

ATS adds research and data page to website

By DEBORAH H. C. GIN

As part of a longstanding ATS commitment to research, ATS has launched a new web presence that increases access to institutional and student data, research related to various ATS initiatives, and the research of others with an interest in theological education and religion. As the new page makes its debut, ATS Director of Research and Faculty Development Deborah H. C. Gin answers some questions about the new resource.

Q: Is this new information?

A: The webpage lists information that has been on the Association's website for many years and is used regularly by schools (e.g., Annual Data Tables and Total School Profiles), but it also has annually updated information that many people have not had access to until now.

For example, most school representatives who participated in the Economic Challenges Facing Future Ministers (ECCFM) initiative have seen previous years' data about student debt, but those not involved with ECCFM may have not. Similarly, most deans and presidents will have seen the 2016 Biennial Meeting presentation on the effectiveness of various programs in which schools have engaged, but others may have not.

Most importantly, the *organization* of the information is new. The ATS Research and Data webpage brings good information to one convenient location, including institutional and student data, recent ATS research on special topics in theological education, recent research by others,



and new research opportunities—datasets, research questions, and tools for accessing.

Q: Why is having ATS research on the website important?

A: Last June, the Board of Commissioners approved a new policy to provide access to institutional data. My hope is that, with greater access, more researchers will conduct analysis on and contribute their interpretations of the data. In such a context, the role of the Association's research function shifts beyond providing important analysis and interpretation of information to also include the culling and vetting of information. Schools need quality information; the *busy-ness* of schools means they need quality meta-sites where they trust the information that has been culled. The ATS staff research team relies heavily on the ATS Research and Data Advisory Committee to vet the resources contained on the website.

Q: How will the webpage benefit the schools and how can they make the most of it?

A: As the webpage develops and incorporates findings from the Association's and others' research, schools can

use this information as they make critical decisions. I encourage schools to make use of the webpage in three ways:

1. Visit, play, bookmark, and return—check out some of the findings (e.g., Women in Leadership, Faculty, Students) and return soon for data visualization—a hands-on tool to slice data that makes sense to you.

2. Find helpful resources—explore various links with information about clergy, congregations, or their communities.

3. Spread the word—connect researchers, including doctoral students, to ATS early in the research process.



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