American College of Neuropsychopharmacology
bulletin



Sarah Timm, CAE, CMP-HC, ACNP Executive Director

Understanding the ACNP Experience:

Survey Findings and Next Steps

"Many people can reach for and achieve excellence. To do this consistently is what separates masters and geniuses from everyone else." - Paul Russo

The College recently completed a comprehensive perception survey to better understand how members and non-members view the organization, its mission, and its role within the broader scientific and clinical community. I hope you participated and provided your feedback. The survey findings provide valuable insight into ACNP's strengths, areas of opportunity, and the evolving expectations of the field.

More than 600 individuals participated in the survey, including current ACNP members, associate members, emeritus members, fellows, and non-members from across the neuroscience and psychopharmacology communities. The goal of the initiative was not only to better understand how ACNP is perceived today, but also to help guide future communications and engagement.

One of the clearest findings from the survey is that ACNP continues to be viewed as one of the premier scientific organizations in our field. Across both members and non-members, respondents consistently described ACNP as, expert-level, well-respected, influential, cutting-edge and interdisciplinary. These perceptions reinforce the organization's longstanding reputation for scientific rigor, intellectual leadership, and excellence in advancing translational

and clinical neuroscience. Members, in particular, emphasized qualities such as mentorship, collegiality, collaboration, and community. Many described ACNP as a uniquely supportive professional environment that fosters scientific exchange and career development.

While the survey highlighted broad admiration for ACNP's scientific standing, it also revealed an important distinction between how members experience the organization and how non-members perceive it. Members often described ACNP as collaborative, mentoring-oriented, and welcoming once inside the organization. Non-members, however, were more likely to view ACNP from a distance as highly exclusive or difficult to access. This gap in perception emerged consistently throughout both the quantitative and qualitative data. Nearly 80% of non-member respondents characterized ACNP as "Exclusive/Elite" or "Highly Exclusive/Elite," compared with approximately 59% of members. Many non-members also reported that their relationship with ACNP extends little beyond the Annual Meeting.

Importantly, the findings suggest that the issue is not a lack of respect for ACNP. In fact, respondents overwhelmingly acknowledged the organization's scientific prestige. Rather, the challenge centers on accessibility, visibility, and broader engagement.

The survey also underscored the substantial value members place on their ACNP involvement. Among current members:

- 87% reported that ACNP involvement positively affects their professional reputation.
- 84% believe the rigor of the membership process is worth the value received.
- 82% believe ACNP's work should be more visible to the general public.

These findings reinforce that members continue to see ACNP as an important professional home and a meaningful marker of scientific achievement. At the same time, members expressed a strong desire to ensure that ACNP remains forward-looking, connected to emerging investigators, and reflective of the evolving scientific landscape.

The survey included extensive open-ended responses that provided additional context and nuance to the quantitative findings. Several themes emerged consistently. First, a recurring theme involved the perception that ACNP can feel difficult to access, especially for early-career investigators and individuals outside established academic networks. Some respondents encouraged the organization to continue broadening mentorship opportunities, improving transparency around membership pathways, and creating additional opportunities for engagement outside the Annual Meeting.

Survey responses also reflected thoughtful discussion about the balance between maintaining ACNP's high standards and adapting to changes within the field. Members expressed support for preserving scientific rigor while also ensuring the organization remains interdisciplinary, forward-thinking, and welcoming to a broad range of scientific perspectives.

The survey findings also informed several strategic recommendations focused on strengthening ACNP's visibility, accessibility, and member engagement. Those recommendations included:

- Modernizing aspects of ACNP's digital presence to better reflect the organization's cutting-edge scientific identity.

- Expanding public-facing communications and scientific storytelling.
- Increasing opportunities for engagement beyond the Annual Meeting.
- Enhancing onboarding and mentorship experiences for newer members.
- Continuing to communicate the interdisciplinary and collaborative nature of ACNP.

Moving forward, a task force assembled by Council is working to implement these recommendations. We appreciate your feedback and participation in the survey. The insights help inform ongoing strategic discussions and future initiatives aimed at ensuring ACNP continues to serve as a premier scientific home for the field.