

In Memoriam: Jennifer M. Sweet



On Saturday, April 6, 2024, Dr. Jennifer Sweet passed away at the age of 45 after a 16-year battle with cancer.

Jennifer was born on September 7, 1978, in Wausau, Wisconsin. She earned her Bachelor of Science in Biology with minors in Spanish and Psychology (2002) from the University of Wisconsin River Falls, where she was also the recipient of the Chancellor's Award; a Master of Science in Counseling and Student Personnel (2005) from Oklahoma State University; and a PhD in Educational Psychology, with a focus on Measurement, Statistics, Evaluation, and Assessment (2016) from the University of Illinois Chicago.

Her dissertation focused on developing a practical model to reduce cognitive load in survey items and instruments, which assessment practitioners in higher education could use to design surveys. About halfway into her dissertation, she was diagnosed with an aggressive and terminal form of brain cancer.

She served as an Assessment Specialist at the University of Illinois at Chicago, and most recently, she served as the director of assessment at DePaul University's Center for Teaching and Learning. An active member of organizations including the Association for the Assessment of Learning in Higher Education (AALHE) and the Chicago Area Assessment Group, Jennifer was a tireless advocate for the advancement of higher education assessment over the last two decades. Through her passion and dedication, she left an indelible mark on the field. Her work not only elevated the institutions she served but also inspired those around her to strive for greatness.

As we bid farewell to a cherished colleague and friend, let us carry forward her legacy of passion for learning, dedication to excellence, and her unwavering belief in the power of education to transform lives. Though she may no longer walk among us, her spirit lives on in the hearts of all who had the privilege of knowing her, and for that, we are eternally grateful. May she rest in peace.

-Written by Yi-Chin Wu, Fiorella Peñaloza