2017 Assessment Network of New York Regional Conference

By Don Sutherland

The Assessment Network of New York (ANNY) held its 2017 regional conference at the Wilton Center of SUNY Adirondack. The event was co-sponsored by SUNY Adirondack and SUNY Plattsburgh.

The event kicked off with a moderated discussion among four college Presidents. Paul Smiths College President Cathy S. Dove, Clarkson University President Anthony G. Collins, SUNY Empire State College President Merodie A. Hancock, and SUNY Adirondack President Kristine Duffy discussed a wide range of topics ranging including the role top leadership has played in cultivating their institutions' culture of assessment, how an emphasis on meaningful assessment led to a rise of data-driven decision making, and the direction assessment may take in the future on account of evolving societal demands.

Keynote speaker Kimberly M. Yousey-Elsener, Dean of Assessment and Retention at Hartwick College discussed whether colleges can afford good assessment. In her address, she highlighted attributes of good assessment including that it provides useful information, is cost effective, is fair and ethical, and it provides reasonably accurate and truthful information.

During the afternoon, there were two concurrent sessions. University of Albany Director of Assessment Steven Doellefeld discussed the use of predictive analytics to improve student retention and student satisfaction. In his presentation, Dr. Doellefeld outlined a risk model that is used to prioritize advisor interaction with students, leverages multivariate statistical and machine learning techniques, and assesses student likelihood of graduating. Among other things, the model uses data from the ten most attempted courses and the ten most predictive courses to better understand student success outcomes. In the other concurrent session, Dara Wexler and Matthew Gulliford of Taskstream provided early data from a national survey concerning assessment. Survey results were drawn from a combination of institutional leaders, assessment professionals, and faculty.