



2021 SRS Board of Directors Candidate

Director-at-Large

James “Tim” McKenna, PhD



I am a Research Health Scientist at the VA Boston Healthcare System, West Roxbury, MA, and an Assistant Professor in Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School. My research aims to describe how select brain regions and neurotransmitter systems control arousal, sleep homeostasis, the sleep-wake cycle, and related oscillatory EEG rhythms. Such research may inform treatment of the neural dysfunction seen in sleep disorders and related psychopathologies. I have also taught students and peers across many academic levels as a classroom instructor and bench scientist, from undergraduates to post-doctoral candidates, including recent lectures and course direction at the Harvard South Shore Psychiatry Residency Training Program.

I have been a member of the SRS for almost two decades. I joined as a trainee member in 2003, when I began my post-doctoral training in the laboratory of Dr. Bob McCarley. I have served as a voting member on the SRS Membership, Membership and Communication, Educational Programs, and Board Nominating committees. I previously served as Vice-Chair of the SRS Membership committee, and I am soon concluding my two-year term as Chair. I previously chaired (and presented at) a post-graduate APSS Sleep meeting course developed by the Educational Programs committee, and I have served as a reviewer of abstracts, post-graduate courses, and symposia for the Sleep meeting.

I think the mention of a few of the SRS Membership committee’s recent accomplishments will reflect positively on me as committee Chair, and hopefully demonstrate my potential as a Board member. Although member retention was a major concern in the year 2020, membership numbers stayed relatively static, which our committee attributed to a number of factors including the new two-year SRS

membership option initially proposed by our committee, committee email membership drives, and the successful adaptation of the Sleep meeting to the new virtual environment. Recent events concerning the Covid pandemic have significantly impacted sleep research, and our committee responded in April 2020 when we initiated the now-established SRS Covid-related webinar series. Another great success for the Membership committee was Club Hypnos at the first virtual Sleep meeting in 2020, which received strong supportive feedback. As committee Chair, I have also hosted bi-yearly meetings of the Chairs and Co-Chairs of the various SRS committees, to foster interaction and communication concerning such items as the SRS website and virtual offerings.

In conclusion, I hope I have portrayed my great enthusiasm concerning sleep research and SRS. As the Society moves into 2021, I look forward to working with other SRS Board members and the committees on a number of issues and initiatives, including continued support of Society publications and educational materials, member retention/growth, promotion of diversity, trainee support, adaptation of sleep research to the pandemic environment, and international membership growth. As a Board member, I will strive to support the SRS membership and advocate for sleep research in both the scientific and general communities. Thank you for your consideration.