



American College of Neuropsychopharmacology



ACNP President’s Letter 2020
Maria A. Oquendo, M.D., Ph.D.

Dear Members of the College,

It is a privilege and an honor to serve as your President for 2020. Having served the College in various roles (Membership Committee, Program Committee, Council), the opportunity to contribute in a different capacity is exciting. ACNP is my scientific home and the annual meeting is the professional bright spot of my year.

As I mentioned in the Business Meeting last December, I have proposed four initiatives for 2020.

The first initiative is to develop strategies for recruitment of the next generation of outstanding scientists conducting cutting edge research with continued focus on diversity defined in the broadest sense. Most of our membership growth has depended on having individuals self-select or be identified and encouraged by their mentors to apply. There exist opportunities for more proactive outreach to potential members that can diversify the scientific portfolio and sociodemographic characteristics of the College. This initiative will necessarily rely on the wisdom of the Membership Committee who evaluates and selects applicants for membership and of the Education and Training Committee, which selects our travel awardees with special attention to diversity and is responsible for fostering their development and ultimately their membership in the College.

Leveraging our assets to promote the mission of the College is a second initiative. Thanks to the College’s portfolio’s excellent performance under the guidance of our distinguished Treasurer, supported by the Audit/Finance Committee, we are in a position to invest in efforts that support the mission of the College. Thus, I will work with the Education and Training Committee and with the collaboration of our sister societies, to develop opportunities to further education in neuropsychopharmacology.

My third initiative is informed by my experience as President of the American Psychiatric Association. In that position, I learned first-hand about the capacity that professional and scientific societies have to influence policy. They can do so by organizing congressional briefings in which scientists and stakeholders talk about research findings with immediate public health impact; by organizing meetings between scientists and members of the Senate and Congress to discuss the need for ongoing research funding; and by showing that this is a bipartisan issue. This is a job that our colleagues at NIH and other federal funding agencies cannot do. We know

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that the nation's health depends on research dollars to support fundamental and clinical science. By working with the Liaison Committee to strengthen our partnerships with societies with similar missions, we can increase our reach to policy makers and work to ensure protection/expansion of research funding and support for animal research. By supporting advocacy for the outstanding science that we discuss at our meetings and read about in our journal, this initiative has the potential to will benefit the College and its members.

A fourth initiative will support both the education and the research mission of the College. While we want to improve educational opportunities for budding basic, translational and clinical neuroscientists, it is essential to improve the pipeline. A key strategy for this is to ensure that graduate and medical schools are exposing their students to the excitement of neuroscience research relevant to psychiatric and addictive disorders, so that they choose it as a focus for their career. Thus, I will work with the Education and Training Committee to engage the AAMC and other organizations to expand the time spent in SOM/Neuroscience curricula on psychiatric and substance use disorders.

Of course, the success for any ACNP President relies heavily on the outstanding work and support that Parthenon Management Group provides in ensuring that we keep our eye on the ball as we work towards fulfilling Presidential initiatives, while continuing to ensure the highest quality programming and functioning of ACNP. Thank you to Sarah Timm and her outstanding team!

I owe a debt of gratitude for the vision and dedication of the immediate past Presidents, Marina Wolf and Steve Hyman, as well as that of our illustrious Council. Together, they have set the stage for what I hope will be another fabulous year for ACNP.

I look forward to hearing from you and to a productive year!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'MAO', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Maria A. Oquendo, M.D., Ph.D.
President