

ATS welcomes new face and staff transition

By *MARISSA DECHANT*

The Association of Theological Schools (ATS) is pleased to announce Elise W. Sutter as administrative assistant for student data, and the transition of Meghan Niskach to conference coordinator. ATS has made several changes to its staff in the past year to better serve its member schools as they navigate opportunities and challenges.



Sutter has been hired as a part-time administrative assistant for student data. She coordinates the Entering, Graduating, and Alumni Questionnaires for member schools—producing and distributing reports from the data. With more than a decade of experience

in social work and mental health counseling, she was most recently the human resources coordinator for an early childhood education organization in Pittsburgh, and she led an adoption team to provide services for youth in foster care. Strengthened by her passion for helping others, she does volunteer work in children and family ministries, and she is the leadership counsel chair for an organization supporting families in crisis.

Sutter earned a master's degree in clinical psychology from Chatham University, and bachelor's degrees in psychology and religious studies from Westminster College.

"We are thrilled to have Elise as a member of the ATS research team working to support member schools with their student data needs. Her ongoing experiences in mental health counseling and ministry leadership offer invaluable gifts to our membership, and I'm looking forward to seeing her shine as the incoming administrative assistant for student data," said Christopher The, ATS director of student research and initiative management.

"Elise brings many important skills and relevant experience to her new role. Additionally, her commitment to the work of communities of faith will serve ATS schools quite well," said Chris Meinzer, ATS senior director and COO.

In her new role as conference coordinator, **Niskach** handles the procurement of hotel contracts for all ATS events and acts as a liaison between hotels and the Association. She started at ATS as part-time administrative assistant



for student information resources when she joined the staff in 2014, and most recently served as coordinator for student personnel and questionnaires.

“We are grateful for Meghan’s willingness to shift roles within ATS,” said Meinzer. “In her new role as conference coordinator, she can now utilize her education and prior work experience in hospitality across all ATS programming. Her tenure with ATS has also allowed her to build a wealth of knowledge of why and how we do our conferences in support of our membership.”

Over the past few years, the ATS Board of Directors has been identifying, iterating, and clarifying the Association’s four strategic priorities: (1) Equip leaders for effective change, (2) Explore and encourage innovative financial and organizational models, (3) Enhance adaptive work in schools’ educational missions, and (4) Engage the membership in its broad diversity. These staff changes strengthen ATS and better position it to fulfill these priorities.



Marissa Dechant is Communications Coordinator at The Association of Theological Schools in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Visit the [ATS website](#) for staff department updates, bios, and contact information.