GROUP RESEARCH

- The use of cohorts in Doctor of Ministry programs yields higher graduation rates.

- Online education is most frequently engaged among schools that are larger (150+ students), evangelical Protestant, and in the United States.

- Schools are engaging globally in multiple ways, and nearly all schools host international students on campus and have faculty who teach in international contexts.

- While three-quarters of schools that collaborate with an international partner share resources (faculty, administrative personnel, libraries, housing and classroom facilities, student materials, curriculum, and finances), fewer than a third share standards with their partners.

Economic Challenges Facing Future Ministers

As part of the Mapping the Workforce survey, recent graduates were asked about their financial standing.

- 26 percent believe they have adequate retirement savings.
- 42 percent wish they had borrowed less to pay for their seminary education.

Women in Leadership

An additional major research project is underway in anticipation of the Women in Leadership 20th anniversary celebration in 2018.

- Fewer than 14 percent of women have been part of a group that meets regularly to support women in leadership.
- Nearly 70 percent have mentors, and more than 55 percent of those mentors are other women.

Engaging Science in Seminaries

The Engaging Science in Seminaries project concluded this year with interviews and document analysis to look at how *institutions* engage the topic. The interviews focused on clergy preparation and culture, the relevance and incorporation of science on seminary campuses, and available resources.

Most key informants rank science very high among current cultural issues that are relevant to clergy preparedness, noting the impact of science on how people view, care for, and manage life. Interviewees understand that science, as a subjective entity in itself, has the capacity to effect change in the subjective realities of faith, theology, religious practices, and the church.

Enhancing the Research Function

Finally, ATS research has begun its foray into data visualization, which will enable greater interactivity with institutional data. We hope to provide schools with the ability to slice institutional data according to variables/characteristics that are most meaningful to them, at the click of a button, equipping them to make more data-informed decisions.

Further work is underway to build infrastructure (human resources, protocols, and policy) to support research on the ATS database and beyond, addressing larger questions in the world of theological education for both member schools and broader publics.

FACULTY

The Association works with faculty to explore the relationship between the individual identity and vocation of the faculty member and the collective vocation of a theological school faculty called together to fulfill the mission of a school. Through the Association's work with faculty as "theological educators," individuals are encouraged to think beyond their disciplinary specialties and to consider their roles in the formation of students, institutional and community service, scholarship that serves broader communities of faith, and the development of new educational models and practices.

This year, ATS' work with faculty included roundtable events for new and midcareer faculty. A new interactive preconference focused on publishing, and another preconference featured peer group representatives from the Educational Models project leading conversations on how to implement various programs such as online education, accelerated approaches to Master of Divinity programs, and competency-based education. Faculty webinar attendance swelled to 100 this year with the webinar "Tips of the Trade: Self-Promotion for Humble Scholars."

In addition, supported through the Educational Models project, ATS leveraged its buying power to provide a set of resources at no cost to faculty, through Magna Publications' 20-Minute Mentor, a large video library on various topics related to the classroom and curriculum.

LUCE FELLOWS

This year, ATS and the Henry Luce Foundation selected the final class of Luce Fellows in Theology, bringing the total to 160 Luce Fellows representing 55 different ATS schools. As we celebrate 24 years of the Luce Fellows program, we also look ahead to new ways of supporting faculty in their scholarship and their vocation as theological educators. ATS staff are entering into conversations with faculty to explore what forms might best support the next generation of theological educators.

"Through these years, we have explored what it means both to celebrate the scholarship and to reach across boundaries through this expanding fellowship. . . . From varying perspectives, the work of the Fellows encourages us to engage with multiple forms of theological reflection, to explore ongoing challenges in the work of theological education, and to consider how thoughtfully framed scholarship not only deepens understanding but also might contribute meaningfully to a variety of extra-academic conversations and concerns."

Margaret Boles Fitzgerald, Michael F. Gilligan, and Jonathan VanAntwerpen, The Henry Luce Foundation

Paul M. Blowers
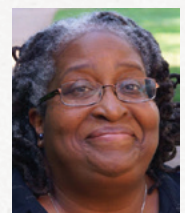Emmanuael Christian Seminary at Milligan

Luke Bretherton
Duke University Divinity School

Emmanuel Katongole
University of Notre Dame Department of Theology

Catherine Keller
Drew University Theological School

Marcia Y. Riggs
Columbia Theological Seminary

J. Bradley Wigger
Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary

STUDENT RESOURCES

Entering and Graduating Student and Alumni/ae Questionnaires

To analyze last year's graduates, 180 institutions (66% of member schools) used the graduating student questionnaires, reaching 6,069 graduates of ATS member schools. The student responses revealed several trends:
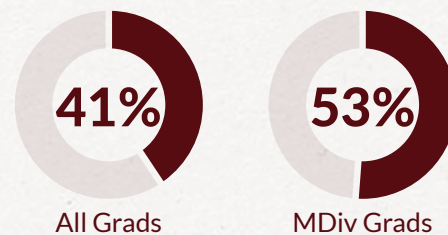
1. The percentage of students borrowing decreased in 2016–17, and those who borrowed were borrowing less than in previous years.

2. Graduates perceive theological education to be effective in helping them think theologically and build respect for their own traditions, but somewhat ineffective in preparing them to administer a parish.

3. Older students and online students perceive theological education to be more effective in facilitating spiritual growth than do younger students and traditional campus students.

4. Students graduating from theological schools continue to pursue pastoral ministry in significant numbers, with 41% of all graduates and 53% of MDiv graduates planning on serving as pastors, priests, ministers, or associate/assistant pastors in congregations.

5. Gender and race/ethnicity impact whether or not a graduate will pursue congregational ministry. Black/non-Hispanic students are much more likely to be planning on bi-vocational ministry

6. Female students were less likely than their male counterparts to have been offered a job at graduation.

2017 GRADUATES VOCATION

BI-VOCATIONAL PLANS

black, non-hispanic	hispanic, latino(a)	asian, pacific islander	white, non-hispanic
57%	41%	29%	28%
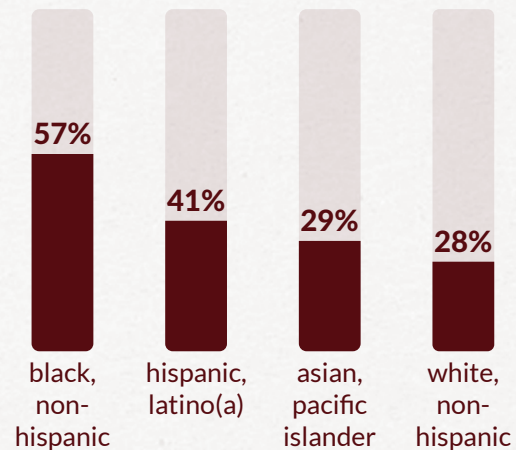
PASTORAL MINISTRY ASPIRATIONS

41% — All Grads

53% — MDiv Grads

STILL SEEKING PLACEMENT AT GRADUATION

39% — Women

29% — Men
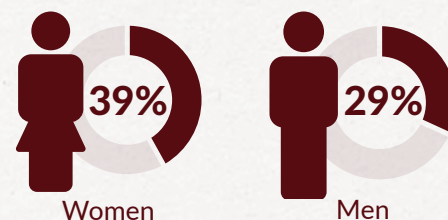
source: graduating student questionnaire 2016–17

THE WORK
OF THE
COMMISSION

ACCREDITING

A look at the data on accrediting actions for 2016–17 reveals four significant trends over the past three years:

1 Schools continue to explore innovative ways of engaging in graduate theological education. The Board of Commissioners approved 22 petitions for experiments or exceptions this year, bringing the total to nearly 120 such approvals since the revision of the Standards in 2012.

2 Overall, the number of petitions to the Board decreased this year (from 120 in 2015, to 140 in 2016, to 96 in 2017). The total number of required reports reviewed by the Board of Commissioners has also seen a slight decline (from 154 in 2015, to 142 in 2016, to 140 this year). Fewer assessment-based actions (down to 28 from 38 in 2015 and 44 in 2016) suggest that schools are improving in that area. There has also been a slight but steady decline in the number of finance-related actions that require Board review (from 34 in 2015, to 30 in 2016, to 29 this year).
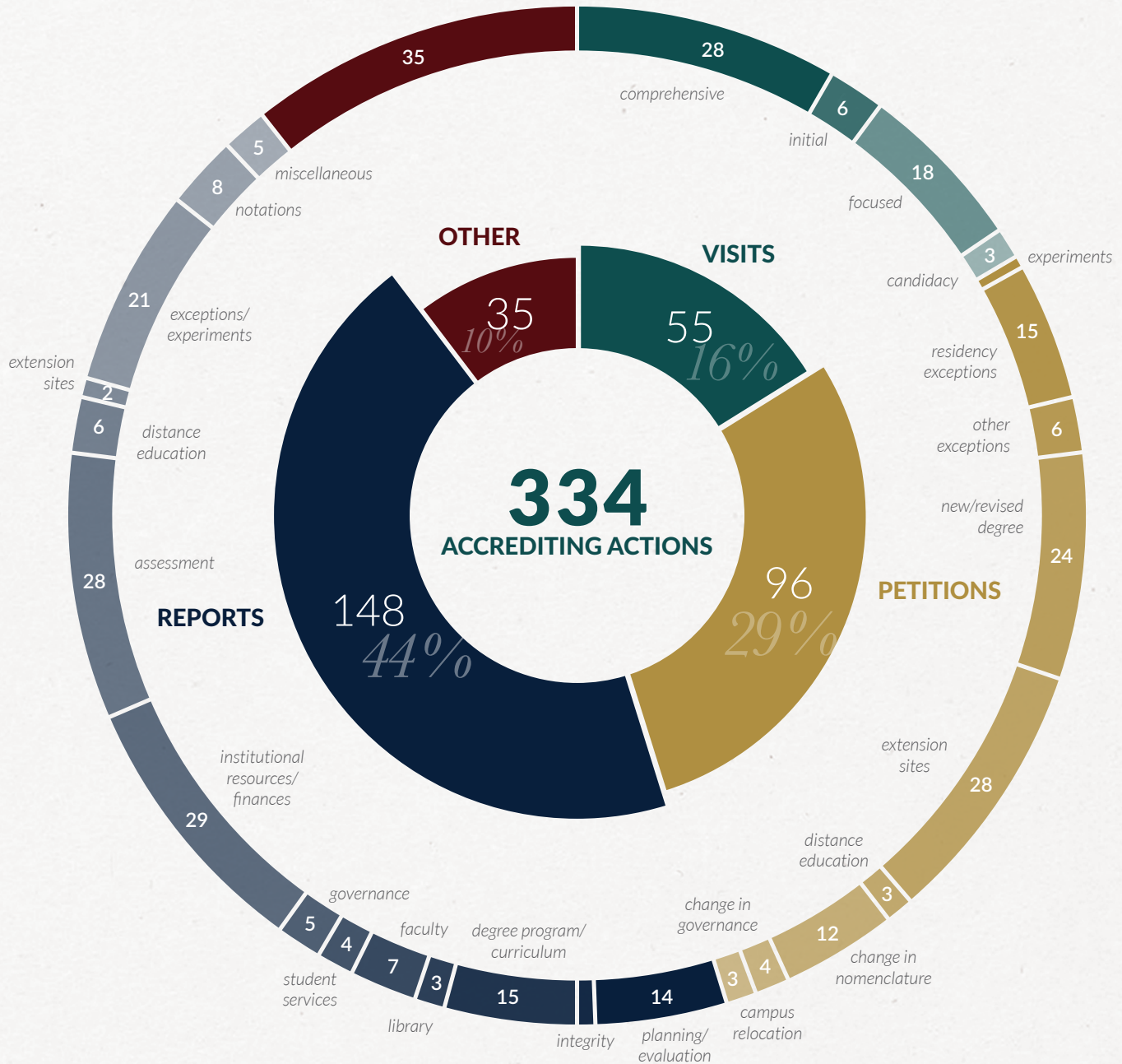
3 The work of accrediting has benefited from an increase in the size of the Board of Commissioners (from 16 to 20 members) and a trend toward more staff approvals of routine petitions and reports (more than 100 this year). Staff approvals (roughly one-third of all actions) have enabled schools to get responses much more quickly.

**SIX SCHOOLS WERE GRANTED INITIAL ACCREDITATION THIS YEAR:**

B. H. Carroll Theological Institute

Freed-Hardeman University Graduate School of Theology

Georgia Christian University School of Divinity

Grace School of Theology

Holy Apostles College and Seminary

Neal T. Jones Seminary of Washington University of Virginia

Congratulations, and welcome!

334 ACCREDITING ACTIONS

VISITS — 55 — 16%
- comprehensive — 28
- initial — 6
- focused — 18
- candidacy — 3

PETITIONS — 96 — 29%
- experiments — 15
- residency exceptions — 6
- other exceptions — 24
- new/revised degree — 28
- extension sites — 3
- distance education — 12
- change in nomenclature — 4
- change in governance — 3
- campus relocation — 14

REPORTS — 148 — 44%
- planning/evaluation — 14
- integrity — 15
- degree program/curriculum — 3
- library — 7
- faculty — 4
- student services — 5
- governance — 29
- institutional resources/finances — 28
- assessment — 6
- distance education — 2
- extension sites — 21
- exceptions/experiments — 8

OTHER — 35 — 10%
- notations — 5
- miscellaneous — 35

4 The accrediting staff and evaluation committee volunteers continue to work on a large number of visits each year, with 55 completed this year, up from 42 in 2016.
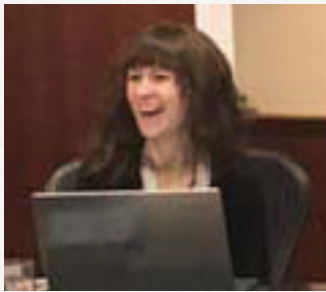
Self-Study Workshops

In 2016–17, Commission staff conducted two self-study workshops at the ATS offices in Pittsburgh that were carefully designed to address all elements of the institutional self-study process for member schools anticipating a comprehensive evaluation visit two years hence. The workshop focused on the meaningful work that transpires when a school takes a thoughtful, rigorous look at itself for the sake of mission and education. By the end of the workshop, participants understood all parts of the self-study process and the foundational role of the Standards and Procedures in the process, grew in their appreciation for the role of educational assessment in the context of educational innovation, and knew what goes into the making of a good self-study report.

In addition, all participants had helpful conversations with their accrediting liaisons and exchanged wisdom and encouragement with representatives of other member schools who are engaging in the same work of institutional self-evaluation amidst a commitment to educational excellence. A participant reported appreciation for having "the big picture framed and structured well, which led to the focused detail for each of the subsections. It made understanding and envisioning the end product and the quality of expectations much easier."

Upcoming Self-Study Workshops are scheduled for September 14–15, 2017, and March 5–6, 2018.

Redevelopment of the Standards and Procedures

During the 2016-17 year, the Board of Commissioners appointed a Preparatory Committee for the Redevelopment of the Standards and Procedures. The committee is composed of several Board members and Commission staff, whose task is to develop a proposal for the redevelopment of the Standards and Procedures that will be brought to the full Board in February 2018 for its consideration. The Board intends to bring a motion for redevelopment to the 2018 Biennial Meeting for a vote of the full membership. The motion will be accompanied by a rationale and a proposed work plan. The Board is fully committed to an inclusive, transparent, consultative, and iterative redevelopment process.

Only twice in their 80-year history have the standards undergone a major redevelopment. The last redevelopment, in 1996, was a ground-up approach that required four years of labor-intensive work with widespread input from virtually every member school. Those standards were revised by the membership in 2010–12 to emphasize both rigor and flexibility, through "exceptions and experiments," as well as to emphasize the assessment of student learning outcomes. This last revision was intended as a transitional strategy until ATS was ready for what was acknowledged even then as a need for a major redevelopment of the standards.

Much has changed in the higher education landscape since the standards were revised, including calls for greater transparency, more flexibility, and increased accessibility and accountability. At the same time, ATS member schools have become increasingly diverse in

Continuity, change, collaboration, and the quest for a culture of collegiality—all of which recognize and respect both diversity and inclusion of member schools—will continue to inform the work of the Commission.

terms of their theology, their educational programs and delivery methods, and their institutional structures. As well, member schools have demonstrated—in their ongoing work with the Board and in their participation in the Educational Models and Practices project—their desire for and commitment to relevance, flexibility, and innovation, as well as to rigor and excellence. Learnings from this ongoing work, which have become defining priorities for member schools will, no doubt, inform the redevelopment process. In this regard, continuity, change, collaboration, and the quest for a culture of collegiality—all of which recognize and respect both diversity and inclusion of member schools—will continue to inform the work of the Commission.

The 2016–17 year has also seen a number of new collaborations and mergers among member schools:

- Andover Newton Theological School has affiliated with Yale Divinity School, which includes a gradual move from its Newton Centre campus to Yale's New Haven campus.

- Episcopal Divinity School (EDS) and Union Theological Seminary have signed an agreement that will allow EDS to continue to provide theological education through a collaboration with Union at its campus in New York City.

- The Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg and the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia joined their two historic institutions as United Lutheran Seminary.

- Trinity Lutheran Seminary is in the process of reuniting with Capital University, effective January 1, 2018.

- Other schools are in earlier stages of exploring relocations, mergers, or other partnerships; some have publicly announced their plans (such as Claremont School of Theology, which has begun the due diligence process to explore moving and embedding within Willamette University on its campus in Salem, Oregon), while others are working primarily behind the scenes at this point.

ONGOING ASSESSMENT, EDUCATION, AND COMMUNITY BUILDING

New this January will be the first ever "School for Peer Reviewers," modelled on the popular ATS School for New Deans. While this inaugural event is by invitation only, it is planned to be the first of many that will eventually involve representatives from most ATS member schools. It seems fitting that this first event occurs in the centennial year of ATS. In his book, *A Community of Conversation* (2008), Glenn Miller observed that one of the most significant milestones in the history of ATS occurred in the mid-1960s, when ATS began regularly requiring an internal self-study process every 10 years, followed by an external evaluation by a team of peer reviewers.

Before then, accreditation was basically a "one-and-done" event, with schools essentially granted "accreditation for life" based on an initial checklist of factors completed by one person at the school, which was then reviewed by a single ATS staff member.

Miller observed that self-study and peer review created for ATS "a community of improvement." The self-study process elevated the conversation about quality theological education internally within member schools, while peer review elevated the conversation externally across member schools. "As visiting teams crossed the continent . . . [they created] a broader and better-networked community of theological educators." The goal of the School for Peer Reviewers is to build on that "community of improvement" by providing face-to-face training. It is also a way to thank those who serve so sacrificially to help ATS member schools, since the school will be fully funded by ATS.

COMMUNICATIONS

TOP ATS
NEWS STORIES

Colloquy Online continues to be the communications strategy with the broadest reach, averaging 3,600 "opens" each month.
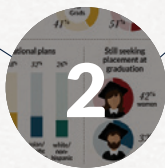
COMMUNICAIONS

5

1 "Accessible, effective" How online education is shifting the formation model

3 Midpoint reflections on the Educational Models project: peer groups share 10 themes

Online learning at ATS schools: Part 1—Looking back at our past; Part 2–The present state of affairs

2 How 2016 graduates are faring

4 Adventures in innovative ministry: 8 competencies and support structures that bi-vocational ministers need
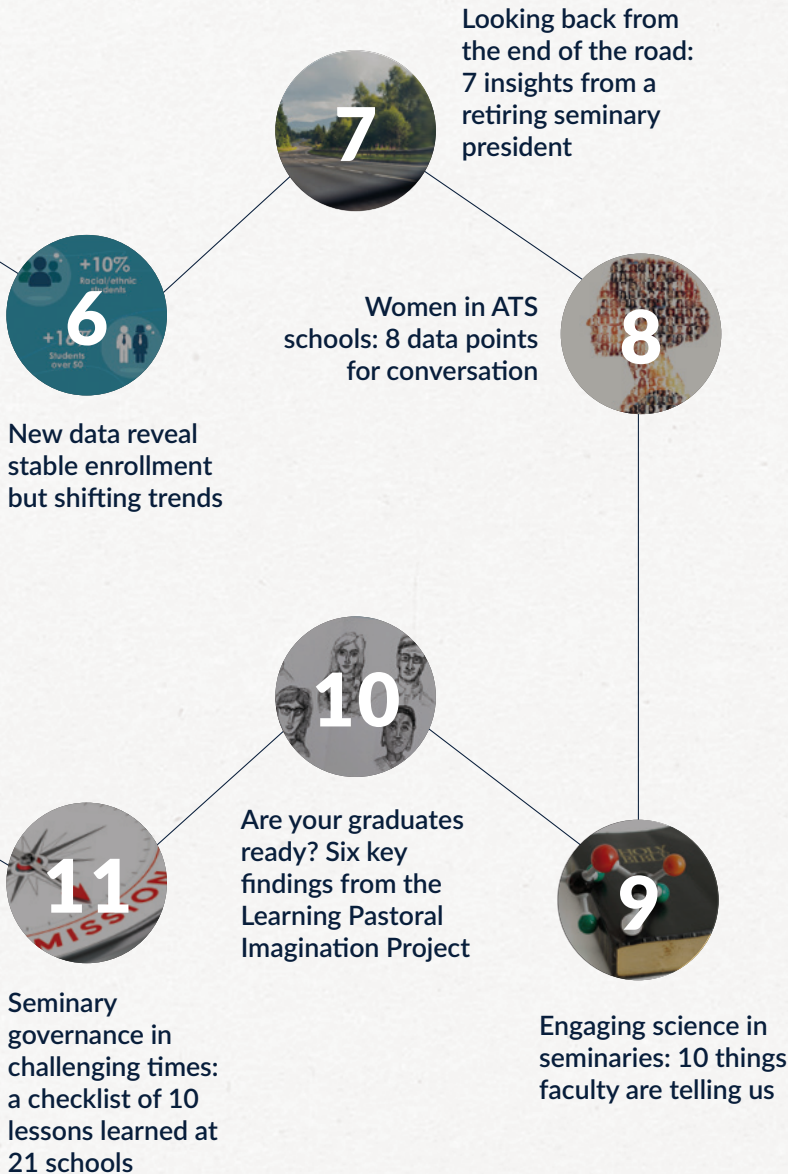
12 Where else can they go, and what else can they do? Guiding MDiv graduates into fields other than congregational ministry

The *Theological Education* Advisory Board

11 ISSUES | **63** STORIES
39,552 OPENS | **9,158** CLICKS

7 — Looking back from the end of the road: 7 insights from a retiring seminary president

6 — New data reveal stable enrollment but shifting trends

8 — Women in ATS schools: 8 data points for conversation

10 — Are your graduates ready? Six key findings from the Learning Pastoral Imagination Project

11 — Seminary governance in challenging times: a checklist of 10 lessons learned at 21 schools

9 — Engaging science in seminaries: 10 things faculty are telling us

Read these articles in their entirety at www.ats.edu.

SOCIAL MEDIA

During the past year, the ATS Facebook page has increased engagement with constituents around the world.

800+ FOLLOWERS
38.8% increase over last year

186,653 IMPRESSIONS
87.4% increase over last year

1,508 LINK CLICKS

153 POSTS

4,115 POST ENGAGEMENTS
95.9% increase over last year

ATS also entered the blogging arena this year, launching three threads: "Views from the Corner Office," "Data Matters," and "Educational Models and Practices." Staff posted a total of 15 entries, and the response has been positive:

1,454 SUBSCRIPTIONS

933 OPENS

445 CLICKS TO READ FULL POSTS

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as of July 2017

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Nadine Banks
Executive Assistant

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Director, Accreditation
and Institutional
Evaluation

Barbara Mutch
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Initiatives and Student
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Faculty Development

Mary Young
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Education

Linda Giehll
Coordinator,
Leadership Education

Meghan Niskach
Administrative
Assistant, Student
Information Resources

Leah Wright
Coordinator, Faculty
Development and
Initiatives

Transitions in 2016–2017 included four new staff members and three departures.

Welcome to

Frank Yamada, Executive Director

Christopher The, Director,
Commission Information Services

Mary Young, Director, Leadership
Education

Carola Molinares, Conference
Coordinator

Farewell to

Daniel Aleshire, Executive Director

Mary McMillan, Meeting
Coordinator

Lori Neff LaRue, Director,
Accreditation Services