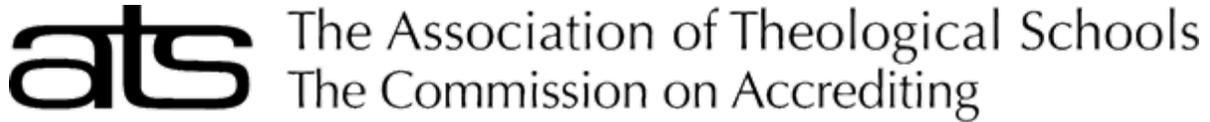


From: [ATS Accrediting](#)
To: sangmeynglee@msn.com; [Barbara Mutch](#)
Cc: jkang@pts.edu
Subject: [COAATS] Action Letter, June 2023
Date: Friday, June 9, 2023 1:39:25 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)



June 9, 2023

ATTN: Sang Meyng Lee
Presbyterian Theological Seminary in America
15605 Carmenita Road
Santa Fe Springs, CA 90670
via email only

Dear President Lee,

The Board of Commissioners met in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, on June 5-6, 2023, and included on its agenda Presbyterian Theological Seminary in America's comprehensive visit and the resulting report by the evaluation committee.

After reviewing the information in light of the pertinent Commission [Standards](#) and [Policies and Procedures](#), the Board voted:

1. To reaffirm the school's accreditation for a period of seven years, until 31 July 2030, with the next comprehensive evaluation visit in spring 2030.
Rationale if less than maximum period: In light of the warnings on evaluation and shared governance, the period of accreditation is reduced to seven years.
2. To approve the following educational offerings:
 - a. Degree programs:
 - Master of Divinity
 - Master of Arts in Counseling Psychology
 - Master of Arts in Intercultural Studies
 - b. Distance education: Comprehensive
 - c. Additional locations: None
3. To affirm these distinctive strengths to be maintained during the next period of accreditation:
 - a. A compelling commitment to a clear institutional mission witnessed across the school.
 - b. A commendable posture of care for, and attentiveness to, students.
 - c. A palpable desire to grow and an openness to new ideas.
 - d. A strong technological infrastructure that positions the school to advance its programs.
4. To highlight the following issues needing special attention during the next period of accreditation:
 - a. Integrity of interaction with constituents through consistency and accuracy of every form of public communication (see Standards 1.4 and 3.15).
 - b. Consistency of educational quality delivered through courses taught simultaneously in multiple modalities and in diverse global settings (see Standards 1.4, 3.2, and 3.6).
 - c. Careful attention to student services that includes regular review of safety protocols, appropriate attention to placement services, and adequate backup of student records (see Standards 7.5 and 7.10-11).

- d. Fair compensation for support staff and adjunct faculty (see Standard 10.1).
5. To require the following reports to address areas needing improvement and/or further information:
 - a. To require a report by the 1st of September 2023, regarding the disclosure of its accreditation status in all languages in which it publicly communicates. The report shall include evidence that the school’s disclosure of its accreditation status follows the approved format and language and that it lists its unapproved degrees publicly with a note specifically stating that the degrees are “not approved by the Commission on Accrediting of The Association of Theological Schools but are approved by [school inserts name and web address of recognized accrediting or quality assurance agency]” (see *Policies and Procedures*, VII.A.6, IV.D.1). The school should consult the “Guidelines and Request Form for Degree Approval Exemption” available on the ATS website.
 - b. To require a report by the 1st of April 2026, regarding supervised practical experiences in the MDiv, MACP, and MAICS programs that meet the requirements in Standard 4.4 (see Standards 4.4 and 4.8).
 - c. To require a report by the 1st of April 2027, regarding diversity, particularly the school’s commitment to gender diversity, demonstrated in the composition of its board, administration, faculty, and staff. The report shall also include the school’s publicly available stance on diversity and how the school uses that stance to enhance its diversity (see Standard 1.5).
6. To impose the following warnings because the school, while substantially meeting the Commission *Standards of Accreditation* as a whole, is at risk of not meeting the following specific standards. The school has two years to address these warnings adequately, or the Board will take other appropriate action as described in the *Policies and Procedures*, III.G-J:
 - a. Standards 2.6-7 on Evaluation: The school has insufficient evaluation processes and practices for its educational programs and must submit a report by the 1st of April 2025, providing clear documentation of how it fully meets all parts of Standard 2.6-7 for each degree program.
 - b. Standards 9.6-8 on Shared Governance: The school insufficiently demonstrates an expression of shared governance in which the school’s governing body delegates to the faculty appropriate authority to oversee, design, implement, evaluate, and improve the school’s educational programs and policies in collaboration with other appropriate parties. The school must submit a report by the 1st of April 2025, documenting the establishment of a governance model that ensures that faculty, understood as those charged with teaching the majority of the curriculum, exercise appropriate authority in light of their expertise, and that governance is shared appropriately across the institution.

In a separate action, the Board also considered the school’s recent focused visit, as required by the school's petition reviewed by the Board in January 2023, and the resulting report by the evaluation committee.

After reviewing the information in light of the pertinent Commission [Standards](#) and [Policies and Procedures](#), the Board voted:

7. To *deny* the petition to offer the PhD (see Standards 5.11-16) as it does not meet *Commission Standards* regarding educational evaluation, minimum residency, relevant collection development policy, and a faculty sufficient in number and diversity (see Standards 2.6-7, 5.15, 6.8, and 8.2).

NOTE: Actions #1–5 & #7 (above) are effective **June 6, 2023**; action #6 (above) is effective **June 23, 2023**—thereby allowing sufficient time from the receipt of this notification for any initial request for a review (see ATS Commission [Policies and Procedures](#), VIII.A and VIII.A.1-3). To request a

review of the above public sanction(s), the school must submit an official request signed by the school's chief executive officer (or designee) within two weeks from today's Board action letter; the school would then have two more weeks to submit specific documentation supporting its review request (VIII.A.1-2). Any initial request for a review is to be addressed to the Board of Commissioners and submitted in care of the Accrediting Records Coordinator (accrediting@ats.edu).

The ATS Commission *Policies and Procedures* defines a public sanction as (negative) action being taken by the Board of Commissioners to issue a Warning (III.G), to place on Probation (III.H), or to issue a Show Cause (III.I). Timeframes for resolving a public sanction may not exceed twelve months in the event of a Show Cause—which is neither reviewable nor appealable (III.I.1)—or two years in the event of either an imposition of Warning (III.G.1) or being placed on Probation (III.H.1). Evidence for removal of the above public sanction(s) should be sent to the ATS Commission on Accrediting no later than **April 1, 2025**, in order to be considered by the Board at its 2025 summer meeting (June). Submission of such evidence follows the guidelines and formatting as other interim reports to the Commission (III.E(.1)); see also <https://www.ats.edu/Interim-Reports>). To request that a public sanction be removed earlier, the school should contact its assigned ATS Commission staff liaison regarding the possibility of any advance submission and associated deadline for Board review.

Please contact me directly at mutch@ats.edu with any questions.

Sincerely,

Barbara Mutch
Senior Director of Accreditation

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The Association of Theological Schools | The Commission on Accrediting
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