

**ACNP Council Meeting Minutes**  
**Thursday, January 15, 2026**  
**7:00pm – 9:30pm Eastern Time**  
**Hera Meeting Room**

*Deanna Barch, Presiding*

Susanne Ahmari  
Victoria Arango  
Tracy Bale  
Bill Carlezon  
Cynthia Crawford  
Neill Epperson  
Yasmin Hurd  
Paul Kenny  
Helen Mayberg  
Dost Ongur (virtual)  
David Rubinow (virtual)  
Rita Valentino

Executive Director: Sarah Timm  
Staff: Erin Shearon

Associate Members: Andrea Goldstein-Piekarski (Associate Members have voice but not vote)  
Hilary Marusak

***Conflict of Interest Forms were reviewed prior to start of the meeting by Deanna Barch, President, Rita Valentino, Secretary, and Sarah Timm, Executive Director, per the Conflict of Interest Policy for Council.***

- 1. Welcome New Associate Members on Council*** – D. Barch welcomed the new Associate Members on Council, A. Goldstein-Piekarski and H. Marusak.

***Strategic Goal 1: Excellence in College Membership - The College will include the most respected, diverse scientists focused on disorders of the brain, and these Members will present at the Annual Meeting while working to enhance the careers of talented investigators by providing mentorship and guidance.***

- 2. Researchers with Lived Experiences*** – D. Barch requested for Council to consider how to engage researchers with lived experiences in the College and annual meeting such as establishing a subcommittee under the Experience & Resilience Committee that would operate the same as the BIPOC, LGBTQIA2S+, Hispanic/Latin America, and newly established Neurodivergent subcommittees. It was mentioned the Study Group Session entitled, *Centering Lived Experience in Psychiatric Neuroscience Research: Challenges, Opportunities, and Calls to Action*, received positive feedback. After discussion, Council agreed to charge the Experience & Resilience Committee to consider ideas for inclusion of

researchers with lived experience in the annual meeting and membership and to provide Council with recommendations on how to proceed.

**Strategic Goal 2: Annual Meeting** - *The ACNP Annual Meeting will be consistently acknowledged as an exceptionally stimulating forum that provides attendees with opportunities to easily connect with one another and broaden their understanding of emerging research advances while providing the opportunity for early career scientists to emerge as future leaders in the field.*

### ***3. Future Annual Meeting Discussion***

***a. Special Topics Sessions*** – As a reminder, the Special Topics sessions were established for committees and task forces to submit proposals to be reviewed by Council for inclusion in the annual meeting program. These sessions took the place of Meet the Expert. Council requested to get feedback from attendees on the Special Topics sessions and this will be discussed during the April Council meeting.

***b. NIH*** – It was advised that the HHS decision to not allow attendance by NIH employees was based on the large number of NIH employees requesting to attend and the location. There were not any details regarding why the location was an issue and whether this was due to the international nature or that the meeting was being held at a resort. It was noted that NIH attendance at SfN was also limited. There was discussion on canceling the January 2028 Annual Meeting at the Atlantis; however, Council agreed the expense that would be incurred and the difficulty in relocating with short notice argued against this decision. Council agreed to continue the January 2028 Annual Meeting at the Atlantis and requested a back-up plan for livestreaming capabilities should NIH employees not be approved to attend. It was also suggested to remove “hybrid” from the title of the ACNP Annual Meeting.

***4. Discuss Locations for December 2029 Annual Meeting or January 2030 Annual Meeting*** – The Annual Meeting Task Force, chaired by Ellen Leibenluft, provided a proposal for an update to the guidelines for Council’s review and approval. The updated guidelines equate financial, weather, and safety considerations where the original guidelines were established based on safety concerns. It was suggested to list the considerations as bulleted points, so it did not seem as though they were ranked in order of importance. It was suggested to include that each consideration will be equally weighted. There was a motion, second, and all of Council approved the updated guidelines with the revisions mentioned. S. Timm requested for Council to consider locations on the east coast for the next open year’s meeting location as December 2028 will be held in Las Vegas. Council requested for the Executive Office to consider Tampa, Orlando, Puerto Rico, and New Orleans in the December 2029 or January 2030 Annual Meeting proposals. Council will discuss these locations during the April Council meeting. It was suggested to request further clarification from NIH on international locations as Mexico was suggested as a

future location. S. Timm advised that there is not a hotel property large enough to accommodate our meeting size in Mexico.

**Strategic Goal 4: Collaborative Relationships** - *Through collaborative relationships with academia, industry, government, and patient advocacy organizations, the College will be viewed as a valued resource and disseminator of information on brain disorders and their treatments.*

5. **APA 2027 Annual Meeting** – D. Barch met with Mark Rapaport, APA President, and he has requested for ACNP to present a science focused session at the APA Annual Meeting in 2027. D. Barch advised his concern is that the APA Annual Meeting has moved away from science and would like to bring back scientific sessions in the program. N. Epperson volunteered to assist with this as she will already be attending the APA Annual Meeting in San Francisco.

**Operational/Governance Items:**

6. **Presidential Initiatives for 2026** – D. Barch reviewed her presidential initiatives with Council.
  - a. **Ensure that ACNP uses its voice to support the future of biomedical research** which perfectly aligns with advocacy and how the College wants to collaborate with others. D. Barch mentioned the Executive Committee had a productive meeting with the leadership of the AfCNP, CINP, and ECNP during the annual meeting and are considering ways to collaborate. It was suggested to research information from FENS on their animal research program.
  - b. **Ensure that ACNP does all that it can to support early-career researchers in challenging times.** Council was reminded that a task force will be established to review the annual meeting expenses and determine if there is a way to provide additional scholarships in the Early Career Investigator Assistance Program next year. Council was reminded that the Early Career Investigator Assistance Program randomly selects ten applications for a total of \$25K in annual meeting support. This program is available for both members and non-members who qualify. There was a suggestion to consider changing this to only Associate Members. Another suggestion from the Emeritus/Fellow Networking Roundtable session was to offer a travel scholarship for an emeritus member to attend the annual meeting.
  - c. **Ensure that ACNP maintains its commitment to inclusive excellence.** It was mentioned that Council members have received negative feedback regarding the name change of the Gender Equity and Inclusion Committee to the Empowerment Committee. It was questioned whether the Executive Office could request more data from the attorney to see if there is any flexibility with changing the name back to the Women’s Committee. It was cautioned that the bandwidth this endeavor may take away from other presidential initiatives. Concern was raised about changing the name of this committee that other committees may request to change back their name. These changes could cause confusion on the mission of the

committees. This will need to be clearly addressed with charges annually to each committee.

- d. Strengthen partnerships among academia, industry, and government.** D. Barch is considering a Teaching Day session with industry to attract more pharma members to the meeting. It was suggested to consider holding a policy-based meeting at the ACNP Annual Meeting focused on public private partnership with government, industry, and pharma similar to the meeting organized by Kerry Ressler and Hussein Manji in 2023. Another suggestion was to look for opportunities to host a scientific session at an industry meeting such as the JP Morgan Meeting. This idea will be revisited during the April Council meeting.
- e. Include program elements that focus on the developmental origins of diseases of the central nervous system**

***Information Items:***

- 7. 2026 Summer Council and Program Committee Meetings** – The summer Council meeting will be held virtually on Wednesday, July 29<sup>th</sup>, from 10:00am – 2:00pm Eastern. The Program Committee will meet virtually on Wednesday, July 22<sup>nd</sup>.
- 8. 2026 EC/Council Call/Meeting Schedule** – Council was provided the 2026 call schedule.

***The meeting concluded at 8:35 PM Eastern Time.***