

ATS schools report fall enrollment numbers

By CHRIS MEINZER

ATS requested expedited fall enrollment data from member schools to provide timely feedback as to the trajectory of enrollment for fall 2022. As of October 24, 226 schools—about 81% of the membership—reported data. Of the 226 schools reporting, about 44% have shown enrollment increases and 56% have shown enrollment decreases.

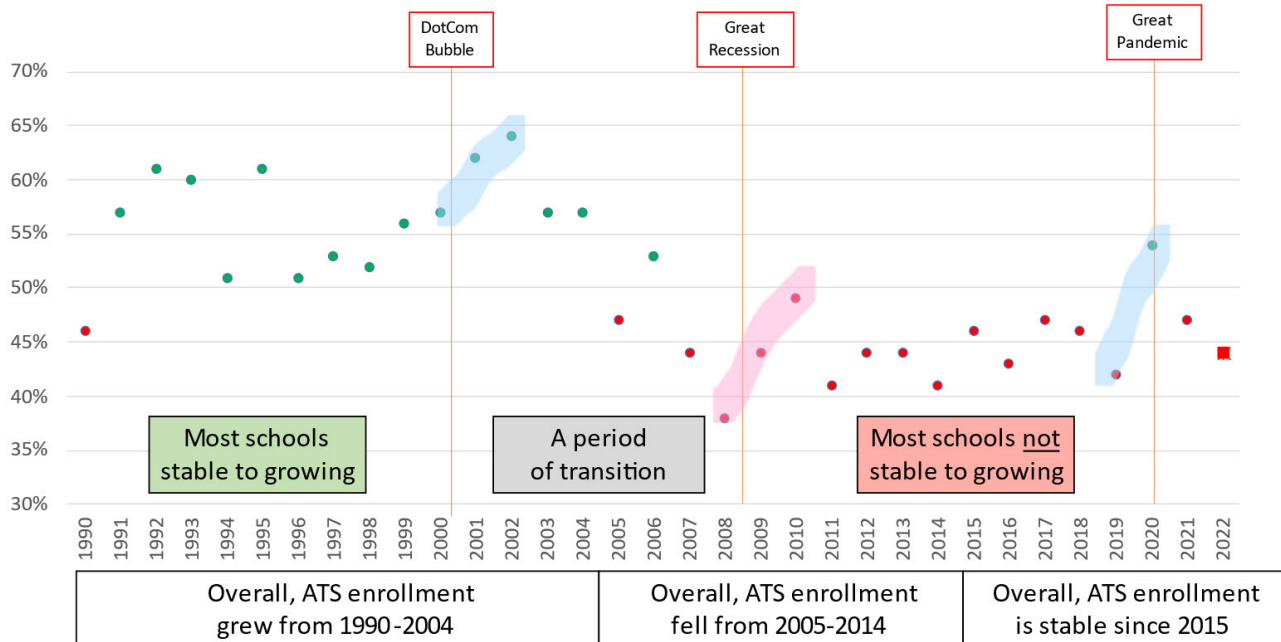


relative percentage just after the Great Recession of 2008–2009 and during the recent global pandemic.

The ratio of about 45% of schools growing to 55% of schools declining year-over-year is a return to a trend that has been occurring since around 2006. As one can see in the graph below, there were some bumps in this

For example, in fall 2020, almost 55% of ATS schools showed year-over-year increases, but this bump was short-lived and the pattern headed back toward historic

Percent of ATS Schools with Stable to Growing Annual Head Count Enrollment Year-over-Year



trends. In fall 2021, 47% of ATS schools had enrollment increases and 53% had enrollment decreases.

These year-over-year changes reflect a broader trend in ATS enrollment. From 1990 to about 2005, more schools grew than declined year-over-year and this translated into growing enrollment across ATS schools. A shift began in 2005 when more schools declined year-over-year and total enrollment across ATS began to decline and continued to decline until about 2014. Although the pattern of approximately 45% growing to 55% declining has continued in recent years, overall ATS enrollment has stabilized.

Below is a chart that shows (through October 24) the percent of schools with enrollment increases and decreases and the median change. The chart shows this for all ATS schools reporting to-date as well as data by ecclesial family and structure.

In fall 2021, ATS schools educated more than 78,600 students across nearly 280 schools. With about 55 ATS schools still to report in fall 2022, it appears that

total ATS enrollment will be down slightly to stable, and will continue the trend from the last few years. As the remaining schools report, updated enrollment trends will be posted on [Engage ATS](#) and will appear in the November issue of *Colloquy Online*.

As a leader in a theological school, it is imperative that you analyze not only your year-over-year trends but what has been happening with your enrollment and mission over the last decade. Take the time to compare where you have been to where you are now so you can best discern where you need to go. ATS has tools that can help you with external benchmarking, such as the [ATS Data Visualization Tool](#) and the [ATS Strategic Information Report](#).

If you would like to have a [presentation](#) specifically tailored to your enrollment and economic data that places your institution in the context of broader North American theological education, email Chris Meinzer at meinzer@ats.edu.

	All ATS	Evangelical	Mainline	RC/Orthodox		Independent	Related
Increase	44%	41%	32%	65%		46%	40%
Decrease	56%	59%	68%	35%		54%	60%
Median Change	-2.9%	-3.2%	-5.9%	2.6%		-1.8%	-3.4%



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