

Notice of ATS Warning and United's Response

March 2021

The Association of Theological Schools' (ATS) Commission on Accrediting issued a warning to United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities, effective February 22, 2021, for being at risk of not meeting two of ATS' Standards of Accreditation: Standard 10.3, "The school has sufficient and stable financial resources to achieve its mission with educational quality and financial sustainability;" and Standard 10.5, "The school protects and preserves any endowed funds, including utilizing prudent endowment draws." The determination is based on the school's financial statements ending June 30, 2020.

A warning is the lowest level of the commission's three public sanctions, issued when ATS determines that a school substantially meets their standards but is at risk of not meeting one or more standards. This action does not put United in danger of losing its accreditation with ATS; it is merely a public statement of concerns that may lead to United not meeting the identified Standards.

United has accepted the determination of ATS and has also accepted responsibility to aggressively address ATS' concerns. Over the last several months, the seminary has already demonstrated indications of progress in regaining financial sustainability. Key examples include budgetary relief from employee vacancies, significant growth in student enrollment, achievement of advancement goals, and the planning and implementation of new program initiatives to foster continued increases in enrollment and giving.

The strategic priorities of United's new interim president, Molly T. Marshall, will continue to address ATS' concerns. Initiatives for the coming months will include a review of operational effectiveness, focused attention on advancement, and an update of the strategic plan so as to pursue the seminary's mission with greater clarity.

By November 1, 2022, United will submit to ATS a report documenting evidence of its progress toward financial sustainability. ATS will review this report to determine whether to remove the warning or issue further action.