"I have been involved in many interfaith organizations, and ATS stands alone. Its member schools do not have the same theologies, or views of women’s ministries, or commitments to Christianity, or convictions about science and salvation—nevertheless they respect one another and work together because they are committed to quality education. They uphold an integrity that respects and protects learning environments even when people cannot, will not, and do not agree on content. I know of no other cross cultural and religiously passionate organizations that even imagine doing this, let alone sustaining such a practice over decades. God works in mysterious ways."

Barbara Brown Zikmund
1986–1988 ATS President (the first woman elected to that position)
2004 Distinguished Service Awardee

"The greatest asset ATS has right now is bringing schools and ideas together."

2018 Biennial Meeting participant
A lot has changed in 100 years. The world of 1918 was a much different place. The major crisis with which many countries were dealing was the after-effects of the First World War. The loss of a generation—the tremendous cost of human, cultural, and social capital—exhausted a world that was still in conflict. In the United States, social, religious, and institutional recovery was slow and would last for years after the Great Depression of the 1930s. Daily life was very different, with affordable cars and radio broadcasting, for instance, just emerging as conveniences. In Canada, women obtained the right to vote in federal elections, one year ahead of their US counterparts. The church was on the cusp of the fundamentalist-modernist controversy.

And in 1918, a group of seminary leaders met in Cambridge and began a conversation that would become the American Association of Theological Schools, later The Association of Theological Schools. Much has changed over the course of the past century, and yet there have also been some constants that have been part of our Association’s DNA from the very beginning.

You’ve heard a lot about the theme for this Centennial year: Legacy and Innovation. It calls upon the membership to strengthen this 100-year legacy of cross-ecclesial commitment to improvement and enhancement in theological schools AND to foster and support innovation in member schools.

I would stress the conjunction between these two aspects, highlighting the power of AND. This bi-focal reality is not an either/or polarity between the old and the new. It is a both/and reality that we must live into. We cannot sacrifice the past to meet the needs of the future. We must also not be locked in to our past, ignoring the real challenges and changes that confront us.

In my first year as executive director, I have traveled the country and engaged with personnel from 85% of our member schools, sharing this vision and listening to the persistent refrain from our schools that their practices, and the students they serve, are changing in rapid and profound ways. Certainly, schools can be found on different places on the spectrum between legacy and innovation; and yet each of the schools is having internal discussions about how to best preserve its historical mission and core values, while being attentive to the current environment.

In the midst of these changes, we see schools demonstrating immense creativity. We also hear hope. This is not a pie-in-the-sky type of hope, but a hope that is grounded in the vitality of the schools’ missions, and in the implementation of that mission in new and creative ways.

Legacy and innovation—and uncertain times—are nothing new for the people of God and for those of us who have committed ourselves to the vocation of theological education. God is doing a new thing among us even as schools seek to ground those new things in legacies that stretch back for centuries. Legacy and innovation is what we do. It is what we have done for 100 years. And, with God’s help, it is what we will continue to do.

Frank M. Yamada
Executive Director
The ATS/COA Centennial Biennial Meeting

WELCOME!

10 new Associate member schools
- Academy for Jewish Religion, Yonkers, NY
- Antiochian House of Studies, La Verne, CA
- Catholic Distance University Graduate School of Theology, Charles Town, WV
- The Robert E. Webber Institute for Worship Studies, Jacksonville, FL
- The King’s Seminary, Southlake, TX
- Liberty University Rawlings School of Divinity, Lynchburg, VA
- Methodist Theological Seminary in America, Fullerton, CA
- NAIITS: An Indigenous Learning Community, Montague, PEI
- Oakwood University School of Religion, Huntsville, AL
- Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, WI

4 new Affiliates
- ISAAC: Innovative Space for Asian American Christianity, Los Angeles, CA
- Betty Ann Greenbaum Miller Center for Interreligious Learning & Leadership at Hebrew College, Newton Centre, MA
- The COMISS Network, Keller, TX
- Episcopal Divinity School at Union Theological Seminary, New York, NY

This was my 8th Biennial Meeting, and each meeting has stirred my passion for theological education.”

2018 Biennial Meeting participant

New connections—priceless!”

2018 Biennial Meeting participant
Distinguished Service Awards

At the Centennial Banquet, three veteran theological educators—Anne Anderson (University of St. Michael’s College), John Kinney (Samuel Dewitt Proctor School of Theology at Virginia Union University), and Richard Mouw (Fuller Theological Seminary)—received the Distinguished Service Award. Six past awardees were there to share in the celebration: Barbara Brown Zikmund (2004), Diane Kennedy (2006), David L. Tiede (2010), Barbara G. Wheeler (2012), Justo González (2014), and Katarina Schuth (2016).

Legacies of the future

Why do we do what we do? The final plenary of the Biennial Meeting featured eight students and recent graduates from member schools who shared their stories of how various models of theological education have formed them and informed a broad range of ministries—from restorative justice work to chaplaincy in a maximum-security prison block, from a small rural parish church to an inner city hospital.
The Birth and Growth of a Remarkable Community

The first Conference of Theological Schools was hosted by Harvard University in 1918 to “discuss problems of theological education arising out of the war.” From that initial gathering of delegates from 49 Protestant seminaries, the Association has grown to comprise more than 270 theological schools that represent the full range of Christian expression in North America—mainline Protestant, evangelical Protestant, and Roman Catholic/Orthodox. Membership is open to Jewish schools as well, with a pluralistic Jewish seminary joining this year.

The schools differ from one another in deep and significant ways, but through their membership in ATS, they demonstrate a commitment to shared values about what constitutes good theological education.

Many of the values and commitments that fuel ATS today were evident in the deliberations of its founders and throughout its history. They sought to erect a “big tent” open to broad ecclesial participation, to support bilateral engagement in a global context, to study the “industry” through research and data analysis, and to promote the highest quality in theological education.

“Many of the values and commitments that fuel ATS today were evident in the deliberations of its founders and throughout its history.”

MILESTONES

1918: 101 delegates gather at the Conference of Theological Seminaries and Colleges in the United States and Canada, hosted by Harvard University.

1920: At a second meeting in Toronto, the gathered schools form the Conference of Theological Schools.

1934: The Conference votes to become an accrediting organization: The American Association of Theological Schools (AATS).

1936: The first accrediting Standards are adopted, with the three-year Bachelor of Divinity as the standard first theological degree plus 16 other degrees. 61 schools apply for accreditation. The membership authorizes creation of the Commission on Accrediting.

1938: The AATS, with a membership of 80 schools, issues its first list of 46 accredited schools, 35 of them with notations. Of those initial schools, 35 did not charge tuition. The Commission issues its first annual data report.

1942–1946: World War II brings enrollment declines, accelerated programs to fill vacant pulpits and provide military chaplains, and a move of the AATS office to Washington, DC.

1944: The GI Bill introduces the use of accreditation to unlock federal funds for higher education and open the door to seminary for thousands of veterans.

1955: Lilly Endowment Inc. and Sealantic Fund provide the first major funding for the Association.

1956: AATS hires Charles Taylor as its first full-time executive director. Headquarters are established in Dayton, Ohio. The Association begins granting Faculty Fellowships.

1959: Jesse Ziegler is hired as associate director.

1964: The Theological Education journal is launched.


1966: The Master of Divinity degree is recognized as a first professional degree. By 1971, 61 accredited schools have adopted the MDiv, while 55 retain the BD.

1970: The Association publishes its first Fact Book on Theological Education. A constitutional amendment opens membership to Jewish schools.

1971: A grant supports the addition of a black associate director of the Association.

1972: The first major redevelopment of the accrediting standards is completed. The Association purchases a house in Vandalia, Ohio, as its new headquarters. A staff of 14 serves the Association.

1974: The AATS name is changed to The Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada.

1977: ATS holds its first seminar for CEOs, launching a longstanding commitment to leadership education.

1978: The Committee on Underrepresented Constituencies merges existing committees on the Black Religious Experience, Hispanic/Americans, and Women’s Concerns.

1980: Leon Pacala is elected as third executive director of the Association.

1988: The first Distinguished Service Award is presented to Krister Stendahl.

1990: ATS moves to Pittsburgh and builds its headquarters at 10 Summit Park Drive.

1991: James Waits is elected executive director.

1994: The Henry Luce III Fellows in Theological Education program is launched.

1996: A major redevelopment of the accrediting standards is completed.

1998: Daniel O. Aleshire is appointed executive director. The Women in Leadership program is launched.

2004: ATS and COA are reorganized as separate corporations.

2010–12: The accrediting Standards and Procedures are revised.


2018: ATS celebrates its Centennial.
The Innovation Expo

*representing the collective wisdom of more than 50 ATS member schools*

The Expo showcased lessons learned through both the Educational Models and Practices project and the Economic Challenges Facing Future Ministers project as well as innovations being implemented at member schools. The Biennial Meeting agenda allowed ample time to explore exhibitors’ projects and engage in conversation about what is working at member schools.
State of the Enterprise
Fall 2017

ATS BY THE NUMBERS

Resources Among the Schools
$2.1 billion in total annual unrestricted revenue
$8.5 billion in long-term investments

Portrait of a Median School
10 full-time faculty
14 full-time equivalent faculty
145 headcount students
90 full-time equivalent students
$3.9 million in expenditures

STUDENT HEADCOUNT DISTRIBUTION
BY SCHOOLS ECCLESIAL FAMILY

- 67% Evangelical Protestant
- 23% Mainline Protestant
- 10% Roman Catholic/Orthodox

HEADCOUNT ENROLLMENT
72,896

FACULTY

FULL-TIME ADMINISTRATORS

SCHOOLS
Grants Received
Henry Luce Foundation: Future of Theological Scholarship $600,000
American Association for the Advancement of Science: Science in Seminaries $75,000

New Century Fund Disbursements
Redevelopment of the Accrediting Standards and Procedures $250,000
Global Engagement Initiative $110,000
Since 2010, 27 schools (10% of the ATS membership) have merged, embedded, or otherwise affiliated. Embedded schools now represent about 39% of the membership. At the current pace, in a few years, the majority of ATS schools will be embedded. The current standards were written with an independent, free-standing school in mind, so the new standards will somehow need to address this significant change.

The Master of Divinity degree has been declining for more than a decade (down 15% since 2008), while MA degrees have been growing (up 18% since 2012). These trends suggest that MA enrollment could exceed MDiv enrollment by 2021—for the first time in ATS history. As of 2016, the annual number of MA graduates has already exceeded the number of MDiv graduates.

More than 20 years ago, there were no ATS schools offering online courses or degree programs. Today, almost two-thirds of ATS schools have online courses, and more than a quarter have completely online degree programs.

Degrees and programs are increasingly moving to deeper engagement of a student’s context. Some schools have been engaged in Competency Based Education, where programs are developed after extensive engagement with churches and denominational leaders about what their leaders need from their education. Often students are now not only using their current ministry context as a site of learning, but the context itself incarnates the application of Bible, theology, ministry, and history. Theological education has always cared about context, but now context is the deep tissue in which formation is expected to emerge.
The Work of the Association

EDUCATIONAL MODELS AND PRACTICES

As the Educational Models and Practices project approaches completion, a significant part of the initiative’s work this year was the formation and work of 18 peer groups comprising more than 300 representatives from 110 schools to study particular educational models and practices, analyze their effectiveness, and nurture innovative thinking. They shared their findings with the membership in practical and thought-provoking reports. Meanwhile, the work made possible by more than 100 Innovation and Faculty Development grants is nearing completion. Forums in June and September 2018 brought together recipients of faculty development and innovation grants, respectively, and their final reports will be made available online in the coming year. The peer groups and the Innovation and Faculty Development grantees showcased their work in the Innovation Expo at the 2018 Centennial Biennial Meeting.

In April, educators from law, medicine, social work, business, medical humanities, education, and graduate humanities met with ATS staff and members of the Educational Models and Practices Project Advisory Board to identify and discuss issues of common concern. Participants will re-convene in October 2018 to continue their conversations, leading to a final report to be posted on the ATS website later this year. The study group identified many trends in common, including enrollment challenges in many disciplines, increasing diversity of students, alternate paths to credentials, concerns about the growing costs of education, and innovations in educational models, including uses of educational technologies, more contextually located education, and explorations of competency-based approaches.
ECONOMIC CHALLENGES FACING FUTURE MINISTERS (ECFFM)

A major forum for ECFFM participants in October 2017 included a preconference focused on “Teaching Faith and Finances.”

77% of participating schools lowered either the number of borrowers or the average debt of their graduates.

Average debt incurred by borrowers in 2017–2018: $35,664

The number of borrowers continued to drop. Fewer than half (49%) of students are borrowing.

The ATS Coordination program for the Lilly Theological School Initiative to Address Economic Challenges Facing Future Ministers (ECFFM) is entering its seventh year and is expected to continue through 2020, with 67 schools participating. A major forum for ECFFM participants in October 2017 included a preconference focused on “Teaching Faith and Finances.”

Also started this year was a major assessment of the impact of the grant on participating schools and a project focused on “Healthy Students/Healthy Schools,” which uses data from the ATS Annual Report Forms and the Student Questionnaires to help schools think more holistically about the financial health of their institutions.

The positive impact of the ECFFM initiative continues to grow.

About half (34) of the 67 participating schools offered one-on-one financial counseling in 2017, with 1,729 students participating. Also in 2017, 31 schools offered transcripted courses on finance.
Events for those serving in specific administrative and faculty roles—drawing 1300 attendees—showcased the wisdom of veteran theological educators coupled with the many ways that schools are innovating to respond to a rapidly changing landscape. Webinars have substantially increased the reach of these programs.

2017–2018 Leadership Education Events

- Academic Officers’ Preconference to the Biennial Meeting
- African American CEOs’ and CAOs’ Conference
- Asian Descent CEOs’ and CAOs’ Conference
- Development Officers’ Conference
- Faculty Webinars
- Financial Officers’ Conference
- IT Professionals’ Mini Conference
- Joint AAR/SBL Workshop with Wabash on Formation in Online Contexts
- Latina/o CEOs’ and CAOs’ Conference
- New Presidents’ Conference
- Presidential Leadership Intensive
- Roundtable Seminar for Midcareer Faculty
- Roundtable Seminar for Newly Appointed Faculty
- School for New Deans
- State of the Industry Webinar
- Student Personnel Administrators’ Conference
- Women in Leadership 20th Anniversary Celebration

HENRY LUCE III FELLOWS

The 24th and final class of six Luce Fellows completed their work this year, bringing the total number of Fellows to 160. As this quarter-century tradition draws to a close with the Luce Fellows Conference in fall 2018, ATS is grateful to the Henry Luce Foundation for its extraordinary past support. Luce’s new three-year grant of $600,000 will celebrate and evaluate the legacy of the Fellows program and look forward by exploring needs and models for future theological scholarship.
ATS engages in research and data as part of its 100-year legacy. The ATS research function, a strategic priority of the Association’s work plan, ensures that basic institutional and student data are accessible and comprehensible but also that additional research is conducted on topics of special interest to theological educators. Specific lines of inquiry and research methods are built into each major initiative that ATS undertakes with external funding. In addition, the research team and outside consultants engage in special research projects to support a broad understanding of theological education. A new research webpage features ATS data and research, the research of partner organizations, and an invitation to new lines of inquiry.

### Educational Models and Practices Peer Groups
- **Doctor of Ministry**: a survey of DMin directors on program characteristics and effectiveness
- **International Partnerships**: a survey of deans to determine best practices in working with partners worldwide
- **Online Learning**: a survey of deans to identify educational effectiveness of online programs

### Educational Models and Practices Workforce Mapping Study
An examination of more than 940 graduates to determine where they are serving and what competencies are required

### Graduate Experiences with Debt (Economic Challenges Facing Future Ministers)
a survey-based examination of graduates and their experiences with educational debt and strategies to address it

### Women in Leadership
An in-depth look at the perspectives of women in theological education

### RESEARCH IN SUPPORT OF ATS INITIATIVES

At its June meeting, the ATS Board of Commissioners voted to adopt a new approach to sharing data and cultivating diverse conversations with outside researchers. The new Data Sharing Policy promises to expand the scope of inquiry into general issues of theological education as well as more in-depth understanding of ATS member schools, the students who attend them, and the administrators and faculty who serve them.

Expanded access and collaborative thinking—invoking outside researchers as well as ATS staff—will develop a robust body of research literature on the study of theological education, which can serve schools as a resource of good information as they make important decisions in a time of great change.

### WHERE ARE THE 2017-18 GRADUATES PLANNING TO SERVE?

- **26% seeking to serve in a congregation**
- **35% already serving in a congregation**
- **39% planning to serve in other settings**

- **Other Ministry**
- **Education Other**
- **Hospital/Hospice Chaplain Undecided**
- **Further Graduate Studies Social Work/Social Services Self-Employed**
- **Work in for-profit Sector Exec/Admin. in non-profit**
An interest in global theological education has been part of the ethos of ATS since its very beginning. The Association has been actively working toward cultivating a more global theological perspective since the 1980s. But three more recent historical developments in the global landscape have prompted a renewed commitment of worldwide partnerships: (1) the demographic shifts signaled by the cipher “2040,” recognizing that in less than two decades—in North America, at least—white individuals will constitute a minority of the population; (2) the shifting “center” of Christianity from the global North to the global South; and (3) the rapid growth of immigrant churches in North America in the last 20 years.

With support from the ATS New Century Fund, a working group drawn from member schools will develop an agenda and guidelines for effective global partnerships, with staff leadership by Lester Edwin J. Ruiz in his expanded role as director of accreditation and global engagement. In addition, ATS will work toward making its services (such as leadership education events) available to majority world schools that are in partnership with ATS schools and identifying ways in which ATS accreditation might serve majority world theological education.

The interest among member schools is evident in the more than 150 individuals who attended a “Global Conversation” breakfast at the 2018 Biennial Meeting in Denver.

At a meeting in 1919, the year after the very first meeting of the Conference of Theological Seminaries in the United States and Canada, “a subcommittee was appointed to procure data relating to theological schools, courses of study, conditions of admissions, etc., in England, Scotland, France, Switzerland, and Holland for the information of students of the United States and Canada who desire to continue their studies in the countries named . . .”
Since 1997, ATS has designed intentional educational programming as part of its Women in Leadership (WIL) initiative. This year, a three-day celebration gathered 150 women at all stages in their careers, many of them representing milestones as the first women to serve in various capacities in theological education or at their respective schools. Other events gathered cohorts of women serving in particular senior administrator roles.

**WOMEN IN ATS MEMBER SCHOOLS**

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1971</th>
<th>2017</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Administrators</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>39%</td>
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The Work of the Commission

THE REDEVELOPMENT OF THE STANDARDS AND PROCEDURES FOR ACCREDITATION

The membership embarks on a journey to a new future

In a 2016 survey, the ATS membership indicated that one of ATS's highest priorities should be “a revision of accrediting standards to be relevant and flexible and to encourage innovation.” At the Centennial Biennial Meeting in June, the Commission membership voted “to authorize the ATS Board of Commissioners to undertake a comprehensive redevelopment of the Standards of Accreditation and the Commission Policies and Procedures expeditiously and with a substantial participation process.”

This represents just the third overall redevelopment in the 80 years that ATS has engaged in accrediting graduate theological education.

ATS standards reflect the era from which they come. We look at the standards we have now and see an artifact of the postmodern era that seeks to be all things to all people and perforce falls short. What is this era?”

Sarah Drummond, Andover Newton Seminary at Yale Divinity School

Staff Transitions

Debbie Creamer, who has served on the COA accrediting staff since 2013, has been appointed senior director of accreditation. In her new role, she will lead the accrediting staff, provide education and support to member schools, and support the work of the Board of Commissioners. She will continue to serve as liaison to more than 50 ATS member schools.

Lester Edwin J. Ruiz, a COA accredditor since 2008, has been named director of accreditation and global engagement. He will continue to serve as liaison to more than 60 ATS member schools while also continuing to champion the Association’s commitment to strategic conversations and partnerships with theological educators worldwide.

Elsie M. Miranda joined the COA accrediting team on July 1, 2018. She comes to ATS from Barry University in Miami, Florida, and will assume responsibility for a portfolio of 50 member schools.

A Task Force of 19 individuals, led by Sarah Drummond (Andover Newton Seminary at Yale Divinity School) and Oliver McMahan (Pentecostal Theological Seminary), immediately launched a two-year process—starting with a working forum at the Biennial Meeting. They will continue with a year of listening, researching, and reflecting, during which the Task Force will engage a wide variety of membership groups, and expect to have a proposed set of standards and procedures for the 2020 Biennial Meeting in Vancouver.
ACCREDITING ACTIONS

SIX SCHOOLS WERE GRANTED INITIAL ACCREDITATION DURING THE 2017–2018 ACADEMIC YEAR

- Central Baptist Theological Seminary of Minneapolis, Plymouth, MN
- Heritage Theological Seminary, Cambridge, ON
- Kearley Graduate School of Theology of Faulkner University, Montgomery, AL
- Northwest Nazarene University Graduate School of Theology, Nampa, ID
- Presbyterian Theological Seminary in America, Santa Fe Springs, CA
- St. Mark’s College, Vancouver, BC

The total of 49 petitions for exceptions and experiments approved this past year is a record—more than twice as many as the 22 approved the previous year and more than the 36 approved the year before that. Since the 2012 revision of the Standards that allowed for exceptions and experiments, the Board of Commissioners has approved 173 such petitions from 73 different ATS schools, with 90% of them dealing with residency.

Finances, assessment of student learning, and planning/evaluation continue to be the three most frequent causes for actions taken by the Board of Commissioners, accounting for nearly two-thirds of all Board-required reports (99 of 161 reports vs. 71 of 148 reports the year before).

The 161 total petitions approved this past year is also a record—well above the 92 approved the previous year and more than the previous record of 138 set the year before. The second most frequent petition (after exceptions and experiments) was for extension sites (45), followed by new degrees (31).
INTRODUCTION OF THE SCHOOL FOR PEER REVIEWERS

In his 2008 history of ATS, *A Community of Conversation*, Glenn Miller observed that one of the most significant milestones in the Association’s 100-year history did not occur until the mid-1960s. While ATS had been accrediting schools since 1938, it was not until the 1960s that it began requiring two things that are now quite common: (1) the self-study process and (2) the practice of external peer reviews by teams of volunteers. Before then, accreditation was basically done on a “one-and-done” basis. Schools were essentially granted “accreditation for life,” based on an initial checklist completed typically by only one person at the school that was then reviewed by a single ATS staff member.

The new School for Peer Reviewers, which debuted January 18–19, 2018, is a fully funded opportunity for up to 25 people, ranging from those who are about to do their very first accreditation visits to those who have done a half dozen or more visits. It is hoped that this mix of new and experienced reviewers engaged in peer education will help build a cohesive community of improvement.

“The work of accrediting simply could not be done without the hundreds of volunteers who give scores of hours each year.”

Tom Tanner
ATS Director of Accreditation
A YEAR IN THE LIFE OF COLLOQUIY ONLINE

11 issues, 71 stories, 32,446 opens, 9,037 clicks

Colloquy Online is opened by more than 3,600 people each month, providing a wealth of data-driven trends analysis, best practices in administration, and reflections from veteran theological educators.

Read these stories and others at www.ats.edu.

Two new issues of the Theological Education journal focused on “Theological Education Between the Times” and “A Tribute to Daniel O. Aleshire.”
People

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(as of June 21, 2018)

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