WHY EDUCATIONAL MODELS? WHY NOW?

Theological schools are hybrid institutions ordained for the church and to higher education. Both are in the orbit of academic and fundamental change.

ATS responds, insight from leaders of theological schools, and studies of the rapidly changing religious and demographic landscape in North America call for theological schools to consider some fundamental questions:

- What educational and religious leaders need to serve in changing contexts?
- What current and possible educational models and practices best meet those needs?
- What resources do the schools need to implement new models?
- How can the Association’s member schools collaborate in confronting challenges and creating opportunities?
- How can the Association’s policies and practices best support schools in these efforts?

EDUCATIONAL MODELS AND PRACTICES INCLUDE

- educational program design
- teaching and learning strategies
- curricula
- patterns of educational delivery
- location of educational efforts
- educational goals
- assessment of learning
- models of education adapted to particular constituencies and situations
- academic calendar and class scheduling
- arrangement of educational content (e.g., academic disciplines)

HOW WILL MY SCHOOL BENEFIT?

Through this project, schools have the opportunity to network with peers and to deeper know how learned in pursuit of a shared theme of theological education: the task of providing quality, accessible, affordability, and effective. Some schools will develop and support initiatives for accreditation and grant-funded initiatives under the auspices of the Educational Models and Practices Project. The participating schools will benefit from the new ideas, shared knowledge, best practices, and innovative and effective models and practices explored, assessed, and approved by the project.

HOW CAN I PARTICIPATE?

- Talk with colleagues about the project, what responsibilities look like at your school, or if you’ve got a new model, what you might share with others.
- Respond to invitations to share information about your programs and the work of your graduates.
- Accept invitations to join peer group gatherings to develop, implement, and assess innovative models and practices.

FOR MORE DETAILS, VISIT ATS.EDU

Explore Assess Affirm

THE ATS EDUCATIONAL MODELS AND PRACTICES PROJECT

CONTACT US

STEFAN SAHALES
Senior Director of Programs & Services
sahales@ats.edu | 412-786-6985, ext. 215

LEAH WRIGHT
Administrative Assistant, Faculty Development & Initiatives
wrightl@ats.edu | 412-786-6985, ext. 224

The Association of Theological Schools The Commission on Accrediting
THE ASSOCIATION OF THEOLOGICAL SCHOOLS

SIX WAYS TO EXPLORE, ASSESS, AND AFFIRM

THROUGH FACILITATION AND SUPPORT BY ATS, SCHOOLS WILL ENGAGE ISSUES AND COLLABORATE WITH PEERS IN SIX INTERRELATED AREAS OF WORK.

- MAPPING EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM DEVELOPMENTS IN ATS MEMBER SCHOOLS
  The Association will gather the most comprehensive data it has in history about what schools are doing to serve new constituencies, to make theological education more accessible, and to address patterns of anxiety that have been understandably distressing to students. The project will study particular models and practices and report back findings to the broader membership.

- A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF OTHER PATTERNS OF GRADUATE PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION
  Law schools, business schools, medical schools, and other human service professional schools are struggling with some of the same issues that face theological schools. We want to know what they’re learning and how these insights might inform theological education.

- A STUDY OF THE RELIGIOUS WORKFORCE
  Graduates of ATS member schools are working in a broad range of careers. A representative sample of schools will identify where graduates are serving and how well their theological education prepared them for their work.

- A STUDY OF LEARNING OUTCOMES BASED CURRICULAR DEVELOPMENT
  A number of member schools have developed particularly effective strategies for assessing learning outcomes. The project will gather best practices and work to disseminate them, especially for innovative programs such as online programs, competency-based education, and other new forms.

- INNOVATION AND FACULTY DEVELOPMENT GRANTS
  Small grants will help schools or centers expand upon innovative ideas to support faculty development programs related to new educational models and practices. Work the ATS website for announcements about this request for proposals.

- REDEVELOPMENT OF ACCREDITING STANDARDS
  Ultimately, the findings in this project will inform a substantial development of the Commission on Accrediting’s Standards of Accreditation.

COLLABORATION IS KEY

Many ATS member schools are already engaged in innovative and experimental programs to change the way theological education is designed and delivered. These efforts could be enhanced through collaboration with other schools. This project offers the opportunity—for the first time—to gather all of these innovative ideas together, to learn from the experiences of other schools, and to work together with the full ATS membership. Together, on an as-needed basis with the ATS Secretariat, we can accomplish far more than any one school can on its own.