

120 comments and counting . . . ATS membership weighs in on proposed Standards

By TOM TANNER

The Redevelopment Task Force has received more than 120 comments from the ATS membership since the first public draft of the proposed Standards of Accreditation was released on December 2. Nearly one-third of those comments have come through Engage ATS, the new online community for ATS members, and nearly one-fifth have come through a specialized online survey. The remaining half have come through emails or through Q & A sessions held at ATS leadership education events during the last two months, which have engaged nearly 150 ATS members. Very few comments have been received on the proposed Policies and Procedures.

The responses so far have been overwhelmingly positive, with many good questions and suggestions as well.

Affirmations include: "Outstanding job of incorporating feedback [during the year of listening last year] from member schools," "I'm pleased that comments from the ATS Educational Models and Practices Project were incorporated into these standards," and "these standards move [us] significantly in the right direction."



To be sure, some commenters raised some significant concerns, especially concerning the scalability of accrediting standards for smaller schools and the proposed admissions requirements for the Doctor of Ministry degree.

Two of the larger questions raised are: (1) How will the proposed standards, which are principled-based, hold schools sufficiently accountable? and (2) What is the role and authority of the proposed "self-study prompts?" Many specific suggestions were made concerning the wording in a number of standards.

All the comments received to date, including suggested revisions, were reviewed by the Redevelopment Task Force when it met on January 29. Resulting revisions were then be reviewed by the ATS Board of Commissioners at a joint meeting with the task force on January 30. Based on those conversations, a second public draft will be released by February 17.

The task force has scheduled six regional meetings and two webinars for membership input on the second draft.

More than 280 ATS members have registered so far for one of those eight events.

If you have any input to give the task force, please email us at reddevelopment@ats.edu. For an overview of the redevelopment process, please visit our [webpage](#).



Tom Tanner is Director of Accreditation at The Association of Theological Schools in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. He also serves as the ATS Commission staff liaison for the redevelopment process.