



## ACNP President's Letter 2015

### Time to Contemplate and Innovate

Raquel E. Gur, M.D., Ph.D.

I am honored and deeply humbled to serve as president of ACNP for the upcoming year. This organization helped me grow through learning, intellectual stimulation, collaborations and friendships. In an ever changing world and increasingly demanding work settings - academia, government, industry - the realization that we are all in it together is encouraging, binds us to our common mission and, at times, inspiring.

The ACNP is a remarkable organization. Our strengths derive from the enthusiastic engagement of members who want to serve and contribute to enabling a dynamic infrastructure that makes transitions seamless and keeps its finger on the pulse of times. However, our field is undergoing a revolution, joining the genomic age that harbors the promise of mechanistic interventions within the context of precision medicine. If clinical neuroscience is to join the rest of medicine, the way to do research and collaborate, will evolve. Transition to Big Science necessary for genomic studies poses new opportunities but also challenges. Advances require strong collaboration between academia and industry at a time that industry is pulling out of the brain business. The ACNP should understand these transformations and proactively provide the stage for shaping the future.

We are embarking on strategic planning that will review where we are and set goals for the upcoming years. I want to take this opportunity to thank the members of the Task Force that have already convened at our Arizona meeting. They broadly represent the ACNP elected officials, committee chairs, our journal, government, industry, and associate members. The Task Force is charged with reviewing our current goals that include maintaining standards of excellence of our membership, an informative and stimulating annual meeting, increased impact of ACNP publications and providing a valued resource for organizations such as patient advocacy, government, academia and industry. We will reach out for your input and your participation will be greatly appreciated. At the end of the process we should be in a strong position to move forward financially sound and with a fresh view of our goals and new ways to advance them.

Notwithstanding any changes, we will continue to be guided by several principles that the college has already been pursuing. The ACNP is committed to a diverse membership and representation of women and minorities. We are making progress with women and less so with minorities. The challenges we face are similar to those

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evident in academic settings. Together, with diligence, we will push to enhance equality in representation of women and minorities in the college and its organizational structure.

With limited research funding, junior scientists face the greatest challenge for career development. We hope that the ACNP will serve as a vehicle for mentorship and guidance. The ACNP will continue to strive to attract the best clinical and basic neuroscientists to join its ranks and present at meetings. While the virtual world can satisfy most of our intellectual and even collaborative scientific needs, it is the shaking of the hands and the meeting of the eyes and the ebb and flow of the conversation that can cement a project or a career path. Planned and random encounters at the annual meeting have helped shape my own career and I hope that the membership will keep sending us the brightest of the young. We will make every effort to support them financially and through mentorship and help them grow.

The ACNP is first and foremost a scientific organization. However, our science is translational and we therefore bear responsibility to additional constituencies. The knowledge we generate must be shared with the public for the benefit of patients and society. At a time that remarkable advances in technology enable scientific progress in elucidating the neurobiology of complex brain disorders, we still need to combat stigma and educate policy makers and the public.

I look forward to an exciting year of reflection and planning, confident that with the combined wisdom of the ACNP committees and membership we will be able to retain the core of what makes us unique while adjusting aspects in our organization to make us better poised to face the future. Hopefully, the process will also produce some novel ideas that will allow our college to be a trailblazer. I realize that a president may come in with one agenda and find out that events have forced another agenda. Should that happen, I will rely on the guidance and input of the ACNP past and present leaders, the membership and a fantastic administrative staff.

With warm wishes for a wonderful holiday season and a great 2015,

Raquel E. Gur