Data visualization: 2019–20 enrollment update now available

BY DEBORAH H. C. GIN

In January, The Association of Theological Schools (ATS) announced the launch of its data visualization tool, which allows engagers to slice and view enrollment data to address questions that are important for their contexts.

This month, to coincide with the update to the ATS Annual Data Tables, ATS published an update to the data visualization tool, adding enrollment data that schools submitted for the 2019–20 academic year. (See Chris Meinzer's article for analysis on enrollment trends this year.)

You may have already seen the article regarding the launch, but as a reminder, here are some questions to explore, using the tool:

- Current **enrollments for specific schools**

- 30-year **enrollment trends for groups of schools**—Are there more or fewer schools that are trending up since the downturn in 2008?

- **Trends according to type of school**—How do enrollments compare between denominationally affiliated schools and independent schools, within a certain ecclesial family?

- **Intersection of gender/race/degree category and any school slicers**—What is the picture of growth in racial/ethnic students or white students? How does this trend line differ for Evangelical, Mainline, and Roman Catholic/Orthodox schools?

Which data do you want to explore?

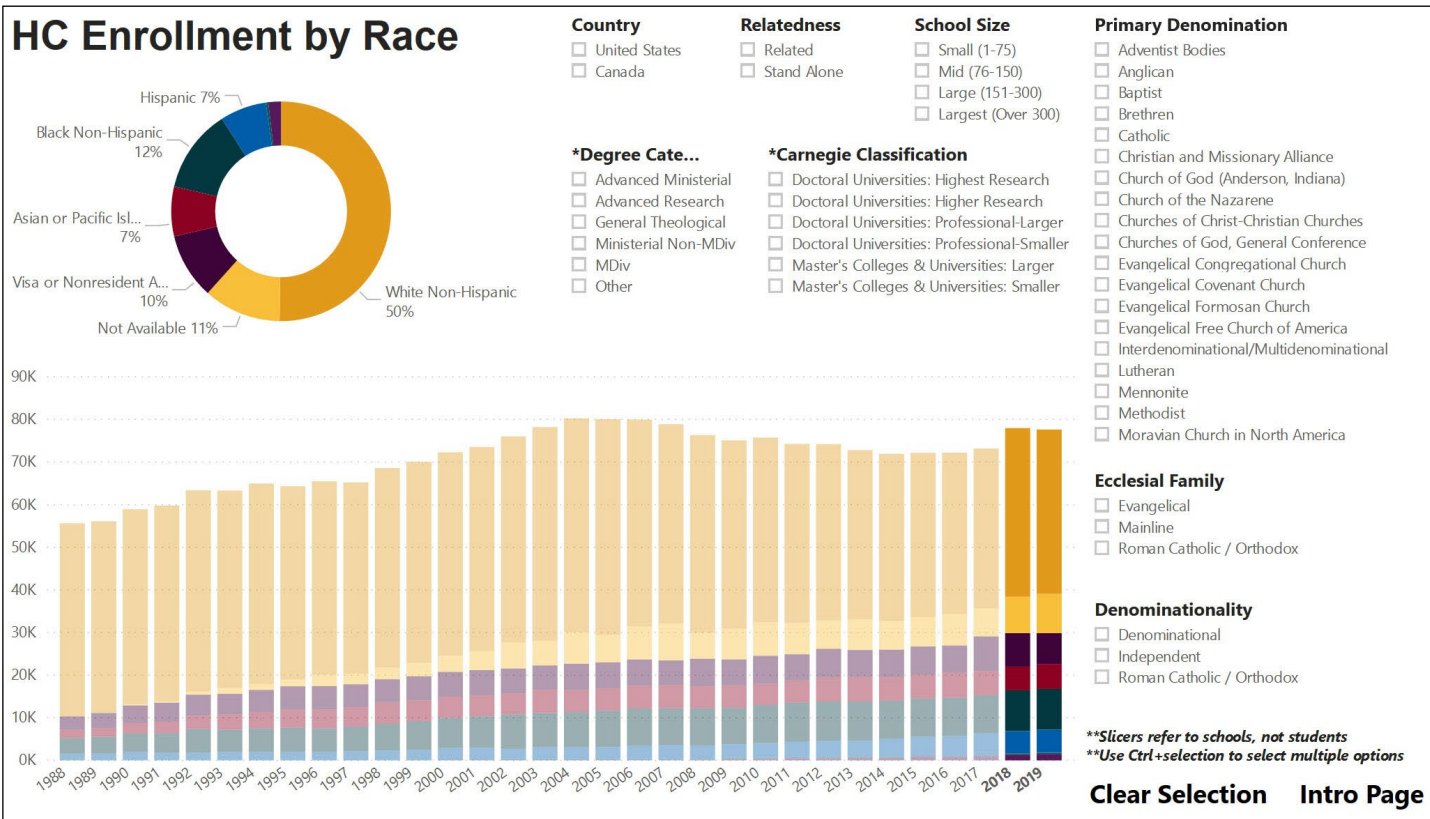| Summary Of Enrollment	Summary Of Schools
Enrollment By Year	Enrollment By Gender
Enrollment By Degree	Enrollment By Race
Glossary	

- **Specific degree categories with all of the above**—What does the 30-year trend line look like for the MDiv, MA Professional ("non-MDiv ministerial"), or advanced professional (e.g., DMin) degree types? Are any of these growing overall? For those that are growing, what is the gender or racial composition? Is it the same for schools in all ecclesial families?

- **Click on one year or multiple years**—Have we seen the pattern of growth/decline of recent years elsewhere in the 30 years?

Instead of open-ended exploration, perhaps you would rather start with targeted questions for your context:

- What do we see for our school? Do we know what our trend lines are? Where can we find them for our specific school? (Hint: check your Strategic Information Report.)

- What does it mean for our school that our trend lines do/don't align with the trends of our "group(s)"?

HC Enrollment by Race

Country
☐ United States
☐ Canada

Relatedness
☐ Related
☐ Stand Alone

School Size
☐ Small (1-75)
☐ Mid (76-150)
☐ Large (151-300)
☐ Largest (Over 300)

Primary Denomination
☐ Adventist Bodies
☐ Anglican
☐ Baptist
☐ Brethren
☐ Catholic
☐ Christian and Missionary Alliance
☐ Church of God (Anderson, Indiana)
☐ Church of the Nazarene
☐ Churches of Christ-Christian Churches
☐ Churches of God, General Conference
☐ Evangelical Congregational Church
☐ Evangelical Covenant Church
☐ Evangelical Formosan Church
☐ Evangelical Free Church of America
☐ Interdenominational/Multidenominational
☐ Lutheran
☐ Mennonite
☐ Methodist
☐ Moravian Church in North America

***Degree Cate...**
☐ Advanced Ministerial
☐ Advanced Research
☐ General Theological
☐ Ministerial Non-MDiv
☐ MDiv
☐ Other

***Carnegie Classification**
☐ Doctoral Universities: Highest Research
☐ Doctoral Universities: Higher Research
☐ Doctoral Universities: Professional-Larger
☐ Doctoral Universities: Professional-Smaller
☐ Master's Colleges & Universities: Larger
☐ Master's Colleges & Universities: Smaller

Ecclesial Family
☐ Evangelical
☐ Mainline
☐ Roman Catholic / Orthodox

Denominationality
☐ Denominational
☐ Independent
☐ Roman Catholic / Orthodox

**Slicers refer to schools, not students
**Use Ctrl+selection to select multiple options

Clear Selection   Intro Page

- What does it mean for our school that growth can be found in certain segments (by school type, degree category, student race/gender), but not in others?

- What do the data tell us for the possible future? Given the degree programs we offer, should we be targeting particular groups of students?

- Who else at our school needs to wrestle with these data?

Keep in mind the words of caution we offered in January. First, in order to create an accurate history of the 30 years, we included all schools that were active that year; however, not all these schools are listed in the "by school" visualization. Schools, of course, have left and entered the Association during the 30 years, but the list of schools reflects only those that are currently active.

Second, it is important for users to simultaneously look at trend lines and specific enrollment counts. Trend lines may look dramatic for a particular school or with a particular slicer, but trends tend to be exaggerated when counts are smaller (i.e., a 45-degree slant from one year to the next may represent only three students).

Finally, remember that data like these tell only a part of the story. At ATS, we firmly believe in the benefits of mixed-methods research, and we encourage users of this tool to practice mixed-method approaches to their data interpretation as well.

In this environment where schools are making future projections amidst crisis fallout, tools such as this can provide concrete information to make important decisions. By the end of the year, we hope to add another segment to enrollment (e.g., finances, personnel). Be sure to bookmark the page, share it, and return to the data often (first time loading may take a minute)!

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