



Pittsburgh Theological Seminary Statement of Student Achievement and Educational Effectiveness *January 2020*

Mission Statement: *Participating in God's ongoing mission in the world, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary is a community of Christ joining in the Spirit's work of forming and equipping people for ministries familiar and yet to unfold and communities present and yet to be gathered.*

Pittsburgh Theological Seminary (PTS) is committed to providing high-quality educational programs. The mission of the Seminary centers on forming and equipping people to serve the church in a broad variety of ministry and community situations, both traditional and emerging. In order to ensure we are achieving our mission, we regularly assess our programs and the Seminary in general to determine student achievement and educational effectiveness.

In this report, there are three areas of student achievement and education effectiveness that are addressed: **Academic Effectiveness; Overall Satisfaction with Preparation and Experience;** and **Program Completion and Placement.**

ACADEMIC EFFECTIVENESS

The academic programs of the Seminary are designed to prepare leaders to serve the church in a broad variety of ministry situations, both traditional and emerging. Some of our graduates are completing their first professional degree while others are expanding their education through certificates, second degrees or the Doctor of Ministry program.

The Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes

The faculty at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary is committed to excellence in teaching and is always striving to better serve students. But how do we know what we need to do better? That is where the work of assessment comes in.

The assessment of student learning outcomes at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary is the practical expression of two things:

- our curiosity about what is happening to our students as a result of our teaching
- the desire to keep the educational promises we make to students when they enroll at PTS.

Assessment is the systematic way the faculty investigates how we are doing *as a team of teachers* by looking closely at how our students are doing *as a group* in relation to the learning outcomes we have for each of our academic programs. We assess some learning outcomes from each program each year, examining a random sample of papers, examinations, projects,

theses, sermons, field education reports, and other sorts of assignments, evaluating what we find there in a systematic way.

Once we have come to some conclusions about how students are doing in relation to a particular program learning outcome, we make changes that we think will improve student performance in the future.

Highlights of changes that resulted from 2018-2019 assessment activities include:

- The new field education requirement will be significantly more robust than the old field education offering. The field experience will be joined with two semesters of course work (six semester-hours total). Field Education will address many issues of integration and interpreting biblical and theological themes in context. The new field education course(s) will require students to apply work in required courses to a ministry context in numerous ways: evaluate the context sociologically; assess practices of a Christian community theologically; address biblical and theological issues raised in required courses through interaction with people in a ministry context; lead practices of ministry in a ministry context.
- Numerous places in the new curriculum address issues of integration and holistic interpretation. In addition to the field education requirement, students will also take a course that requires them to grapple with some subject or issues by considering how the whole biblical narrative speaks to the subject or issue; students will take a worship course that will bring together various parts of the curriculum and require interaction and integration.
- Several courses in the new curriculum aim to help students understand and engage ministry contexts in a more meaningful way. This is particularly true of Contextual Analysis, the Worship Seminar, Ethics and Society, and the Historical Context elective.

Questions about the assessment of student learning outcomes at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary? Contact Barbara Blodgett, Associate Dean of Academic Programs and Assessment, at bblodgett@pts.edu.

Educational Effectiveness in Facilitating Skill Areas (GSQ Table 15)

Each year graduates are asked to complete the Graduating Student Questionnaire (GSQ) which is produced by the Association of Theological Schools (ATS). For this report we have chosen to only focus on those items which are most clearly related to outcomes and educational effectiveness.

The following table and chart provide information which indicates student perceptions about how their academic programs and overall experiences in the Seminary have prepared them for

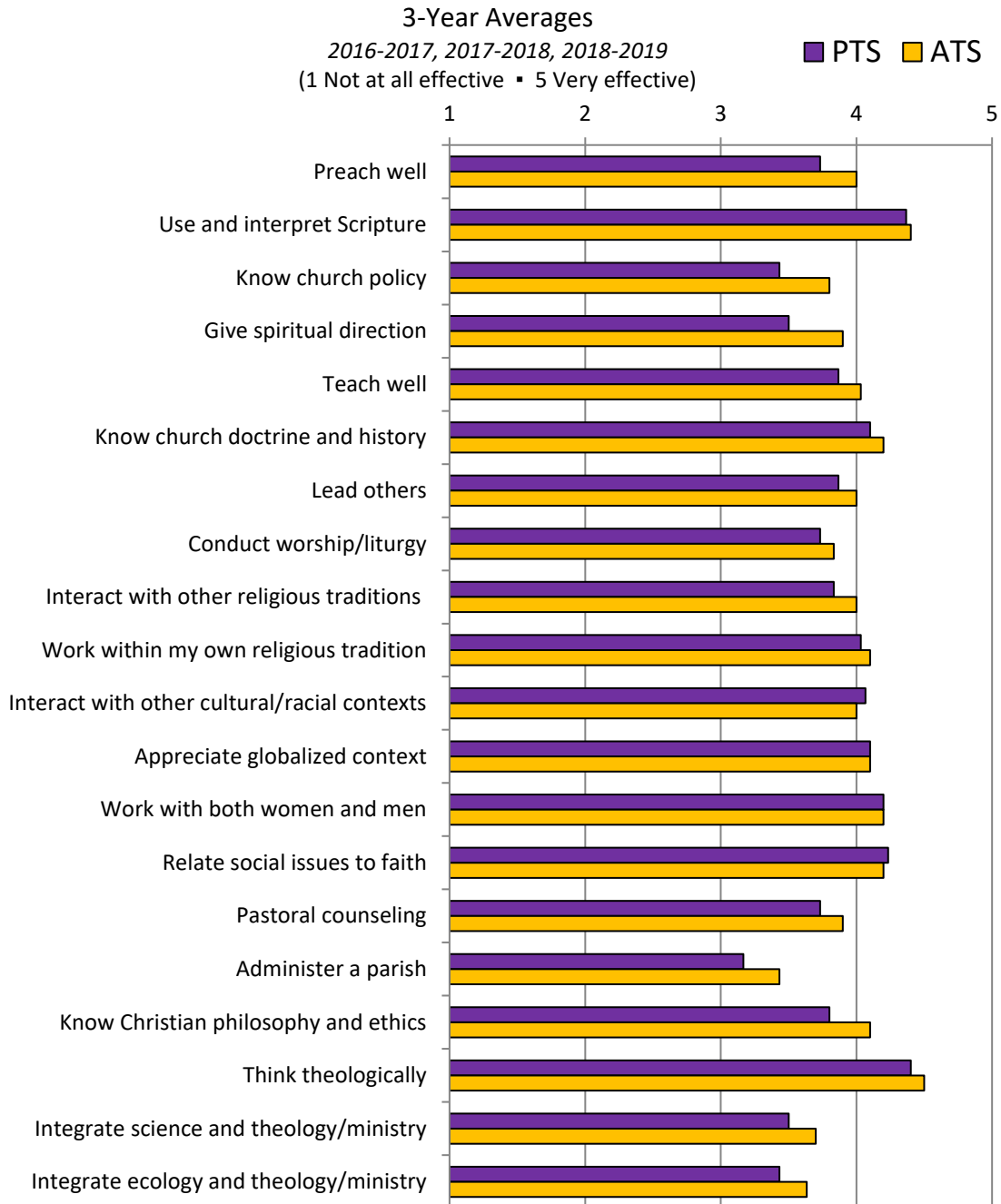
future work. In the table, the year-by-year results for Pittsburgh Theological Seminary are presented. The chart compares three-year averages for PTS and for all ATS institutions.

Educational Effectiveness in Facilitating Skill Areas

1 Not at all effective ▪ 2 Not very effective ▪ 3 Somewhat effective ▪ 4 Effective ▪ 5 Very effective

Skill Area	2016- 2017	2017- 2018	2018- 2019
Ability to preach well	3.5	3.8	3.9
Ability to use and interpret Scripture	4.5	4.1	4.5
Knowledge of church policy/canon law	3.6	3.4	3.3
Ability to give spiritual direction	3.4	3.5	3.6
Ability to teach well	4.0	3.7	3.9
Knowledge of church doctrine and history	4.1	3.9	4.3
Ability to lead others	3.7	3.7	4.2
Ability to conduct worship/liturgy	3.6	3.6	4.0
Ability to interact effectively with those of religious traditions other than my own	4.0	3.6	3.9
Ability to work effectively within my own religious tradition	4.2	3.8	4.1
Ability to interact effectively with those from cultural and racial/ethnic contexts other than my own	4.0	3.8	4.4
Awareness and appreciation of the globalized context in which ministry is practiced	3.9	4.0	4.4
Ability to work effectively with both women and men	4.4	3.8	4.4
Ability to relate social issues to faith	4.2	4.0	4.5
Ability in pastoral counseling	3.8	3.6	3.8
Ability to administer a parish	3.3	3.0	3.2
Knowledge of Christian philosophy and ethics	3.9	3.9	3.6
Ability to think theologically	4.4	4.3	4.5
Ability to integrate insights from science into theology and ministry	3.4	3.7	3.4
Ability to integrate ecological concerns into theology and ministry	3.3	3.5	3.5

Educational Effectiveness in Facilitating Skill Areas



OVERALL SATISFACTION WITH PREPARATION AND EXPERIENCE

Each academic program has specific outcomes and general program goals. While these are very important there are other factors that contribute either directly or indirectly to educational effectiveness.

Again, the Graduating Student Questionnaire (GSQ), produced by the Association of Theological Schools (ATS), provides useful information in this area. For this report we have chosen to only focus on those items which are most clearly related to outcomes and educational effectiveness.

Level of Satisfaction with School's Services and Academic Resources (GSQ Table 20)

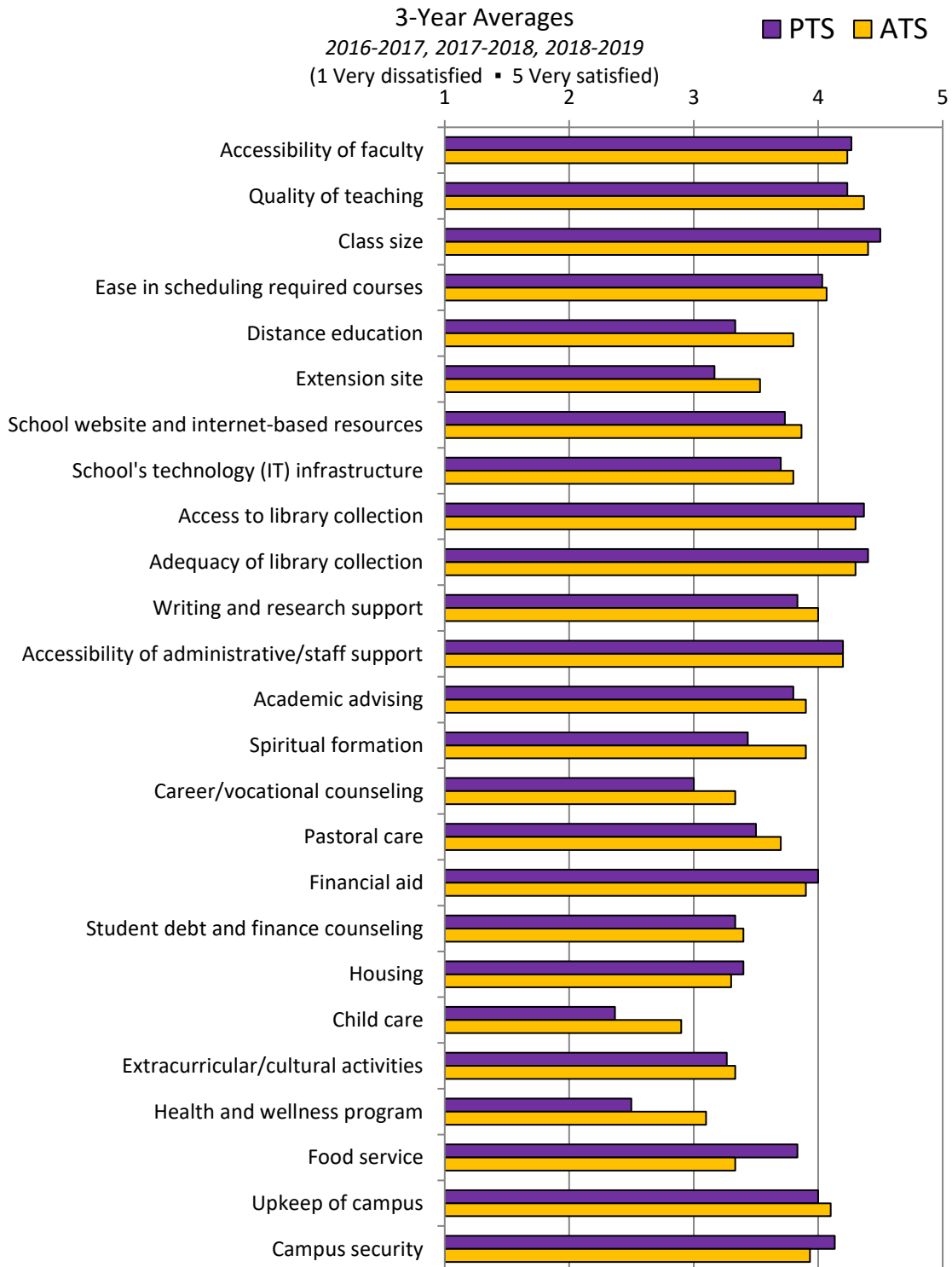
The following table and chart provide information which indicates the most recent results for student perceptions about how the Seminary's services and academic resources contributed to their overall success.

Satisfaction with School's Services and Academic Resources

1 Very dissatisfied ▪ 2 Somewhat dissatisfied ▪ 3 Neutral ▪ 4 Satisfied ▪ 5 Very satisfied

Service / Academic Resource	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019
Accessibility of faculty	4.2	4.2	4.4
Quality of teaching	4.1	4.2	4.4
Class size	4.4	4.5	4.6
Ease in scheduling required courses	3.9	4.1	4.1
Distance education	3.2	3.6	3.2
Extension site	3.1	3.5	2.9
School website and internet-based resources	3.7	3.6	3.9
School's technology (IT) infrastructure	3.7	3.7	3.7
Access to library collection	4.3	4.3	4.5
Adequacy of library collection	4.2	4.5	4.5
Writing and research support	3.3	3.9	4.3
Accessibility of administrative/staff support	4.1	4.3	4.2
Academic advising	3.5	3.9	4.0
Spiritual formation	3.2	3.5	3.6
Career/vocational counseling	2.7	3.1	3.2
Pastoral care	3.3	3.6	3.6
Financial aid	4.1	3.8	4.1
Student debt and finance counseling	3.2	3.4	3.4
Housing	3.3	3.4	3.5
Child care	2.4	2.3	2.4
Extracurricular/cultural activities	3.1	3.2	3.5
Health and wellness program	2.4	2.5	2.6
Food service	3.7	3.9	3.9
Upkeep of campus	3.9	4.0	4.1
Campus security	4.1	4.3	4.0

Satisfaction with Services and Academic Resources



Overall Experience during Theological Program (GSQ Table 21)

The following table and chart provide information which indicates student perceptions about their overall experience as a student at PTS. These data are a mixture of both academic and non-academic areas and were chosen based on the relationship to outcomes and educational effectiveness.

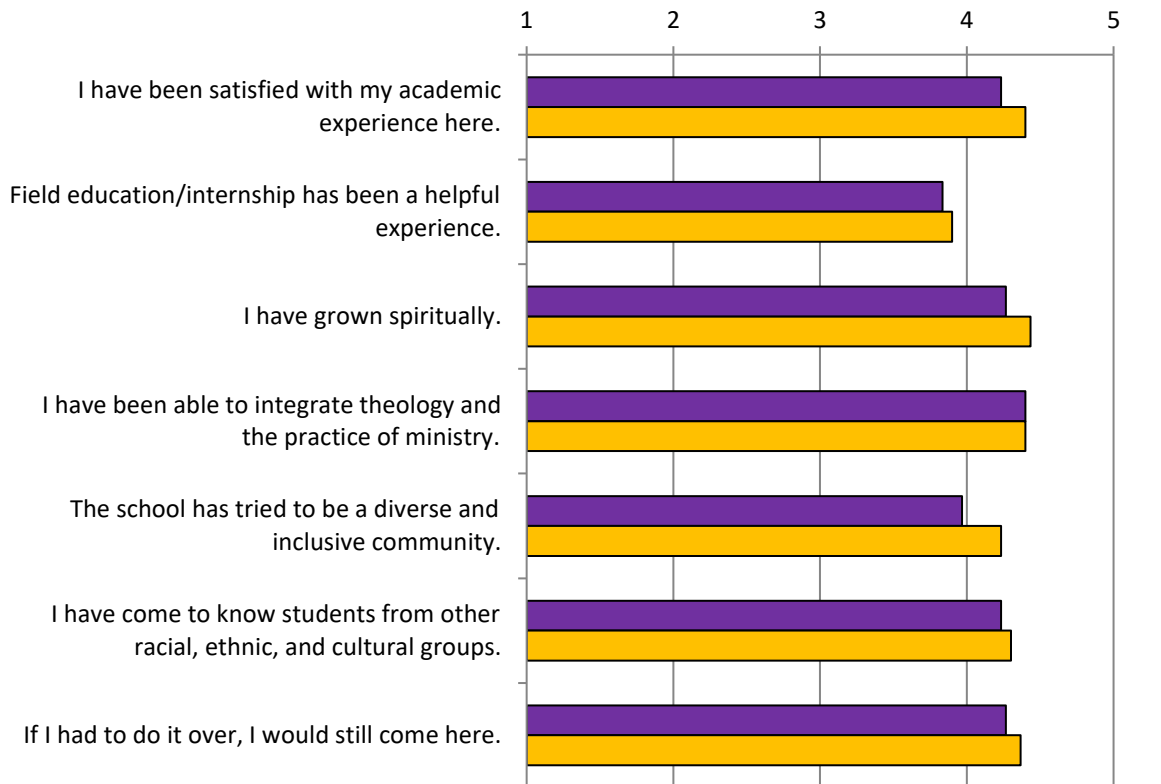
Overall Experience during Theological Program

1 Strongly disagree ▪ 2 Disagree ▪ 3 Neutral ▪ 4 Agree ▪ 5 Strongly agree

Experience	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019
I have been satisfied with my academic experience here.	4.2	4.1	4.4
Field education/internship has been a helpful experience.	3.7	3.5	4.3
I have grown spiritually.	4.1	4.3	4.4
I have been able to integrate theology and the practice of ministry.	4.4	4.4	4.4
The school has tried to be a diverse and inclusive community.	3.9	4.0	4.0
I have come to know students from other racial, ethnic, and cultural groups.	4.3	4.2	4.2
If I had to do it over, I would still come here.	4.1	4.3	4.4

Overall Experience during Theological Program

3-Year Averages
 2016-2017, 2017-2018, 2018-2019
 (1 Strongly disagree ▪ 5 Strongly agree)



PROGRAM COMPLETION AND PLACEMENT

The final area reported as part of the Statement of Student Achievement and Educational Effectiveness relates to program completion and placement.

Average Time to Degree Completion for All Master of Divinity Graduates

Time	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
< 2 years	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2 to < 3 years	2	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	2
3 to < 4 years	22	6	27	20	11	13	-	7	7	7
4 to < 5 years	3	14	11	15	13	6	13	9	12	11
5 to < 6 years	2	9	-	6	5	-	4	3	3	1
> 6 years	5	6	5	5	5	5	1	-	3	5

Cohort Graduation Rate for All Master's Program Students

Entrance Year	Entering in Cohort #	Graduated in < 2 Years*		Graduated in 2 < 3 Years*		Graduated in 3 < 4 Years		Graduated in 4 < 5 Years	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
2010	64	2	3	4	6	21	33	9	14
2011	39	-	-	5	13	11	28	6	15
2012	46	3	7	3	7	13	28	6	13
2013	50	1	2	1	2	15	30	11	22
2014	41	1	2	4	10	8	20	8	20
2015	31	4	13	2	6	6	19	11	35
2016	35	-	-	2	6	9	26		
2017	29	-	-	4	14				
2018	46	1	2						
2019	44								

* Generally M.A. and Th.M. students

Master of Divinity Students Placement by Position

Position	2017	2018
Vocational placement	15	17
Non-vocational placement	-	5
Further study	1	2
Seeking placement	1	1
Other	2	-
Unknown	-	1

Percentage of Master's Program Students Placed

Degree	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
M. Div.	97 %	96 %	95 %	95 %	84 %
M.A.	50	80	78	80	100
Th.M.	100	N/A	100	100	100

This report has been prepared by PTS using both internally and externally provided data. All effort has been made to present accurate information. Any errors in reporting in this statement are the responsibility of PTS.