

ATS welcomes first director of strategic communications

BY *MARISSA DECHANT*

The Association of Theological Schools (ATS) announces Faith Jackson as its first director of strategic communications, a role designed to strengthen the organization's messaging and support for members through innovative and collaborative strategies, while supporting a strategic realignment of leadership responsibilities.



Faith Jackson

Jackson will join ATS as its inaugural director of strategic communications, effective February 1, 2025. Reporting directly to ATS Senior Director and COO Chris Meinzer, she will lead the communications team in developing, managing, and executing strate-

gies that amplify the value of the Association's work and its roles for member institutions. She will also oversee the creation and maintenance of a robust communications framework, fostering cross-departmental collaboration and strengthening connections within the ATS community.

With more than 20 years of experience in higher education communications, Jackson has held leadership roles at Noodle Partners, New Jersey City University (NJCU), Rutgers University, and Drew University—home to ATS member [Drew University Theological School](#). Her diverse background equips her with the skills to effectively engage varied audiences and institutional contexts.

During her tenures at NJCU and Drew University, Jackson facilitated the development of each institution's first strategic communications plan, leading to enhanced returns on marketing investments and increased enrollment. In each role, she streamlined communication processes and introduced tools that improved engagement with students, faculty, alums, and donors. This extensive expertise positions her to enhance the Association's digital presence and internal operations, ensuring the organization effectively serves its members.

"Faith brings a wealth of strategic communications experience in higher education and a thoughtful, relationship-based approach that aligns perfectly with the mission and values of ATS," said Frank Yamada, ATS executive director. "Her leadership will help us better articulate the value of theological education while fostering collaboration among staff and providing stronger support to our members."

The creation of this new role represents a significant milestone in the Association's growth. By ensuring consistent and strategic communication of the value

propositions of ATS and the COA, Jackson's leadership underscores the organization's commitment to advancing theological education and addressing the evolving needs of its members.

"Each of us that participate in theological education are blessed to be part of God's great mission in the world," said Meinzer. "Now more than ever, there is a need for precision and clarity about how theological education supports this eternal mission. Faith has been called to ATS to help us articulate the value proposition of

theological education and why our collective and cooperative endeavors as the ATS membership matter."

This transition reflects an ongoing strategic realignment within ATS. With Jackson's hiring, ATS will be able to focus on high-level organizational communication and engagement strategies that seek to advance the organization's mission. Her role is being filled to support this strategic shift, ensuring ATS is well-positioned to meet the needs of its members and the ATS strategic priorities in the years ahead.



Marissa Dechant is Communications Coordinator at The Association of Theological Schools in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.