

ATS Research – Meta Research Topics

The following list includes topics and some embedded questions that the Association is interested in learning more about. The Association has longitudinal sets of institutional data provided by all schools annually, longitudinal sets of student and alum data provided by participating schools annually, and one-time cross-sectional sets of survey data that researchers can request as they explore these research topics and questions.

1. Theological Education

- Policy, regulatory patterns—impact, who decides, implications
- Relationship between USDE and theological higher education
- Innovation in theological education
- Organizational learning and change
- Relationship between accreditation and institutional change
- Theological higher education administration
- Making the case for theological higher education—value of theological education to the student, the church, wider society
- Domesticating vs emancipatory impulse of theological education
- Value of degree programs (doctoral, MDiv, other masters)
- Value of non-degree programs (certificate, lifelong learning, pre-masters)
- Relationship between undergraduate and graduate theological education
- Theological education as lifelong learning—beginning/ending of theological education; partners in theological education
- Formation in online contexts
- Diversity, excellence, inclusion
- School capacity to adapt to changing student demographics
- Diversity in leadership
- Race and theological education
- Women in leadership in theological education
- Gender equity
- Economic challenges facing future ministers
- Theologies of money
- Educational models and practices
- Global engagement—partnerships, internationalizing student learning, mobility, access, effect of US theological education and accrediting on theological education and accrediting globally
- Needs of the “ministry” workforce
- Bivocationality
- Religious interests of those in undergrad higher education
- Relationship between graduate theological education and ministry leadership

2. Institutional

- Relationship between institutional mission and a school’s finances
- Relationship between financial health and enrollment
- Governance
- Board influence

- Institutional capacity for ____
- Institutional health (definition?)
- Institutional effectiveness (definition?)
- Diversity in leadership
- Tenure
- Hybrid roles—administrator-scholar-teacher
- Partnerships, Closures, Mergers
- Relationship between denominational/diocesan bodies and the school
- Relationship between churches and the school
- Role of research and data in institutional decision-making
- Online engagement
- Institutional innovation
- Regional differences
- Recruiting students, recruiting faculty
- Sustainable models of the faculty/of staff and administration

3. Constituent Groups

- Presidents
- Academic deans
- Faculty
- CFOs
- Development officers
- Student-life professionals
- Communications/External relations
- IT/Instructional designers
- Institutional effectiveness/Accrediting liaison office
- Chief diversity office(r)
- Racial/ethnic students
- Women students
- Boards