

2023 Student Personnel Administrators' Conference

*Service and Formation in Changing Times:
Navigating the Trends of Theological Education*

#ATSSPAN2023

March 20–22, 2023

The Highland Dallas
Dallas,
Texas



The Association of Theological Schools
The Commission on Accrediting

2023 Student Personnel Administrators' Conference

*Service and Formation in Changing Times:
Navigating the Trends of Theological Education*

#ATSSPAN2023

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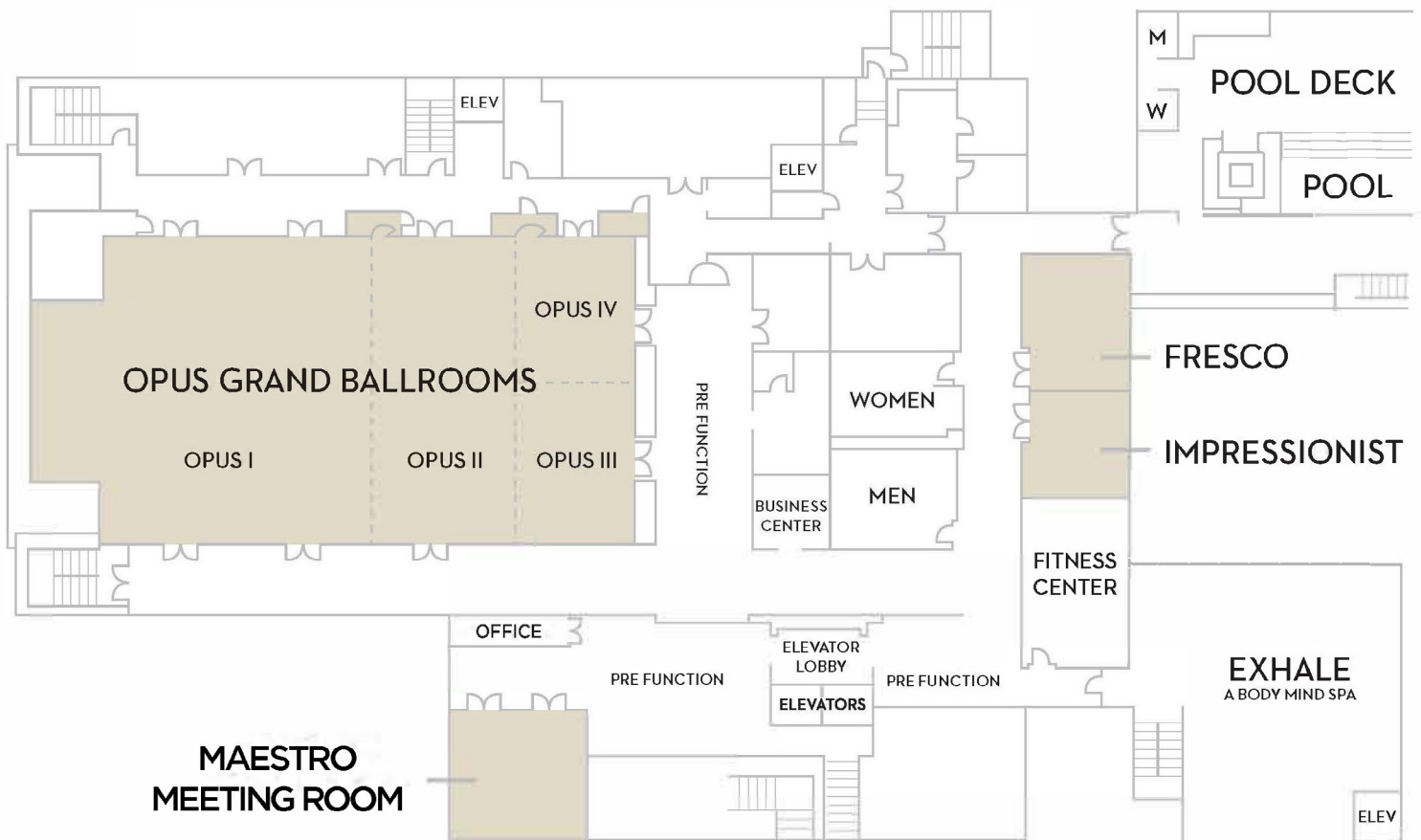


Hotel Floor Plan

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Please use **#ATSSPAN2023**
and/or **@ATSdotedu** to post/tweet
from the event!



Agenda

Monday, March 20

3:30 p.m.	Campus visit to Perkins School of Theology Southern Methodist University <i>(Please meet in the hotel lobby for a 10-minute walk to visit the campus of this nearby ATS member school.)</i>	
5:00 p.m.	Registration and Reception	Knife Patio <i>(cash bar)</i>
6:00 p.m.	Welcome and Opening Dinner <i>Deborah Shadd, Director of Leadership Development, ATS</i> <i>Jeff Sajdak, Dean of Students, Calvin Theological Seminary</i>	Opus 1

Tuesday, March 21

7:00 a.m.	<p>Before the Day Contemplative Space <i>Jeff Sajdak, Dean of Students, Calvin Theological Seminary</i></p> <p>Start your day with a group contemplative practice. Take time to meditate, pray, and rest before the events of the day.</p> <p>Morning Fitness—Yoga Fusion <i>Michael Sandner, Chief Business Officer; Title IX Officer; Director of Human Resources, Hartford International University for Religion and Peace</i></p> <p>Ideal for anyone and everyone, this class will improve your mind, body, and life. Expect to bend and stretch through simple yoga moves while an inspiring soundtrack plays in the background. Breathing control is a part of all the exercises, and options will be available for those just getting started.</p>	<p>Opus 3</p> <p>Opus 2</p>
8:00 a.m.	Continental Breakfast	Opus Pre Function
8:45 a.m.	<p>Morning Reflection <i>Andy Keck, Chief of Staff; Executive Director of Admissions, Perkins School of Theology Southern Methodist University</i></p>	Opus 1
9:00 a.m.	<p>Calling Centers: Theological Education as Vocational Formation <i>Asa Lee, President, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary</i></p> <p>Lee will invite participants to consider future trends in theological education toward practices of formation. Participants will imagine seminaries and theological schools as places for vocational identity, clarity, and formation beyond clergy and faith-focused persons. Attention will be given to addressing the needed changes in governance, structure of leadership, pedagogy, and administration to achieve those ends.</p>	

10:15 a.m.	Break	
10:45 a.m.	<p>State of the Profession Conversations</p> <p>Gather with your peers in role-based groups to meet and connect with colleagues, identify shared trends and challenges, and articulate pressing questions or hopes for discovery and learning together during these conference days.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dean of Students/Student Formation Facilitator: <i>Jeff Sajdak, Calvin Theological Seminary</i> • Student Services Facilitator: <i>Michael Sandner, Hartford International University for Religion and Peace</i> • Admissions and Recruitment Facilitator: <i>DeNeen Collins, Christian Theological Seminary</i> • Enrollment and Retention Facilitator: <i>Kristy McGarvey, Denver Seminary</i> • Registrars Facilitator: <i>Emil Canlas, St. Mark's College</i> 	Opus 1
12:00 p.m.	Lunch	Opus Pre Function
1:30 p.m.	<p>On Mental Health, the Effects of Trauma, and Caring for Students as Whole Humans</p> <p>The crucial importance of attending to and supporting our students' mental health and well-being has been drawn into particular relief through the events of the past few years. This panel will discuss strategies for building positive relationships and resilience within the student body, along with ways we can respond appropriately while employing trauma-informed practices to help our students succeed.</p> <p>Panelists: <i>Zachary Moon, Professor of Theology and Psychology, Chicago Theological Seminary</i> <i>Elizabeth Norris, Assistant Professor of Counseling, Denver Seminary</i> <i>Rameya Shanmugavelayutham, Adjunct Faculty, Hartford International University for Religion and Peace</i></p> <p>Facilitator: <i>Michael Sandner, Chief Business Officer; Title IX Officer; Director of Human Resources, Hartford International University for Religion and Peace</i></p>	Opus 1
3:00 p.m.	Break	

Agenda (continued)

Tuesday, March 21

3:30 p.m.	<p>Workshop Session 1</p> <p>1A Continuing the Conversation around Mental Health and Well-Being <i>Rameya Shanmugavelayutham, Adjunct Faculty, Hartford International University for Religion and Peace</i></p> <p>1B Making the Move from Lag to Lead: Admissions Prospect/Applicate Management at CTSFW <i>Matthew Wietfeldt, Assistant Vice President of Admissions, Concordia Theological Seminary (IN)</i></p> <p>1C Collaborative Course Review: Quality Initiatives for Ensuring a Great Class Experience <i>Josh Bailey, Program Director, Oklahoma Christian University Graduate School of Theology,</i></p> <p>1D Imagining Futures for Enrollment in Theological Education <i>Michael Hemenway, Director of Design and Data Science, ATS</i></p>	<p>Opus 2</p> <p>Opus 1</p> <p>Opus 4</p> <p>Opus 3</p>
5:00 p.m.	Break	
6:00 p.m.	Dinner	Opus 1

Wednesday, March 22

7:00 a.m.	<p>Before the Day Contemplative Space <i>Jeff Sajdak, Dean of Students, Calvin Theological Seminary</i> Start your day with a group contemplative practice. Take time to meditate, pray, and rest before the events of the day.</p> <p>Morning Fitness—Cardio Tone <i>Michael Sandner, Chief Business Officer; Title IX Officer; Director of Human Resources, Hartford International University for Religion and Peace</i> The complete workout in one class. A mix of cardio, resistance, and core while playing with different training concepts to ensure everyone gets the best results from their workouts.</p>	<p>Opus 3</p> <p>Opus 2</p>
8:00 a.m.	Continental Breakfast	Opus Pre Function
8:45 a.m.	<p>Morning Reflection <i>Emil Canlas, Registrar, St. Mark's College</i></p>	Opus 1

9:00 a.m.	<p>Caught Between Hope and Reality: The Impact of National Crises on the Work of Theological Education <i>Pamela Lightsey, Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs, Meadville Lombard Theological School</i></p> <p>While it is true that the landscape of theological education is changing, working as a theology school administrator has been made exceedingly more difficult during this most recent decade. How does one do this work in times of great transition, especially noting COVID and the national political and religious landscape? Dare we even discuss paradigm shifts when the impact(s) are greater than changes in how things have been done? We will delve into the hopeful nature of our work, amid the extreme realities of our time, to consider ways that will help us be our best selves as administrators and to capture possible competencies/traits that will support us in our work.</p>	
10:15 a.m.	Break	
10:45 a.m.	<p>Workshop Session 2</p> <p>2A The Indigenous Practice of Lateral Kindness for Decolonial Student Formation <i>Anne Carter Walker, Interim Associate Dean of Academic and Student Affairs; Director of Theological Field Education, Phillips Theological Seminary</i></p> <p>2B How Changes at the Institutional Level Affect Recruiting and Admissions: Variations in Learning Modalities and Creating Relationships <i>DeNeen Collins, Director of Recruiting and Admissions, Christian Theological Seminary</i></p> <p>2C Doing More with Enough: Building Capacity for New Student Engagement <i>Chenar Howard, Associate Director of Student Affairs, Luther Seminary</i> <i>Sarah Luedtke-Jones, Director of Student Affairs, Luther Seminary</i> <i>Jessi LeClear Vachta, Director of Enrollment Services, Luther Seminary</i></p> <p>2D Discerning Data: How the ATS Student Questionnaires Can Support Evidence-Based Interventions <i>Christopher The, Director of Student Research and Initiative Management, ATS</i></p>	<p>Opus 2</p> <p>Opus 3</p> <p>Opus 4</p> <p>Opus 1</p>
12:00 p.m.	Lunch	Opus Pre Function

Agenda (continued)

Wednesday, March 22

1:15 p.m.	<p>Changing Landscapes and Reflections on Formation <i>Susan Reese, Professor of Spiritual Formation, Kairos University</i></p> <p>Good reflection is often prompted by a meaningful question. We have many questions to pay attention to in our professional and personal lives. Our time will be spent considering what the meaningful questions are and what the invitation is to “live in the tension” of these questions in our ever-changing landscape.</p>	Opus 1
2:30 p.m.	Break	
2:45 p.m.	<p>Workshop Session 3</p> <p>3A Continuing the Conversation around Formation <i>Susan Reese, Professor of Spiritual Formation, Kairos University</i> <i>Jeff Sajdak, Dean of Students, Calvin Theological Seminary</i></p> <p>3B Institution-Wide Enrollment: Strategies for Investing Partners in the Work of Admissions and Retention <i>Tracy Riggle Young, Senior Director of Enrollment Services, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary</i></p> <p>3C Students Leading the Way: An Experiment in Gathering Student Feedback <i>Kevin O’Coin, Associate Director of Enrollment, ACTS Seminaries</i></p> <p>3D They Didn’t Teach Me This at Seminary: Making the Move from Parish Ministry to Institutional Leadership <i>Matthew Wietfeldt, Assistant Vice President of Admissions, Concordia Theological Seminary (IN)</i></p>	<p>Opus 4</p> <p>Opus 2</p> <p>Opus 3</p> <p>Opus 1</p>
4:00 p.m.	Break	Opus Pre Function
4:15 p.m.	<p>State of the Profession Conversations</p> <p>Return to your groups to reflect on what you’ve learned, name lingering questions or ongoing issues, and discuss ways to stay connected and support one another even after returning to your home campuses.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dean of Students/Student Formation Facilitator: <i>Jeff Sajdak, Calvin Theological Seminary</i> • Student Services Facilitator: <i>Michael Sandner, Hartford International University for Religion and Peace</i> • Admissions and Recruitment Facilitator: <i>DeNeen Collins, Christian Theological Seminary</i> • Enrollment and Retention Facilitator: <i>Kristy McGarvey, Denver Seminary</i> • Registrars Facilitator: <i>Emil Canlas, St. Mark’s College</i> 	Opus 1



5:15 p.m.	Closing Remarks, Resending Prayer, and Adjournment <i>Deborah Shadd, Director of Leadership Development, ATS</i> <i>Kristy McGarvey, Dean of Students, Denver Seminary</i>	
5:30 p.m.	Adjourn/Free Evening	

Workshops

SESSION 1

Tuesday

3:30–5:00 p.m.

OPUS 2

1A Continuing the Conversation around Mental Health and Well-Being

*Rameya Shanmugavelayutham,
Adjunct Faculty, Hartford International
University for Religion and Peace*

This workshop is designed to be an open, conversational space for those who want to dig deeper on the subject of mental health and how we can care well for students and for ourselves in the midst of a very challenging season.

OPUS 1

1B Making the Move from Lag to Lead: Admissions Prospect/Applicate Management at CTSFW

*Matthew Wietfeldt, Assistant Vice President
of Admissions, Concordia Theological Seminary (IN)*

In 2018–19, the Admissions Office of Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne (CTSFW) moved from working in a “Student Information System” (SIS) and off of spreadsheets into a robust “Customer Relationship Management” tool (CRM). There was a steep learning curve and a mindset realignment. Nevertheless, through hard work and teamwork across departments, the CRM has not only allowed Admissions to move from lag-focused recruitment and admission to lead-focused, but it has become the management system for the entire campus. This new system also allowed CTSFW to study best practices for recruitment and admission management as it worked to build out the CRM for us. Join this session and learn what this change looks like at CTSFW and what it could look like at your school.



OPUS 4

1C Collaborative Course Review: Quality Initiatives for Ensuring a Great Class Experience

*Josh Bailey, Program Director,
Oklahoma Christian University
Graduate School of Theology,*

Several years ago, our faculty achieved special certification for teaching in the online environment as we launched our latest degree program. Although there was an initial consistency throughout the program, inconsistencies among courses crept in over a short amount of time that led to student frustrations and challenges with enrollment persistence. To help address this, a collaborative course review process was implemented two years ago that has quickly proven to increase adherence to program standards and greater student satisfaction. In this workshop, we will discuss how to bring together faculty and staff to systematically and objectively review each of your courses in a positive way that generates conversation and creative thinking. Participants will have the opportunity to step through a sample Course Review session using a provided evaluation rubric and will discuss how a similar process could be implemented at their own institutions.

OPUS 3

1D Imagining Futures for Enrollment in Theological Education

*Michael Hemenway, Director of Design
and Data Science, ATS*

The world of theological education is changing fast. In this interactive workshop, we will engage a process for exploring the impact of these changes on enrollment management and imagining possible futures for enrollment in theological education. How can methods like participatory narrative inquiry, active sensemaking, or complexity mapping encourage us to invite the wisdom of those directly impacted by the system into how we imagine and design our possible futures?

SESSION 2

Wednesday

10:45 a.m.–12:00 p.m.

OPUS 2

2A The Indigenous Practice of Lateral Kindness for Decolonial Student Formation

Anne Carter Walker, Interim Associate Dean of Academic and Student Affairs; Director of Theological Field Education, Phillips Theological Seminary

Many theological schools struggle to bring disparate marginalized communities together for collective formation that both recognizes their communities' particular gifts and struggles *and* cultivates an overall ethos of belonging. Even in the midst of our best efforts to cultivate connection in communities of difference, lateral violence often arises among marginalized communities and undermines student success and the cultivation of a formational community. This workshop will present a vision for decolonial student formation that both holds difference and cultivates belonging. It will introduce participants to practices of lateral kindness derived from Indigenous cultural wisdom and will teach practices of lateral kindness that participants can take back to their own settings for theological education.

OPUS 3

2B How Changes at the Institutional Level Affect Recruiting and Admissions: Variations in Learning Modalities and Creating Relationships

DeNeen Collins, Director of Recruiting and Admissions, Christian Theological Seminary

The results from the November 2022 ATS Peer SPAN meeting found that 70% of institutions responded that they have seen changes at their institutions during the past year—addressing the funnel approach to how these changes affect recruiting and admission. This workshop will provide: information on how to create messaging and meaningful relationships in the recruiting/admissions process (including the funnel approach—how/when/what to communicate—to communication), how to create relational connections in all ways (in person, virtual, phone, and email) to meet prospects, the importance of a communication strategic plan to ensure no student/lead/prospect/applicant falls through the process, and how to identify when to nurture or delete prospects. All will result in stronger retention and less admissions melt.

OPUS 4

2C Doing More with Enough: Building Capacity for New Student Engagement

Chenar Howard, Associate Director of Student Affairs, Luther Seminary
Sarah Luedtke-Jones, Director of Student Affairs, Luther Seminary
Jessi LeClea Vachta, Director of Enrollment Services, Luther Seminary

Join this interactive session to share ideas for bridging the admissions and student life gap and reducing summer melt. Increase staff capacity, lower staff stress, improve the student onboarding experience, and evolve your new student engagement strategy in scalable steps. Regardless of where you are beginning, you'll leave this workshop with templates, prompts, and an action plan for your fall 2023 entering class. Three years ago, at the emergence of the pandemic, Luther Seminary's Admissions and Student Affairs teams began putting their heads together to address summer melt, unsure of how they would meet the challenge of engaging incoming students without the proper CRM in place, no opportunity to bring students to campus for the traditional in-person orientation, no avenue for international students to be issued visas, and no way to offer assurances about upcoming fall course modalities. With a lot of experimenting (and even more help from colleagues), these departments banded together to build a model of virtual incoming student engagement that became a platform opportunity for building the school's New Student Engagement initiative, now a mainstay for the student experience! Come ready to share your stories and wisdom as you build a plan for this fall!

OPUS 1

2D Discerning Data: How the ATS Student Questionnaires Can Support Evidence-Based Interventions

Christopher The, Director of Student Research and Initiative Management, ATS

Wondering how the Questionnaires can help your school improve serving its students? This workshop illustrates the value of student data and will empower member school personnel—whether new to the Qs or long-time users—to learn from, for, and with the students and graduates we serve.

Workshops (continued)

SESSION 3

Wednesday

2:45–4:00 p.m.

OPUS 4

3A Continuing the Conversation around Formation

Susan Reese, Professor of Spiritual Formation, Kairos University

Jeff Sajdak, Dean of Students, Calvin Theological Seminary

This workshop will focus on our formation as persons as well as professionals. We will discuss practices that can help us pay attention to the rhythms of life even in the midst of chaos.

OPUS 2

3B Institution-Wide Enrollment: Strategies for Investing Partners in the Work of Admissions and Retention

Tracy Riggle Young, Senior Director of Enrollment Services, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary

Admissions and enrollment officers know all too well the importance of using data to set and reach quantitative benchmarks. We are quick to measure our successes or failures through a number. When these numbers (FTE, headcount, number of new student admits) go up, we feel proud. When, these numbers go down, we feel deflated. Often missed, however, in this quantitative measure of success is the necessity of building sustained partners in the work of enrollment. No matter how large our quantitative gains, if our institutions do not feel connected to those gains, we will fail. Forging connections with faculty, alumni/ae, staff, current students, and leaders of partner organizations is essential to successful enrollment and retention work. This workshop will provide concrete strategies for inviting partners into this work (ambassador programs, institution-wide retention tracking and planning, faculty involvement in campus visits and application review, etc.). It will also provide attendees space to share enrollment best practices for this collaborative work.

OPUS 3

3C Students Leading the Way: An Experiment in Gathering Student Feedback

Kevin O'Coin, Associate Director of Enrollment, Associated Canadian Theological Schools (ACTS) of Trinity Western University

This session reflects on data ACTS Seminaries have gathered from current students about their academic and co-curricular experiences as part of a newly-implemented current student feedback panel. A rationale for this information-gathering approach, how ACTS Seminaries has implemented it, and successes and challenges of the model will be covered. Participants will have the opportunity to share with one another what they have been learning from their own student bodies, as well as consider feedback mechanisms that match their own institutional cultures and systems. The target audience is anyone involved in the assessment, evaluation, implementation, and delivery of student services.

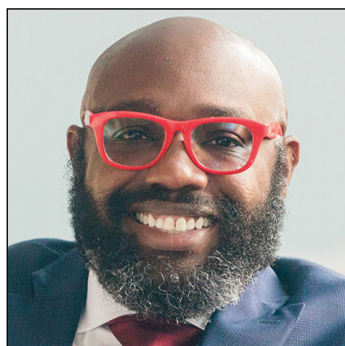
OPUS 1

3D They Didn't Teach Me This at Seminary: Making the Move from Parish Ministry to Institutional Leadership

Matthew Wietfeldt, Assistant Vice President of Admissions, Concordia Theological Seminary (IN)

Our seminaries and divinity schools do a great job of forming individuals to serve in various contexts and situations, focusing on parish or congregational ministry. Some of us are even lucky enough to get positions back at one, and even at our alma maters. One area often short-changed is leadership—especially leadership in organizations or institutions. The size constraints on many of our seminaries necessitate becoming a leader in an institution reasonably quickly. So, what should every new or aspiring leader know? This session will deal with leadership topics to help current and future leaders grow in their leadership skills.

Presenters



Asa Lee

serves as president of Pittsburgh Theological Seminary.

He came to the presidency after seven years of service at Wesley Theological Seminary as vice president for campus administration and associate dean for community life. He served on the faculty of Northern Virginia Community College and is often a guest lecturer at workshops and seminars dealing with Christianity in the 21st century, religious difference, and issues affecting church leadership. Lee also served in a leadership capacity in several churches in the Hampton Roads area of Virginia. Lee was licensed by the Faith Shepherd Baptist Church of Washington, DC, and ordained by the Mount Olive Baptist Church of Arlington, Virginia, where he served for ten years as the assistant pastor/minister of Christian education. An Elder in Full Connection in the Virginia Annual Conference of United Methodist Church, he has held membership in several professional and social organizations, including the American Academy of Religion, the Religious Education Association, and the Association of Leadership Educators, and he is a life member of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc. Lee completed the DMin in educational leadership at Virginia Theological Seminary after earning the MDiv from Wesley Theological Seminary.



Pamela Lightsey

is vice president of academic and student affairs and associate professor of constructive theology at Meadville Lombard Theological School.

Prior to her appointment, she served as associate dean of community life and lifelong learning, and as clinical assistant professor of contextual theology and practice at Boston University School of Theology. An ordained elder in the Northern Illinois Conference of the United Methodist Church, she served first as a United Methodist congregational pastor and then as a theological school educator, scholar, and administrator. Throughout her vocational life, she has been a leading social justice activist, working with local, national, and international organizations focusing primarily on the causes of peacemaking, racial justice, and LGBTQ rights. Her publications include the book, *Our Lives Matter: A Womanist Queer Theology* (Wipf and Stock), "He Is Black and We are Queer" in *Albert Cleage Jr. and the Black Madonna and Child* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan), "Reconciliation" in *Prophetic Evangelicals: Envisioning a Just and Peaceable Kingdom* (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company), and "If There Should Come a Word" in *Black United Methodists Preach!* (Abingdon Press). Following service in the US Army and work as a civil servant, she received her MDiv at the Interdenominational Theological Center and her PhD at Garrett-Evangelical Theological School.

Presenters (continued)



Zachary Moon

serves as professor of theology and psychology at Chicago Theological Seminary.

He has published widely, including four books, *Coming Home: Ministry That Matters with Veterans and Military Families* (Chalice Press, 2015), *Warriors between Worlds: Moral Injury and Identities in Crisis* (Lexington Books, 2019), *Goatwalking: A Quaker Pastoral Theology* (Brill, 2021), and *Doing Theology in Pandemics: Facing Viruses, Violence, and Vitriol* (Pickwick, 2022). He coordinates partnership development for the Center for Chaplaincy Studies, which provides training and consulting to develop courageous, compassionate, and creative leaders who can effectively serve in trauma-impacted communities. Moon earned his MDiv from Chicago Theological Seminary and his PhD from Iliff School of Theology.



Elizabeth Norris

is an assistant professor of counseling at Denver Seminary and a Licensed Professional Counselor in private practice, specializing in trauma-informed care.

She is licensed in both Colorado and Georgia, is trained in Eye-Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR), and provides trauma trainings, debriefings, and crisis care both domestically and internationally. Her research agenda covers trauma and counselor development, with expertise in counselor burnout, organizational culture, and the impact of trauma on individuals and the workplace. Her history includes working in admissions and recruitment on the staff side within higher education, and she currently serves as the faculty advisor for the counseling Honor Society, Chi Sigma Iota. Norris is a National Certified Counselor, earning a PhD in counselor education and supervision from Mercer University.



Susan Hereen Reese

serves as professor of spiritual formation at Kairos University.

She also oversees the Kairos' Listening People to Life: Training in Spiritual Direction program and serves as a faculty mentor for students in certificate, MA, MDiv, and DMin programs. She has previously served in the roles of director of admissions, resident director, and associate dean of residence life. As a professor, she has taught in the disciplines of education, spiritual formation, leadership, and administration. Reese obtained her MA in counseling from Sioux Falls Seminary and her EdD in adult and higher education from the University of South Dakota. She is a certified CliftonStrengths coach and has completed a certificate in spiritual direction from the Christos Center for Spiritual Formation.



Rameya (Rum-ya) Shanmugavelayutham

is a licensed clinical social worker, psychotherapist, ADHD coach, and clinical consultant/educator.

She works with individuals, as well as the broader systems they inhabit, to support neurodiversity and trauma healing through practices of shame-reduction, pleasure, and play. She is currently serving as an adjunct faculty member in the International Peacebuilding Master's Program at Hartford International University for Religion and Peace. She can be found @therapist.rameya or www.rameyas.com.

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*The Association of Theological Schools
expresses its appreciation to Lilly Endowment Inc.
for its generous support of this event.*

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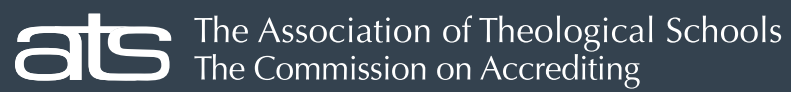
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