

AIA Council Candidate's Questions

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Short Profile:

Dr Anthony Anyia has over 15 years of experience in Agrology and has worked as a research agrolgist, university lecturer, and business unit manager. Dr Anyia's research focuses on study of physiological traits that contribute to improved water use efficiency and yield stability of prairie crops. He has led several multi-team and cross-institution projects and has developed protocols for screening varieties and breeding lines for improved water use efficiency. Dr. Anyia is currently an Adjunct Professor in the Faculty of Agriculture, University of Alberta, where he co-supervises two graduate students.

Dr Anyia completed a Master of Science degree in Crop Science at the Ambrose Ali University in Nigeria and was a lecturer at the University from 1992 to 1996. He was awarded the German Academic Exchange Services (DAAD) scholarship in 1996 to pursue a PhD in crop science at the Humboldt University of Berlin in Germany. He left the Humboldt University to join the Alberta Research Council (ARC) as a research scientist in 2002. He became a senior scientist and program leader in 2006 and was appointed as acting Co-Business Unit Manager for Bioresource Technologies in July 2009.

Dr Anyia has presented results of his work in many national and international symposia and conferences. He is the author of several refereed journal articles and conference proceedings. He is a member of the International Crop Science Society, Canadian Society of Agronomy, Crop Science Society of America, and Canadian Society of Plant Physiologists. He served two terms as Articlign Director and Membership Director of the Alberta Institute of Agrolgist – North East Branch. He is currently on the Board of Directors of Farm Radio International, an Ottawa based NGO.

1. *Governing the profession of Agrology requires that Council members believe in the value of and need for the profession. In your opinion, what is the value of and need for the profession of Agrology?*

Response:

The profession of Agrology exists to protect public interest in matters related to Agrology. The AIA P.Ag designation gives professional credibility to members and gives confidence to the public in matters related to Agrology, knowing that AIA hold its members to “acceptable standard of ethical and competent practices within their scope of practice”

2. *AIA Council recognizes that it is entrusted to act in the public interest. In doing so, Council considers not only the views of members but also the views of the public that AIA serves. Council as a whole must seek to understand and bring those views into their decisions at the Council table.*

a. *What do you see as the challenges of understanding the broad and diverse public perspective?*

Response:

I see diversity of public perspective as strength. The profession of Agrology by design is very diverse, with activities spanning agriculture and the environment. With such a broad range of area of practice, a major challenge becomes how to restrict members to practice in their area of competence.

b. *What do you see as the challenges of understanding the diverse views of the membership of AIA?*

Response:

One major challenge is how to combine the views of members whose area of practice is in primary agriculture and those practicing in the environmental sector. Although we can not discuss agriculture without considering the environment, the issues faced by the different groups is so diverse that one can not expect convergence of views easily. I believe that diversity of view can be managed to achieve strength by ensuring a broad representation of opinions.

c. *What are your thoughts and/or experiences with regard to understanding public perceptions?*

Response:

Although AIA exist to serve the interest of the public, I think there is work to be done to make the public recognize this role. I have had several people ask me what P.Ag stand for, even amongst practitioners of Agriculture in Alberta. I believe that professional Agrologists exist to protect the interests of the public in matters relating to food production and environmental health. Thus the public should be concerned about the

existence of the profession and what it means to be a P.Ag. Some form of a re-awareness campaign would be necessary for the institute to re-engage with the public.

3. *Council's job is to govern. As such it has chosen to use a system of governance that clearly delegates achievement of outcomes (Ends) to the CEO and authorizes him, within pre-stated limitations, to choose the means of achievement. This frees Council to be proactive rather than reactive; primarily focused on the future, rather than the past or present; and emphasizing strategic leadership, rather than administrative detail.*

a. *What has been your experience in determining what future based outcomes should be for an organization?*

Response:

As a senior scientist and a unit manager at Alberta Research Council, I contribute to discussions on strategic thinking, designing of programs and projects and mentor staff to achieve organizational goals. I have also served in leadership role in several charity organizations where I contributed to policy debate and visioning. My two terms as Articling Director and Membership Director of the Alberta Institute of Agrologist – North East Branch also gave me the opportunity to network with several members with diverse background.

b. *What are the strengths you would bring to that process?*

Response:

I have a broad knowledge of Agrology issues, including agriculture and environmental stewardship. I would contribute my experience in strategic thinking and my ability to build and work in teams to the process. Above all I believe in fairness and facts telling, even in difficult situations.

4. *As noted above, Council's governance system does not prescribe means to the Ends. Consequently, assuring that AIA achieves what it should and avoids what is unacceptable, is neither about Council approving programs and activities nor about checking to see that such activities were done. Instead, Council applies a high level of rigour in monitoring achievement of Ends and ensuring that the CEO has complied with Council stated limitations. Monitoring in this system compares the Council's written policies with the CEO's compliance.*

a. *Have you had any comparable experience?*

Response:

Yes, I have the following comparable experiences:

- Currently serving on the Board of Directors of a highly successful and effective Ottawa based NGO that does development work in sub-Saharan Africa. As a board member, I contribute to policy development and monitoring to ensure that the work of the organization is performed with due diligence and accountability.

- Served two terms as Articling Director and Membership Director of the Alberta Institute of Agrologist – North East Branch
- Several years of volunteer experience in charity organizations including serving as club treasurer for two years in the Kinsmen Club of Vegreville
- Active membership of several professional organizations including Canadian Society of Agronomy, Crop Science Society of America, Canadian Society of Plant Physiologist

b. What would you bring to the process?

Response:

I bring a high level of experience and diversity to the process. I have worked and lived in three different continents, practiced Agrology as a research agrologist, educator and business unit manager.

5. *Council speaks with one voice. Translated this means that Council makes decisions as a whole. In practice, this means that Council members are expected to deliberate openly and candidly, seeking to understand diverse viewpoints. Yet when a decision is made by majority rule, all Council members respect the decision when speaking externally.*

a. What has been your experience in deliberating in a diverse group?

Response:

I have actively participated in group deliberations in my role as team leader and Business Unit Manager and as a member/director in the board of NGOs. The NGO board is highly diverse but also highly effective in attracting donor support to do work in Africa. The board operates on the principle of equality and fairness, with all members having equal opportunity to express their views on motions before a vote is taken. Although some members can be very passionate about their views, once the motion is passed, we all respect the decision and work to achieve the common goals of the organization.

b. If others were to describe how you operate in groups, what would they say?

Response:

It is hard for me to predict how others would describe me. But I like to think of myself as being principled, critical, confident and fair. I am not shy in letting others know my position, even if it is not the most popular in the group. Like *Thomas Jefferson* once said, I am able to “swim with the current in matters of style, but in matters of principle, I will stand like a rock”. As a team player, I respect the opinion and viewpoint of others, even when I disagree with them.