The Seattle School
OF THEOLOGY & PSYCHOLOGY

EVOLVING TRENDS IN ACCESSING GRADUATE SCHOOL EDUCATION

KRISTEN HOUSTON
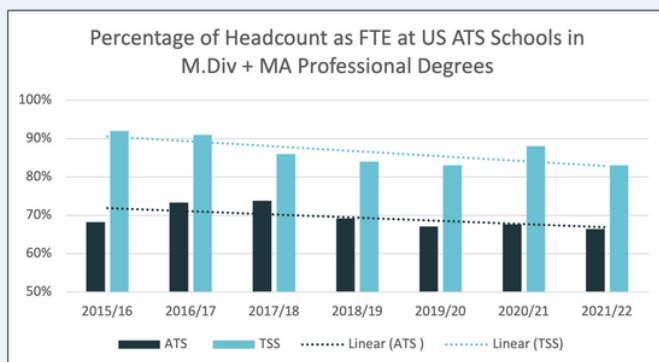**Associate Dean of Academic Administration**

KELSEY WALLACE
Registrar

ABSTRACT

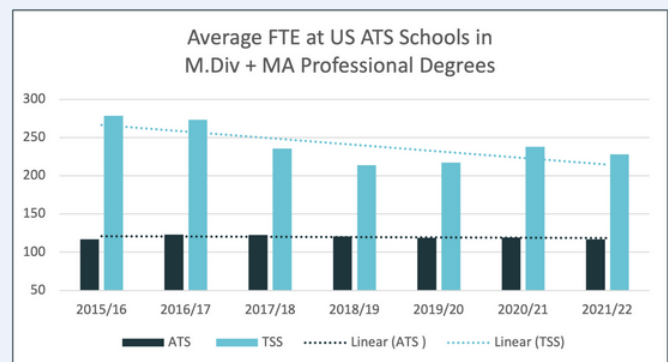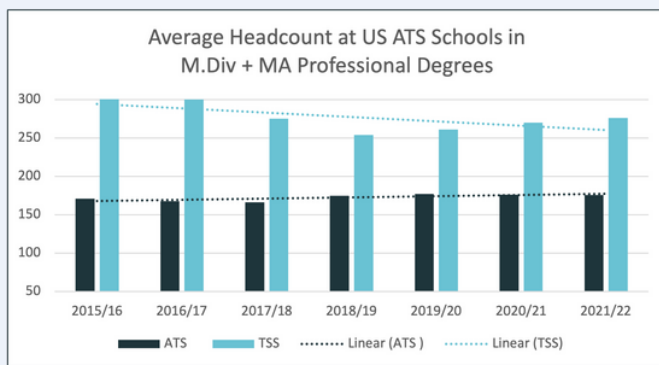### Statement of Question

In recent years we have seen changes in how students are accessing graduate school, with students taking fewer average credits per term and extending their graduation dates across degree programs. While this research project will not posit the causation behind these changes, it does seek to demonstrate these new trends by comparing and contrasting The Seattle School's headcount and full-time equivalent (FTE) data to those of peer schools. Examining this data will help us begin to understand whether the trends we are observing at The Seattle School are unique to us or are part of a larger trend among similar theological schools.

Average Headcount at US ATS Schools in M.Div + MA Professional Degrees

Average FTE at US ATS Schools in M.Div + MA Professional Degrees

Percentage of Headcount as FTE at US ATS Schools in M.Div + MA Professional Degrees

Data was gathered from the ATS.edu website from annual table tables. These tables represented aggregate data as reported annually from all ATS accredited schools. We utilized tables 2.7 and 2.8 from the 2017-2021 reports, and tables 2.10 and 2.11 from the 2015-2016 reports. Percentage of headcount as full time equivalent (FTE) was calculated by dividing the total headcount by reported FTE, and then dividing by the total number of schools reporting to get the average across all US based ATS schools (i.e., (HC/FTE)/N).
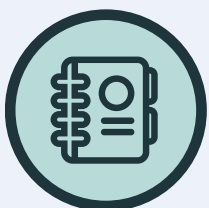
CONCLUSIONS

Headcount at ATS schools is stable and is rebounding at The Seattle School. It is clear from this data that students across ATS schools in the United States at the Master's level are taking fewer credits per term. This is evidenced by the percentage of full time equivalent students as compared to headcount. So, students are enrolling, or staying enrolled, but taking longer to complete their degrees. At this time we only have anecdotal evidence to explain the reasons behind this phenomenon. As a next step, we will gather and analyze gender, race/ethnicity, and economic data to better understand these trends and how they impact students.