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Deanna M. Barch, Ph.D.
ACNP President, 2026

Dear Colleagues:

I am so very honored and humbled to serve as President of ACNP in 2026. ACNP has long been a stimulating intellectual community for me, providing a venue for interacting with colleagues with diverse interests and expertise, and a place where academia, industry, and government come together to support the development of the very best science on the causes and treatment of diseases of the nervous system including psychiatric, neurological, behavioral and substance use disorders. I also very much appreciate ACNP's commitment to the professional development of trainees, and the ways in which our community has worked together to make the meeting an inclusive and supportive experience for all who attend. I pledge to do all I can to maintain and expand what makes ACNP such a wonderful intellectual home for so many members of our field. To accomplish this pledge, I have the following five goals for the next year.

Ensure that ACNP uses its voice to support the future of biomedical research

At least in the United States, the future of biomedical research has never faced more challenges. The past year has seen disruptions to the core supports for biomedical research that are unprecedented in recent history, perhaps even for any time in history. These disruptions threaten the health and well-being of people across the world, as they risk derailment of thriving research programs that are untangling the causes of disorders of the nervous system, and/or which are developing novel treatments that could prove to be life-transforming. We are stronger when we come together and act collectively to raise our voices in support of biomedical research, and I will help to ensure that ACNP joins with other organizations to advocate for biomedical research in effective ways. ACNP is in the process of reviewing our approach to advocacy, and I will work with our excellent partners at Parthenon Management Group over the next year to build an approach to advocacy for ACNP that will help us ensure that the public understands the importance of the work that we do, the benefits of supporting biomedical research, and to ensure that public support for these efforts continues and even expands.

Ensure that ACNP does all that it can to support early-career researchers in challenging times

While the current disruptions to support for biomedical research are challenging for everyone in our field, they are particularly challenging for early-

career researchers who are just establishing their careers and labs. ACNP has a critical role to play in supporting these individuals, and we have a strong track record of doing so. However, we need to amplify these supports in the coming years to help ensure that we retain those individuals who are the future of our field and of ACNP. This will include amplifying our professional development and mentoring efforts across career stages and helping connect early-career researchers to novel funding pathways, including partnerships with industry and foundations. It may also require developing novel mechanisms to support ACNP attendance for those experiencing challenges due to funding disruptions, which are likely to be time-limited. This is also an area where our most senior members are critical, given their experience and wisdom, as they can help provide essential perspectives and support to those at an earlier stage in their careers. I will work to achieve this goal by collaborating with and supporting the Career Development Committee, co-chaired by Ashlee Van't Veer and Sandra Sanchez-Roige, the Education and Training Committee, co-chaired by Debra Bangasser and Ryan Bachtell, and the Senior Leaders Advising on Careers Committee, chaired by Judy Ford.

Ensure that ACNP maintains its commitment to inclusive excellence

ACNP has made great strides in ensuring our community is welcoming and inclusive of individuals from a range of backgrounds, perspectives, intellectual positions, and methodological approaches. We just ensure that this continues, even in the face of broad societal headwinds that threaten to derail these critical advances. Solving the thorny problem of identifying the causes and treatments of disorders of the nervous system will require the minds, hearts, and contributions of people with diverse skills, perspectives, and intellectual approaches. We cannot retreat from the advances we have made and, in fact, need to push forward to ensure we are building an intellectual community that reflects the full diversity of individuals, perspectives, and approaches. I will work to achieve this goal by collaborating with and supporting the Experience & Resilience Committee, chaired by Gregory Fonzo, and the Empowerment Committee, co-chaired by Tamar Gur and Claudia Lugo-Candelas.

Strengthening partnerships among academia and industry

ACNP has long been a place that values and welcomes scientists and leaders from both academia and industry, striving to build connections and pipelines that build partnerships that benefit all involved. As the field is evolving, these relationships have never been more critical, and we need to pursue additional ways to build collaborations. The previous leadership of ACNP has done outstanding work building precompetitive stakeholder collaborations that should benefit both industry and academia. However, as interest in CNS disorders among pharmaceutical, device,

and other novel digital and technological industries increases, there is more we can do to build partnerships across industry, academia, and government. This includes developing opportunities for individuals who have never partnered across industry and academia to learn about the needs and approaches of those working in different settings so as to develop more effective collaborations. Further, while ACNP has a long and strong history of engaging the pharmaceutical industry, we have further opportunities to build engagement with a wider variety of industries doing work relevant to understanding brain disorders, including those developing novel technologies and devices, digital platforms, and applications. I will work to achieve this goal by collaborating with and supporting the Liaison Committee with Governmental Agencies and the Pharmaceutical Industry, co-chaired by Melissa Brotman and Ryan Logan.

Include program elements that focus on the developmental origins of diseases of the central nervous system

ACNP has always been home to a broad array of research and perspectives, from those that focus on developing treatments for those individuals already suffering from disorders of the central nervous system, to work relevant to understanding the developmental pathways to risk and resilience for these disorders. However, research increasingly demonstrates that disorders that often do not manifest in their full form until adulthood have their roots much earlier in development. This means we have the potential to identify biomarkers of risk early in life, providing crucial avenues for early intervention and prevention. While we have many current ACNP members who focus on the developmental origins of brain disorders, we have the opportunity to foster awareness and interest in this area of science. I welcome the opportunity to work with the 2026 Program Committee Co-Chairs (Tallie Z. Baram and Holly Lisanby) to incorporate the full range of scientific perspectives into the type of stimulating and balanced program that brings ACNP attendees back to our meeting year after year.

I want to take this opportunity to thank the most recent presidents of ACNP, including Kerry Ressler, Helen Mayberg, and Bill Carlezon. I have learned much from serving with them on the ACNP Executive Board, and we are so fortunate to have had their wisdom and leadership skills at the helm of ACNP over the past years. Further, I am also so grateful for the leadership of Sarah Timm as our Executive Director and the fabulous support from the whole team at Parthenon Management Group. I am also very appreciative of the efforts of all of our committee co-chairs and members, who give so much to ACNP. I very much look forward to working with each of them and all of you in this upcoming year.

Sincerely,



Deanna M. Barch, Ph.D.
ACNP President