

In Memoriam

In Memoriam: Dr. Karen Swan

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Dr. Karen Swan

The community that makes up the Online Learning journal lost a colleague, leader, and dear friend recently. Dr. Karen Swan, a founding member of the Online Learning Consortium and the James J. Stukel Distinguished Professor of Educational Leadership at the University of Illinois Springfield passed away on September 5, 2021. Karen was a central figure on the editorial board of this journal, and we will miss her wisdom, kindness, and spirit.

A graduate of Columbia University's Teachers College, Karen was a member of the International Adult and Continuing Education Hall of Fame, a compassionate teacher, and an inspiration to many younger scholars aspiring to contribute to the field. She taught online for more than 20 years and this work informed her research on learning effectiveness, interactivity, the Community of Inquiry framework, and social presence, as well as issues affecting the retention and progression of online undergraduate students.

Her scholarly publications include more than 160 published articles, proceedings, and book chapters: three books, and numerous multimedia programs. Karen led or participated in hundreds of presentations and served on nearly 40 dissertation committees, including doctoral candidates from around the world. She oversaw funded research projects of over \$2.7 million. Karen was widely recognized for her research and received the Sloan-C award for Outstanding Achievement in Online Learning by an Individual and was a member of the Sloan-C Inaugural Class of Fellows.

Karen was named the 2010 Distinguished Alumni from Teachers College, Columbia University and received the 2014 Burks Oakley II Distinguished Online Teaching Award. She served on the editorial review boards for the *Educational Psychologist*, *International Journal of Instruction*, *Internet and Higher Education*, *Journal of Asynchronous Learning Networks*,

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and *Journal of Distance Education*. She was a special issue editor for OLJ bridging the Online Learning Consortium (OLC) with the American Educational Research Association (AERA) through this work.

Karen was also a close, personal friend and mentor to me and many others in the Educational Technology field. In 2004, when I decided to step down from an administrative position at the State University of New York, she encouraged me to apply for the position she was then vacating at the University at Albany and served as a reference for me. I was hired for the position and moved into her old office. I, like so many others in the field, owe a great debt of gratitude to Karen Swan.

Our community has suffered a deep loss and we mourn Karen's passing as we celebrate her warmth, humanity, generosity, commitment, and singular contributions to the field.