

ANNY 2018 Election: Candidate Bio and Statement

Sandi Connelly (Rochester Institute of Technology)

Brief Personal Bio:

I have been on the faculty at Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) since 2007, and have been very active in general education, STEM, and online course assessment since 2010. I am a Principal Lecturer of Life Sciences, the Leader Faculty for Online Learning in the College of Science at RIT, the Chair of the Life Science Experiential Learning Team, and the co-chair of Biology Curriculum and Program Assessment Team. All of these positions put me front-and-center to implement aligned student learning outcomes and assessment metrics in my own courses, but I am also in a strategic position to guide others in SLO design and implement for their own courses and initiatives (e.g. program and experiential learning assessment tools for the RIT Biology program). The multiple hats that I wear on any given day have me interacting with Teaching & Learning Services, Office of Assessment, Academic Affairs, College of Science Administration, faculty and staff, and students. My connections at RIT and regionally make me a strong candidate to consider how we can work across New York State to design useful assessment tools that are easy to implement and measure. To many, "assessment" is a dirty word! The role of ANNY and its constituents is to lead by doing. ANNY has now established itself in New York as a growing resource, and one with whom institutions can work to better their own assessment programs. As I am a faculty member first, the implementation of assessment is a key concern for me – but working in so many different roles outside of the classroom provides me with perspectives that not a lot of faculty will have. By this, I am a unique candidate for the ANNY Board and would work diligently to spread the "good word" of assessment throughout New York, and beyond.

Statement of Interest:

It was not until I had to really think about what I expected from my students on an assignment or in an entire course that I truly became an advocate for assessment in higher education. Sure, as a biologist I understood the role of accreditation and standards in education. But what did that really mean? Faculty have an inbred distain for assessment, and that may come from being generally against "top down control" of their courses. But, now that I have been embedded in Student Learning Outcomes and Assessment, I see its value in and out of the classroom, and it boils down to doing the best job we can for our students. I have taken on several roles in the past two years that have led to some serious discussions - like the need for a 25 year old course to whether an entire program is viable in today's market. These are not friendly conversations, as everyone at the table has a stake in some aspect of it, and the results may leave some with a greater distain for assessment! However, in my roles, I believe that it is my duty to help everyone at the table see why assessment needs to happen and how, in the long run, these initiatives can only make our work better for our students. I do not know many who chose careers in higher education for the hours or the money – but everyone I know got in to it because they believe that an education is critical to the future of our world. Assessment teams and groups like ANNY should have a seat at every table of higher education. If I am elected as an ANNY Board Member, I will work to help others find a place for assessment at their tables.