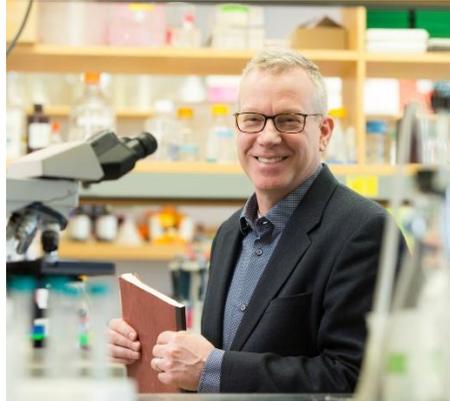




# ACNP Bulletin

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William A. Carlezon, Jr., Ph.D., ACNP President

## January 2026 President's Plenary, Distinguished Lecture, and Teaching Day Sessions

In a year that has truly been unlike any other, the ACNP team has been working tirelessly to stay the course, maintaining our familiar strengths while responding to changing realities and adding touches of innovation that are synonymous with the organization. This year's annual meeting attendees will see elements of each these features—strength, responsiveness, innovation—as we test out a new venue (Atlantis, Bahamas) and new dates (early January) for the first time in our history.

Each year, the ACNP President is primarily responsible for organizing three events at the annual meeting: the President's Plenary, the Distinguished Lecture, and Teaching Day.

This year's **President's Plenary**, entitled *Brain-Periphery Interactions in the Diagnosis, Treatment, and Study of Neuropsychiatric Illness*, will be presented on **Monday, January 12<sup>th</sup> at 8:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. Eastern Time**. Increasing recognition of the critical role of brain-body interactions in health and illness is transforming how we study, diagnose, and treat neuropsychiatric disorders. Familiar, everyday experiences—such as a racing heart, stomach knots, sleepless nights, feeling worn out—illustrate the profound connection between somatic responses to stress, interoceptive cues, and mental health. Understanding these interactions is essential to identifying potential therapeutic targets and advancing neuropsychiatric care. This session features groundbreaking work from four leading researchers in this domain. Karl Deisseroth will present his use of an optogenetic pacemaker to explore how cardiac function influences affective behaviors through the flow of information from the periphery to the brain.

Elaine Hsiao will discuss her research on the gut microbiota, focusing on microbial modulators of brain circuit function, the impact of microbiota-immune (inflammatory) interactions on neurodevelopment, and the microbiome as a mediator of gene-environment interactions in neuropsychiatric conditions. Michael Irwin will share his findings on the mechanistic links between inflammation, sleep disruption, and mood disorders, and evaluate the efficacy of targeting insomnia and the inflammatory biotype to prevent depression. Martin Picard will highlight evidence for biomarkers of mood-mitochondria interactions in blood, saliva, and brain, and demonstrate how the human MitoBrainMap can be used to study mitochondrial biology in the human brain. A more comprehensive understanding of brain-body cross-talk has the potential to drive transformative advances in the study, diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of neuropsychiatric illnesses.

**Presenters:**

*Light-gated membrane channels: discovery and creation of diversity, new principles for ion selectivity, and translational insights into human adaptive behavior*

Karl Deisseroth, M.D., Ph.D.  
Stanford University

*Manipulating the Microbiome to Impact the Mind*

Elaine Hsiao, B.S., Ph.D.  
UCLA

*Mechanistic and Reciprocal Links between Insomnia, Inflammation and Depression*

Michael Irwin, M.D.  
UCLA Semel Institute for Neuroscience

*Probing the Energetic Basis of Mind-Body Processes through Mitochondria*

Marin Picard, Ph.D.  
Columbia University & New York State Psychiatric Institute

This year's **Distinguished Lecture**, entitled *Digital Tools for Phenotyping and Forecasting Outcomes Across Species*, will be presented on **Tuesday, January 13<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m. Eastern Time**. For the first time, this lecture will feature two speakers, who together will focus on strategies to align research across humans and animal models. The session complements the President's Plenary by highlighting rapid advances in technological innovation and computational capabilities that enhance our understanding of brain-body connections and improve predictive outcomes. Access to smart devices such as phones, watches, and trackers is now more prevalent globally than access to safely managed fresh water. This unprecedented moment in time offers unique opportunities: individuals now have constant access to devices that can be used to study, diagnose, treat, and prevent neuropsychiatric illness. These devices enable the continuous measurement of numerous objective endpoints, serving as biomarkers for physiological processes (e.g., activity, sleep, heart rate, blood pressure, body temperature) as well as affective states, emotional health, and cognitive function. By understanding how these biomarkers change over time or in response to experiences like stress or drug use, it may be possible to predict future behaviors or the onset of neuropsychiatric disorders. This lecture will

explore the use of digital phenotyping in neuropsychiatric care and research, emphasizing translational relevance to align psychiatry with basic neuroscience. It will feature two speakers: Brenda Curtis, an expert in human research, and Sam Golden, who specializes in animal model research. Dr. Curtis will discuss digital phenotyping methods in humans and their application to studying patients with alcohol use disorders. Dr. Golden will present his work on devices and computational approaches to "humanize" endpoints in animal models, enabling the identification of translationally valid biomarkers for cross-species comparisons. Using common brain-body endpoints across species can enhance the predictive value of animal models for human outcomes, accelerating the development of transformative treatments and improving clinical care.

**Presenters:**

*Decoding Human Behavior: Real-Time Digital Phenotyping to Forecast Behavioral Health Outcomes*

Brenda Curtis, Ph.D.

NIH

*Preclinical tools bridging brain, body and behavior*

Sam Golden, Ph.D.

University of Washington School of Medicine

This year's **Teaching Day Session**, entitled *Reaching Out: Success Stories and Lessons Learned*, will be presented on **Thursday, January 15<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m. Eastern Time**. This session is responsive to key changes in the field over the past year, exploring two domains: fostering public interest in science and participation in scientific endeavors, and building effective collaborations between academia and industry during a time of shifting government support for research. In the first presentation, Sabina Beretta and Oluwarotimi Folorunso will discuss community outreach programs designed to engage extended families in brain science. These initiatives aim to raise awareness, reduce the stigma surrounding mental illness, and promote participation in science—whether by pursuing careers in scientific disciplines or serving as research study participants. By reaching new communities and lay audiences, these efforts can build public support for research and ultimately influence policy decisions made by elected officials. The second presentation will focus on establishing academic-industry collaborations that ensure delivery of mutually-beneficial outcomes. Patricio O'Donnell will offer insights from the industry perspective, drawing on his experience at several companies that have successfully implemented sponsored research agreements in both clinical and preclinical settings as well as his background as an academic scientist. As researchers in academia, Kristina Deligiannidis will highlight agreements that have facilitated impactful clinical studies, while Paul Kenny will discuss collaborations that have enabled drug development efforts informed by discoveries in basic research labs.

**Presenters:**

*Building Sustainable Local Model for Community Engagement and Reciprocity*

Sabina Beretta, M.D.

Harvard Medical School, McLean Hospital

*Integrating Science Outreach and Community Engagement in Research Training to Improve Mental Health*

Oluwarotimi Folorunso, Ph.D.  
McLean Hospital, Harvard Medical School

*Academic-Industry collaborations: An Industry Perspective*

Patricio O'Donnell, M.D., Ph.D.  
Alto Neuroscience

*Bridging Two Worlds: Practical Guidance for Successful Academic-Industry Clinical Research Collaborations*

Kristina Deligiannidis, M.D.  
Zucker Hillside Hospital, Northwell Health

*Building Mutually Benefit Academic-Industry Partnerships*

Paul Kenny, Ph.D.  
Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai

On behalf of everyone involved in planning these events and making them relevant to a rapidly-changing research landscape, we hope that the sessions will bring value to attendees seeking to learn new concepts, adapt to current challenges, and build back better for the future. We look forward to welcoming members, travel awardees, panel, study group and poster presenters, and invited guests to the President's Plenary, Distinguished Lecture, and Teaching Day sessions as well as all the other outstanding presentations and events on the January 2026 Program.

I hope to see you in person in January at our 64<sup>th</sup> ACNP Annual Meeting!