ATS data visualization: long-awaited personnel update now available

By Deborah H. C. Gin

What data questions do you have of your peers? How do your data compare with theirs? In its commitment to making data more accessible, ATS envisioned a tool that provides users with 30 years of data in one visualization to better see trend lines and allow users to slice the data according to different types of peers.

The formal launch of the ATS Data Visualization tool in 2020 included enrollment data and data about the membership of schools. The tool basically takes enrollment data previously available only year-by-year from the ATS Annual Data Tables and displays them in one view, over 30 years. Users can view their own school's enrollment trendline or any school's enrollment trendline. Users can also see visualizations of groups of schools based on degree type, gender, and race. To enrollment, we added several views related to finances—both expenses and revenues—last year.

This year, after 15 years of collection, we added personnel data. Users can now view different kinds of personnel data:

- **Faculty FTE** for each school

- **Student to faculty ratio** for each school

- **Distribution of faculty** rank, gender, race, and full-time status for different groups of schools (you choose the type)

- **Distribution of administrator** gender and race for different groups of schools (you choose the type)

In addition, this year we completed visualizations of the ATS Annual Report Forms' Admissions and Completions modules. Similar to the enrollment views, completions can now be viewed for each school and visualizations of groups of schools based on degree type, gender, and race. Thirty years of admissions data can also be compared across various peer schools to observe yield—the proportion of those who applied or were accepted who actually enrolled.

The tool is particularly helpful if you put it side-by-side with your school's Strategic Information Report (SIR). You can compare your school's picture with those of your peers. For example, how does your applicant yield look compared to that of other mid-sized Evangelical schools that are related (embedded)? For the MDiv? DMin? Given that yield plays an important role in the enrollment picture, this might be interesting to explore.

Making data more accessible reflects the two core values guiding ATS research: humility and hospitality. Good data can inform good institutional 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 must have access to the data, know what data are available to help them, and how to interpret the data. A sense of hospitality assures that we continue to make data usable by all institutions.

<u>ATS Data Visualization</u> attends to the strategic priorities set by the ATS Board of Directors, as school leaders make important institutional decisions, and brings more voices into the work of interpreting the data. Always remember that data like these tell only a part of the story. At ATS, we firmly believe in the benefits of mixed-methods research and encourage users to practice such approaches to their data interpretation.

Attendees at this year's ATS/COA Biennial Meeting Onsite Conference in Pittsburgh had an opportunity to play with the new modules.

In this environment where schools are making future projections amid great change, tools that provide concrete data can help. Be sure to bookmark the page, share it, and return to the data often!

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