Council Quarterly Minutes
Tuesday, April 28, 2026
1:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m. Eastern

Participants:

Deanna Barch, President	***Paul Kenny***
Susanna Ahmari	***David Rubinow***
Victoria Arango	***Rita Valentino***
Tracy Bale	***Olusola Ajilore (elect)***
Bill Carlezon	***Carlos Bolanos-Guzman (elect)***
Cynthia Crawford	***Hilary Marusak (Associate Member)***
Neill Epperson	***Sarah Timm, staff***
Yasmin Hurd	***Erin Shearon, staff***
Helen Mayberg	

D. Barch congratulated the new Officers and Council members.

- President Elect-Designate – Neill Epperson
- Inclusive Excellence Officer – Carlos Bolanos-Guzman
- Council – Olusola Ajilore and Carolyn Rodriguez

Minutes:

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

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.***

1. ***ACNP's Brand Review –*** A. Brahlek and K. Coffen, PMG, provided an update on ACNP's perception with members and non-members and reviewed the draft Brand Guide. The PMG Marketing Department surveyed members and non-members (annual meeting attendees from the past three years) to share their insight on the College. These survey results were shared with the ACNP Brand Update Task Force that consists of D. Barch, B. Carlezon, D. Rubinow, Alexander Harris, T. Bale, Jennifer Felger, Sheila Rauch, Danielle Graham, Husseini Manji, and Linda Brady. There were 635 total respondents to the survey which included 378 members and 257 non-members. The survey asked respondents to select the adjectives that best describe ACNP. Both groups agreed that ACNP is expert-level, well-respected, influential, cutting-edge, and interdisciplinary. The difference in perception between members vs. non-members was the exclusive nature of the college. Non-members describe ACNP as more exclusive in a more negative connotation where members find the College as exclusive in a meritorious way in that membership is hard-earned. Most members (87%) report that their involvement in the College does have a positive impact on their professional reputation,

and 84% report that the rigor in the membership application is worth the value they receive. Members do agree that ACNP is their scientific home. A substantial number of members (82%) believe that ACNP's work should be more visible to the general public. Some of the concerns expressed were barriers to membership acceptance and perceived drift from clinical and translational to basic science in the meeting content. However, the majority of members and non-members said that the ACNP Annual Meeting has the right balance of scientific, translational, and clinical. There was strong support towards movement for diversity and inclusion. It was also noted that ACNP is still the premier organization for quality of science in their field. Out of membership respondents, Associate Members were the least to respond. Some members and Associate Members noted that it is hard to get their footing in the organization once they become members. Some Associate Members expressed their frustration with the changes to the invitation guest policy. Some of the Fellows expressed concerned that ACNP seems to be moving towards social and political agendas and feel the meeting has gotten too large. Non-members state that ACNP is highly exclusive and can be insular. In terms of membership applications, they noted favoritism towards academics.

The PMG Marketing Department recommends the College update their website within the next two years making sure all images, as well as the language and structure, evoke a welcoming feel along with being meritorious. The website is the digital face of the organization and should reflect the cutting-edge nature of ACNP. They also recommend that ACNP expand its branding and begin to strategize if they are going to engage with the public and that they have the right tools to do so. This would include a social media strategy and social media assets. All communication (website, marketing, emails, social media) should include imagery that shows the interdisciplinary nature that will signal inclusion, especially to new members. The Marketing Department also recommends creating a new member journey to support new members year-round and increase loyalty along the way.

It was questioned how many members felt lost once they received membership in the organization. A. Brahlek advised that 42% of members stated exclusivity and 5% of Associate Members noted it. Many comments noted not knowing how to network and socialize at the annual meeting. It was suggested that Council should consider how to better integrate people in the annual meeting.

Council will discuss the recommendations further during the summer meeting and discussions on updating the website will begin in the fall. A. Brahlek also advised that the marketing department is updating the brand guide to position ACNP as more exclusive as opposed to exclusionary.

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.***

<u>Strategic Goal 3: Publications</u> - *NPP, NPPR, DPN, and the ACNP website will continue to increase the impact of the journals and their value to our members while disseminating cutting-edge and diverse research in our field through our journals, website, and social media.*

2. ***NPP Publisher Search Task Force Report* –** D. Barch and S. Timm provided an update on the NPP Publisher Search Task Force and final report and recommendation to Council. The task force met, discussed, and approved the recommendation to move forward with negotiations with Elsevier with one abstention. The task force received proposals from Springer Nature, Elsevier, and Oxford University Press (OUP). The task force moved forward based on review of the proposals with interviews from Elsevier and OUP. The task force then presented score cards based on the interviews with a final call to vote Elsevier for the recommendation. NPP's contract ends with Springer Nature on December 21, 2026 and DPN's contract ends with Springer Nature on December 31, 2027. Both publishers included DPN in their proposals. It was noted that not only did Elsevier have the strongest financial offer, but they also had a good plan for mitigating the risk of transition. There was one concern raised that the College should select OUP since a non-profit publisher would be more in line with the College's mission and vision. D. Barch noted that the Executive Office plans to negotiate added benefits to our members with Elsevier. It was suggested to also negotiate with Elsevier to sponsor events at the annual meeting as they do have the money to do so. It was questioned how the College plans to spend the signing bonus and recommended to put this money back into the journals. It was also suggested to use this money to help support early-career scientists who do not have sufficient grant funding to attend the meeting. It was also noted that this money could help with the College's expenses as they will be even greater with the 2027 Annual Meeting located in California. S. Timm noted we would have to add this to our projections in the future as this will be the third year in a row of an operational loss. She also noted that a large portion of our use of funds spend is going to early-career scientists and the annual meeting. She said it will be important to balance the funds across our strategic plan; however, would be good to ask the Principal Editors what areas they see of benefit with the journals (their wish lists). It was suggested to request waivers for the Principal Editors in negotiations. There was a motion for the Executive Office to begin negotiations on the contract with Elsevier and update Council on this progress. There was a second and all of Council approved the recommendation.

<u>Strategic Goal 4: Collaborative Relationships</u> - *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.*

3. ***Advocacy Affiliate Application* –** Council reviewed the advocacy affiliate application from AE Research Foundation. The Liaison Committee reviewed and recommended approval. There was a motion, second, and all of Council approved AE Research Foundation as an advocacy affiliate.

4. ***Strengthen Partnerships among Academia, Industry, and Government* –** D. Barch reminded Council that one of the things discussed extensively last year was trying to

make sure that we do more at the upcoming annual meetings to strengthen partnerships among academia, industry, and government. As a reminder, the Precompetitive Stakeholders Task Force drafted a white paper in collaboration with industry and government. D. Barch followed up with Kerry Ressler, who led the white paper along with Sahib Khalsa, to ask what more we could be doing to strengthen those partnerships. He did not think now was the time for a pre-meeting during the annual meeting but suggested to work with industry and government to submit panels to the Program Committee. K. Ressler and S. Khalsa are going to take the lead to submit a study group proposal that will be a follow up to the white paper. D. Barch has reached out to other industry scientists to consider taking the lead on other proposals and has a meeting with Johnson and Johnson (Janssen) during the SOBP Annual Meeting. B. Carlezon advised that there were numerous complaints last year that the January 2026 Annual Meeting overlapped with the JP Morgan Meeting. He advised that there will be a conflict again for the January 2027 Annual Meeting as most places send their top people to the JP Morgan Meeting. N. Epperson advised that she and P. Kenny have met to discuss a proposal that would involve the JP Morgan Meeting and plan to present this soon. This proposal will be presented on a future meeting. It was noted that industry attendees will choose to attend the JP Morgan Meeting over the ACNP Annual Meeting as that is where the deals are made. It was suggested to reach out to the Liaison Committee to consider submitting a proposal to the Program Committee. T. Bale reminded Council of the Promising Targets session that would also be an opportunity for industry to submit proposals for new targets that are new clinical trial outcomes to the Program Committee; however, those submissions do not open until the fall. Another suggestion was to encourage submissions on psychedelics based on the recent Executive Order along with GLP-1s. It was noted that even though the Executive Order came out, there are still scientists that do not understand the path to get there. Suggested proposals could be "how do you design a clinical trial for a psychedelic?" and "what a proper clinical trial in this space could or should look like".

It was advised that feedback and the perception from industry is that they do not feel as engaged in the ACNP Annual Meeting, and that the College was losing people from industry at the meeting. The discussion should center around strategies to reinvigorate and strengthen those interactions and engagement. One suggestion was to organize a 'Meet the Experts' session with key industry leaders to discuss what they find valuable or what they need from academic partnerships. T. Bale reminded the group that in the past, Council made recommendations on certain topic areas or themes with a request for proposals from the Program Committee. Since this has stopped, the Program Committee receives a diverse spectrum of submissions. It was questioned if we knew what industry would like to see in the program. It was suggested to encourage the Program Committee to focus on sessions in neuropsychopharmacology when reviewing the submissions. It was noted to be cautious on how it is framed because pharmacology at the time ACNP was created is different than today. S. Timm advised it would be too late to put out an RFP since submissions are already open; however, we could suggest for members to think of this aspect when finalizing their proposals and give guidance to the Program Committee chairs. The Executive Office will schedule a call with D. Barch and the Program Committee chairs to discuss further.

Strategic Goal 5: Financial Stability and Use of Reserves - ***Earnings from investments and/or the investments themselves will first be used to ensure the stability of the College and then will be used to support programs and initiatives that advance activities important to the mission of the College.***

5. ***ACNP FY27 Budget*** – D. Rubinow presented the FY2027 budget to Council. He advised there is $300K more in revenue largely due to the rental income with the new building; however, there is an additional $900K more in expenses due to the annual meeting and cost of food and beverage in California, which have gone up almost $700K. The FY27 budget shows an operating loss of $640K and that does not include the additional $500K spent in use of funds. PMG is growing each year and doing well which is a plus for the College. We have diversified our funds with the purchase of the new building. He noted that publications also continue to do well. There has been a decrease of participating corporation income over the past few years and that is not anticipated to increase if the environment continues to be economically fraught. D. Rubinow advised Council that we will have to watch funds dedicated to special projects. There was a motion, second, and all of Council approved the FY27 Budget.

6. ***New Office Building Update*** – S. Timm advised that the closing date on the new building is May 7th. She noted that we were fortunate to draw down the funds from investments during a high in the market. The current tenants are in the new building until the end of August so we will move in during October. The College received two offers on our current building and received a signed contract for $150K over asking. The inspection of the current building is taking place tomorrow. We will close on our current building the third week of May. At that time, we will be able to reinvest the funds from the sale.

7. ***Career-Spanning Mentorship Award*** – R. Valentino advised the Senior Leaders Advising on Careers (SLAC) is requesting two Career-Spanning Mentorship Awards in 2026. As a reminder, Council approved one award per year for three years. A second award would be additional $4,100 per year for three years. The mission of the award is to bring together one of our senior members (Fellow or Emeritus) and an early career scientist to engage in a new mentor-mentee mentorship that will last over several years. Each person receives $2,000 for travel support to the meeting, and they receive $100 for a meal onsite at the meeting. The goal is to attract our more senior members who no longer are attending the annual meeting. R. Valentino advised that last year in its inaugural year the committee received 47 applications for only one award. There was some negative feedback that we only offered one award; however, the application was not onerous. The committee did provide $100 meal vouchers to the next top four applicants for them to have a meal onsite. Another proposal from the committee if we cannot do two awards is to offer waived registration for the top finalists. It was noted that non-members and members could apply as mentees if they qualify. The SLAC Committee suggested on the last call to restrict the mentor to only emeritus members to hopefully attract those members who have not been regularly attending the meeting. Council members would not be eligible to apply as mentor. It was questioned why we are encouraging senior members to attend who normally do not if we are trying to reduce

attendance at the meeting. It was stated that these members have fundamental knowledge that would be beneficial to meeting attendees. It was also noted that from the survey to Fellow and Emeritus members last year that one of the reasons that emeritus members are no longer attending is that they do not have the money to attend as they no longer have grants. D. Barch presented three proposals to Council to vote on.

- ***a.*** Budget for two awards with the understanding that there is no obligation to give two awards and awards would only be made if the applicants were truly meritorious.
- ***b.*** Keep only one award with the next top finalist receiving waived registration.
- ***c.*** No changes to the program.

The majority of Council voted for option a. It was suggested to change part of the criteria to encourage emeritus members who are not regularly attending the meeting. Council will review the data next year and decide whether to continue this program or not.

<u>Operational/Governance Items</u>

8. ***PMG Board –***The Parthenon Management Group Board is in need of an international member to replace Guy Goodwin on the board. The PMG Board members recommended Rene Kahn as the first choice and Elisabeth Binder as the second choice for the position. There was a motion, second, and all of Council approved to invite R. Kahn to the PMG Board with E. Binder as back-up.

<u>Open Discussion</u>

9. ***Accelerating Medical Treatments for Serious Mental Illness Executive Order –*** Council discussed the Executive Order signed on April 18th regarding the fast-tracking of reviews of psychedelics for mental health disorders. D. Barch questioned if there is anything that the College should comment on this issue given that it is central to our mission. It was suggested that we may not want to comment on it now but be prepared to address the EO as research progresses. It was also suggested that it is important to keep any statements data focused. Council will be invited to the next Executive Committee meeting to discuss this further.

<u>Information Items</u>

10. ***January 2026 Annual Meeting Report*** – Council reviewed the January 2026 Annual Meeting Report.

11. ***Summer Council Meeting –*** The summer Council meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, July 29th.

12. ***IBRO –*** The College is now a member of the International Brain Research Organization (IBRO).

13. ***ABC –*** The College will co-host a webinar in June with the American Brain Coalition on "Understanding Biomarkers and their Impact on Brain Health". Additional information will be shared soon.

14. ***Presidential Initiatives –***
    - ***a.*** Ensure that ACNP uses its voice to support the future of biomedical research.
    - ***b.*** Ensure that ACNP does all that it can to support early-career researchers in challenging times.
    - ***c.*** Ensure that ACNP maintains its commitment to inclusive excellence.
    - ***d.*** Strengthen partnerships among academia, industry, and government.
    - ***e.*** Include program elements that focus on the developmental origins of diseases of the central nervous system.

The meeting concluded at 3:30 pm Eastern.