



American College of Neuropsychopharmacology



Helen S. Mayberg, M.D. ACNP President 2024

Dear Colleagues,

The annual meeting is less than two weeks away and the program promises an exciting mix of plenary lectures, symposia and workshops, mentoring activities and social events, with time and space to catch up with old friends and hopefully, make new ones.

Chair Tracy Bale, co-Chair Stephanie Bilbo, and the entire Program Committee have worked diligently to organize a diverse, balanced and cutting-edge schedule, and I am hopeful that people will also be inspired by the Distinguished Lecturer and Presidential Symposia speakers that I have selected for the plenary sessions.

As everyone is aware, this will be our last year in Arizona, and the attendance will be a record high--2,000 attendees--requiring for the first time, a cap on invited guests--something everyone must now anticipate as we balance the numbers of invited trainees, non-member speakers, industry participants and active members and their guests. This cap will carry forward as we move to new meeting venues, starting with The Atlantis Resort in the Bahamas in January 2026. Identification of meeting locations that achieve our size, scientific and cultural requirements and that match the majority vote for a warm climate, a single inclusive facility at a reasonable price point has been accomplished by the focus, diligence, creativity and special magic of Sarah Timm and Erin Shearon (nee Shaw) to negotiate on our behalf. This will be a work-in-progress as we try out these new venues over the next few years.

Musings on the Year as President

What I have learned this year is that we are a College of diverse and committed scientists and clinicians with the unwavering shared goal to make the world a better place through great science and creative mentoring. I have been moved by the thoughtful work of each committee to meet their charge and advance the College towards its mission. I have been inspired by the openness and thoughtful discourse of Council to think deeply about scientific, funding, cultural and educational challenges as well as ensuring we remain agile to grow and stay relevant to the evolving needs of our constituency.

The College has been busy. As President, I did my best to listen, facilitate and avoid unnecessary sharp turns. With a diverse group of engaged Committee members and an active and committed Council, we have worked to sustain momentum on

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initiatives implemented over the past several years and to give them needed time to grow and mature.

We have continued to focus on a variety of mentoring opportunities for early career investigators and to facilitate increased involvement of previously underrepresented groups, while also ensuring that the meeting continues to be relevant to both our active and long-contributing Fellows and Emeritus members.

Towards this last goal, we have worked on a new plan to expand mentoring opportunities to all member of the College. The ACNP Senior Leaders Advising on Careers (SLAC) Committee, chaired by Suzanne Haber, has launched a near-peer program to provide a new formal resource for mid-to senior level researchers during critical career transitions. The Career Transition Mentoring Network (CaTMN) will draw on College expertise when one is considering a promotion opportunity, a lateral move to another institution, leadership positions such as a Chair, Center/Institute Director, or Dean, a move in or out of academia, government, or industry, or downsizing a lab, among many career transition topics. If you are interested in learning more and volunteering to be a near-peer network member (currently Fellows and Emeritus members), please [click here](#).

Among the many activities supported by the College, I was particularly gratified to see the actions of the Scientific Communication and Liaison Committees and their leadership in our advocacy activities for neuroscience, patients and society. Their sustained engagement on many fronts included partnership with the American Brain Coalition and their activities on Capitol Hill, endorsement and sign-on to various lobbying efforts impacting neuroscience and mental health funding, and direct public outreach including multiple presentations at the Neuroscience Forum, the National Academy of Sciences and the National Academy of Medicine, and at the United Nations. ACNP members have been at the table this year to educate and advocate on the need for evidence-based neuroscience approaches to address serious mental illness to relieve the suffering and disability of our patients. The generosity of time and knowledge shown by individual scientists towards these many efforts is the embodiment of our collective mission and core values of ACNP.

On other topics, Council has had thoughtful discussions about the role of the press at our meetings weighing the importance of a protected environment to openly discuss and debate works in progress without premature pre-publication publicity with the interest in early dissemination and public education. This will be a topic of ongoing discussion in the Scientific Communication Committee and hopefully among the members and meeting attendees at large. We have further worked to strengthen dialogue with industry and government partners with the shared goal to develop novel treatment targets for neuropsychiatric disorders through careful curation of new

business members to further expand the diversity of meeting participants and new collaborations. Past President Kerry Ressler will continue to champion a new Stakeholder Initiative to Advance Translation in Mental Health Treatments, a topic more important than ever with the yet unknown change in the trajectory of federal funding. We are moving steadily forward with our new digital journal, *NPP-Digital Psychiatry and Neuroscience*, joining a growing set of platforms to publish novel datasets in new formats. This year also marked the start of a Strategic Planning Task Force to consider our priorities to maintain our relevance, growth and progress as we work to fulfill our core mission while seeing new opportunities going forward over the next 5 years.

I finish this year as President humbled by the ongoing vision, culture and mission that the College represents, and grateful for the opportunity to make a small but hopefully meaningful contribution to our shared goal to catalyze scientific innovation that leads to new treatments that impact the lives of people who suffer from neuropsychiatric disorders. While I am proud of our progress this year, I remain circumspect about the ongoing and emerging obstacles that impact our activities as a scientific community. Understanding the brain is hard, forward movement on seemingly actionable discoveries that can impact patients is often slow, and systemic change is at best, incremental; but openness and readiness for change is a necessity of the creative process in each of our own labs and in our work together for the ACNP.

I look forward to the meeting and sharing in the excitement of your latest work and ideas. Safe travels and see you in Phoenix.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Helen Mayberg". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Helen S. Mayberg, M.D.
ACNP President