

ATFE Association for Theological Field Education

News and Updates

Highlights from the 2019 Consultation in Asheville

In January 2019, about 100 ATFE members and friends gathered for the 35th Biennial Consultation in Asheville, North Carolina, USA. Returning to a 3.5-day schedule gave us more time than in recent years to enjoy worship, keynote speakers, plenary and breakout sessions, meals, caucus gatherings, book table browsing, immersions, hikes, author celebrations, bluegrass music, and more!

We were joined by Frank Yamada, Executive Director of the Association of Theological Schools, speaking on "Trends within the Changing Landscape of Theological Education" and the redevelopment of ATS accrediting standards. We contributed our own ideas to that project ([link here](#)). We also heard from Christian Scharen, Vice President of Applied Research at Auburn Seminary, who reflected with us on Auburn's 2018 report, "Making Theology Matter: Field Education as the Practical-Prophetic Heart of Effective Ministry Preparation" ([link here](#)).

Ten breakout sessions led by

ATFE members were well received by the membership. You will soon be able to access notes and materials from these sessions under the "Proceedings" tab on the ATFE website—where you can also browse a wealth of material from past Consultations that will help you in your work.

As always, the Consultation was a chance to expand our network of colleagues as well as to reconnect with old friends and get acquainted with new ones, all in the lovely setting of the western North Carolina mountains.



L-R: Matt Floding, John Senior, Dipa Hart, Mark Hearn

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A Listening Session

Leveraging the Diversity of ATFE Membership Led by Isabel Docampo Tentatively set for Sept 2019

ATFE is growing more diverse, thanks to its member institutions hiring a diversity of individuals for the field educator role. Some markers of diversity are obvious, others are subtle. All lend strength to our organization. How can we as an organization better leverage the diversity of

our membership—in our programming, our continuing education, and our leadership? In this videoconference session, we will spend about 20 minutes each listening for your answers to the three parts of that question.

Listening
=
Learning

ATFE 2021



The 2019 ATFE Biennial Consultation chose Tampa, Florida as the 2021 Consultation's host city. The local arrangements will be coordinated jointly by a committee of Duke Divinity School, Candler School of Theology, and Perkins School of Theology field educators. Survey results guided the selection of dates with preference being given to a mid-week conference, Tuesday, January 26-Friday, January 29. Given that temperatures dip to an average of 71 degrees during the day our hope is that our ATFE colleagues will be able to enjoy the context and perhaps do some further reflection by extending stays over the weekend. A hotel site will be

selected this fall and updates will be shared on our ATFE website.

For the local arrangements committee,
Matthew Floding

“We field educators think of ourselves as the connectors in the architecture of theological education, yet we do not want the synthesis of society and church, academic pursuit and ministerial practice, systematics and faith to belong to us alone.”

—from the 1993 Excellence in Supervision Preamble

Research & Publications news (and a sneak peek ahead)

Congratulations go out to several ATFE members who have an article or review in [Issue 39, 2019](#), of *Reflective Practice: Formation and Supervision in Ministry*, including Chrissy Zaker, Matt Floding/Sung Hee Chang/John Senior/Faye Taylor, and Leslie Veen.

The journal has put out its [call for papers](#) for Issue 40, 2020, and the theme is “Future Forms and Contexts of Ministry.”

In 1993 ATFE adopted a statement regarding “Excellence in Supervision” at its Austin, TX Biennial Consultation. It is still listed as a resource on the ATFE website. At the 2019 ATFE Consultation in Asheville, NC a group shepherded by Matt Floding gathered to commit itself to revisit this theme, explore it from a number of angles and to identify fresh resources. The goal of the group is to resource field education colleagues by publishing their essays as a collection in *Reflective Practice*. The teams and the contributors include 22 ATFE members who will be collectively writing on A Review of the Literature, Theories of Supervision, Training and Supporting Supervisor-Mentors, Listening to our Supervisor-Mentors, and Listening to our Students.

Paying Our Dues

Dear ATFE Colleagues,

I hope you all are doing well and are enjoying the summer.

If your school/institution has not yet paid ATFE membership dues for 2019. There are two ways to pay dues: (1) You can use the invoice and submit dues via check; or (2) you can pay dues online at the link here. <http://atfe.org/membership/why-join-atfe/>.

Thanks so much for your continued support of ATFE. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

John Senior, ATFE Treasurer

Treasurer@atfe.org

Introducing your Professional Conduct Committee

ATFE members voted at the 2019 Consultation to adopt *ATFE Standards of Professional Conduct*. Several members subsequently volunteered to serve on a Professional Conduct Committee (PCC) that would hear and respond to any grievances brought forward. They are: Kathleen Castillo of Christ the King Seminary, Youtha Hardman-Cromwell of Wesley Theological Seminary, Marcus Hong of Louisville Presbyterian Seminary, and Danielle Tumminio Hansen of Seminary of the Southwest. The PCC has met for an organizational meeting and stands ready to support you should the occasion arise.

Our policy gives the following direction to ATFE members who experience or witness misconduct: "A member bringing a grievance (the Complainant) to the PCC is encouraged to contact the PCC as soon as possible after an incident has occurred. The Complainant should bring a grievance directly to the Chair of the PCC, who ensures that all inquiries and complaints are properly undertaken and concluded."

When this policy was introduced in Asheville, we were careful to emphasize that it was *not* created in response to any incident or history of misconduct. Rather, it grew out of the desire to main-

tain ATFE's longstanding culture of respect and the remarkable generosity that our members have always shown one another as we engage in mutual professional development.

Statement of ATFE Values (from *ATFE Standards of Professional Conduct*) The Association for Theological Field Education is an international, ecumenical community whose purposes include maximizing the quality of service to theological field education and providing for optimal growth and development of field education personnel. In pursuit of these purposes members of the Association have particular professional commitments and responsibilities toward one another. In addition, we are a community that has always been marked by "an extraordinary degree of collaboration and a spirit of generosity" as we go about professional development, inquiry, and research. We value contextual education and practical ministry formation. We bring many identities to our work together of forming and educating students in context for ministry.

Listening to our Students

One of the gratifying aspects of being field educators is hearing the discoveries our students make about ministry by serving in new contexts. Listen to what three students from Candler School of Theology say lies at the heart of ministry:

"For me, serving at the Metro Regional Youth Detention Center was exactly what ministry is all about. I saw people cross racial and cultural boundaries, which occurred over time through prayer and authenticity." — Marquice Hobbs, MDiv '18

"This experience [working this summer with immigrants at the Humanitarian Respite Center in McAllen, TX] has enabled me to think twice and be grateful to God each time I have the opportunity to eat, that there are those who struggle to have this food, each time I have an opportunity to choose, that there are those who do not choose because they can only take what is available. From those experiences, I have known what it means to transcend our zone of comfort and really resemble Christ by serving others with joy." — Yves Kinangwa, rising 2nd year student

"During my last year at Candler, I was able to do an internship as a spiritual development advisor at Breakthru House, Inc., a transitional facility for women in recovery. The greatest lesson I took from both [of my internship] sites has been the power of listening. I didn't realize just how much there is to learn until I had to listen to the many stories about who God is, and how these women came to those understandings. Prior to Candler, I might have been offended, probably focused on fixing people; but now what I prioritize is respect for the individual." — Alison Sanderson, 2019 graduate

As educators we always seek to improve the methods for and approaches to our work. We exercise our authority justly with concern for the development of our students, community partners, and colleagues, respecting their dignity and the boundaries appropriate to professional interaction.

As researchers we hold ourselves to a standard of free, rigorous, and intellectually honest inquiry aiming to advance theological field education.

As participants in institutions we foster just relationships with students, faculty, and staff, as well as with the colleagues and communities outside our institutions that we partner with to provide education and formation.

As members of the Association we conduct interactions with colleagues openly, fairly, and respectfully. We execute our duties competently and justly without prejudice toward those with different values, viewpoints, and identities. We welcome and take action to ensure the full participation of new members and those who bring new voices to our conversations.

ATFE

2019-2021 Steering Committee

Barbara Blodgett, Chair
Tracy Hartman, Past Chair
Dipa Hart, Vice Chair
John Senior, Treasurer
Jenny Whitcher,
Communications
Dan Poole, Secretary
Thomas Elliott, At Large
Nick Works, At Large

We're on the web!
atfe.org

How to Reach Us

Members of the ATFE leadership now have email addresses corresponding to their respective positions.

Chair@atfe.org
ChairEmeritus@atfe.org
ViceChair@atfe.org
Treasurer@atfe.org
Communications@atfe.org
Secretary@atfe.org
AtLarge1@atfe.org
(Elliott)
AtLarge2@atfe.org
(Works)
BienniumConsultation@atfe.org
(Matt Floding, Chair of Local Arrangements Committee)

Since its founding in 1946, ATFE represents more than 100 theological schools across the United States and Canada. ATFE enjoys affiliate status with the Association for Theological Schools (ATS). Every accredited ATS seminary or divinity school requires an experiential component that provides a place to practice ministry and a corresponding space to reflect on its practice. This nexus of integration is an intended consequence carefully nurtured by the field educator. Ministry experience, theological reflection, peer engagement, the classroom, consultation, and emulation of ministry professionals are some of the important tools available to us.

Every two years we gather for a conference which provides professional development workshops and excellent keynote speakers, while also connecting field educators with one another. During the consultations, we engage current issues related to theological field education while also seeking to shape creative visions for theological education in the future, develop new patterns for the changing contours of ministry and discover imaginative ways to prepare persons to serve God effectively and faithfully in the church and in the world.

A Best Practice

We would like to include in each issue of this quarterly newsletter a section highlighting a best practice. Some believe there are no such thing as "best practices" any more, given the increasingly diverse models for theological education and ministerial formation. However, those of us who have been at this work for a while still continually hear from those who are newer a desire for some tried-and-true strategies.

If you have ever asked yourself, "What's a good way to . . ." or "What do other people do when . . ." or "Is my context really unique?" and if you have discovered an answer that worked, let one of us on the Steering Committee know. We'll include it here!

The More Things Change . . .

The Conference on Field Work in Theological Education, meeting as guests of The Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Philadelphia on January 12 and 13, 1946, was called at the instigation of a small planning committee consisting of Arthur L. Swift, Jr., Chairman, A. L. Roberts, Carl H. Morgan, Albert C. Williams, J. Christy Wilson, Otis R. Rice and Ralph L. Woodward, all of whom felt the need for a sharing of insights and of problems in this aspect of theological education. . . .

The Conference was planned to cover only the basic and essential principles and issues in current field work practice and no one was asked to write a paper or prepare a speech. A few members of the Conference were asked in advance to be prepared to open discussion on one or another of the major issues as outlined in the tentative agenda prepared by the planning committee.

In the report which follows it will be noted that so far as possible the informal, conversational style has been retained. The topics treated are: I. Types of field work and their value II. How to select and assign student workers III. How to find proper fields IV. How to keep reports V. Financing field work VI. Supervision in field work VII. Counseling in field work VII. The integration of field work with the curriculum.

—from the first gathering of what would become ATFE, in 1946