



2024 SRS Board of Directors Candidate

Director-at-Large

Julio Fernandez-Mendoza, PhD, DBSM



Dear Colleagues:

I have been a member of the Sleep Research Society (SRS) for 15 years. I am also a member of other professional sleep societies, including the American Academy of Sleep Medicine (AASM), the Society of Behavioral Sleep Medicine (SBSM) and the European Sleep Research Society (ESRS), and other professional societies that have demonstrated commitment to sleep science, including the American Heart Association (AHA) and the American Psychological Association (APA). It was, thus, an honor to receive encouragement from the SRS Nominating Committee to submit my candidacy to the SRS Board of Directors.

I am currently the Edward O. Bixler, PhD, Professor and Associate Vice Chair for Faculty Development in Research Scholarship of the Department of Psychiatry & Behavioral Health as well as Professor of Public Health Sciences and Neural & Behavioral Sciences at Penn State College of Medicine. I am also a Clinical Psychologist, Diplomate in Behavioral Sleep Medicine (BSM) by the Board of BSM (BBSM), at Penn State Health Sleep Research & Treatment Center (SRTC), where I serve as Director of the accredited BSM training program. Clinically, I perform assessment, diagnosis and treatment of a wide-array of sleep disorders and, in particular, insomnia, circadian, hypersomnia and nightmare disorders using behavioral and sleep physiology principles to implement non-pharmacological therapies. My patients are highly diverse and my bilingual status allows me to care for underserved Spanish-speaking populations.

I am a scientist-practitioner, which means that my empirical research influences my clinical practice, while my clinical work shapes my research questions. My dual background in Psychobiology and Clinical Psychology and my BSM expertise led me to develop an integrated perspective in science and clinical practice. My research focuses on three areas 1) the association of sleep health, particularly insomnia, short sleep, sleep apnea and circadian misalignment, with cardiometabolic, neurocognitive and psychopathologic morbidity and mortality; 2) the pathophysiology and developmental trajectories of sleep phenotypes and EEG biomarkers across the lifespan; 3) the effect of pharmacological and behavioral therapies, and their combination, on sleep. To achieve these overarching research goals, I have been funded as principal investigator (PI), MPI or site-PI by the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute (R01 HL136587; UG3 HL161342), by the National Institute of Mental Health (R01 MH118308), Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (CER-2018C2-13262), and the AHA (14SDG 19830018), and as co-investigator by National Institute on Drug Abuse (UG3 DA050325-02S1) and others.

My commitment to service to professional organizations and committees has made me gain significant experience and skills that I believe can be useful towards the SRS Board of Directors. For instance, I am Associate Editor of SLEEP, as well as Sleep Health and Frontiers in Neuroscience and Editorial Board Member of Scientific Reports, and served in the very first SRS NIH Grant Reviewer Training Program Chaired by Drs. Dan Buysse and Amy Wolfson. I had served as ad-hoc reviewer on several National Institutes of Health (NIH) study sections, including Biobehavioral Mechanisms of Emotion, Stress and Health (MESH), Behavioral Medicine Interventions and Outcomes (BMIO), Emotions, Sleep, Stress, Health, and Psychopathology Special Emphasis Panel (SEP), and Cancer, Heart, and Sleep Epidemiology Panel A (CHSA), and as standing member of CHSA and Lifestyle and Health Behaviors (LHB). Other gained experiences include having been Director-at-Large and Elected, Current and Past President of the BBSM, Psychologist Reviewer of the Scientific Program Committee of the Associated Professional Sleep Societies (APSS) for the annual SLEEP meeting, member of the AASM Working Group for the Combination Treatment for Insomnia Guidelines chaired by Drs. Dan Buysse and Todd Arendt, the SBSM Working Group for the Behavioral Treatment of Pediatric and Adolescent Insomnia Guidelines chaired by Drs. Sarah Honaker and Stacey Simon, and the AHA Sleep Health Committee chaired by Drs. Michael Grandner and Marie-Pierre St-Onge. Together, these prior and current service experiences have allowed me to better understand and implement strategic planning, management,

government relations, and scientific and career development within professional and scientific organizations.

SRS is committed to the development of a new work force of early stage and mid-career sleep investigators. My mentoring and teaching include master, doctoral and medical students as well as interns, residents, postdoctoral fellows and junior faculty. I mentor in the Anatomy, Epidemiology, Neuroscience, Psychology Internship, and Psychiatry Residency programs and I have served on dissertation committees for those graduate programs as well as for the Biobehavioral Health and Nursing doctoral programs. Several of my past trainees built their career within the SRS, including Kristina Puzino Lenker, PhD, DBSM (Assistant Professor at Penn State College of Medicine), Anna Ricci, PhD (Assistant Professor at University of Vermont), Caitlin Paquet, PhD (Postdoctoral Fellow at Harvard University) or Rupsha Singh, PhD (Postdoctoral Fellow at NIH). My current trainees are also rapidly developing within the SRS, including Natasha Morales (Anatomy) currently funded by the AHA with a predoctoral fellowship (23PRE1011962), Anthony Rahawi (Anatomy) and Casandra Nyhuis (Epidemiology). Without my mentees, I would not have had expanded my work, push myself to learn more, and contributed to our field with new blood.

In summary, I am committed to the SRS's mission. I believe that I have a good sense of the sleep field and its needs, while acknowledge areas in which I will for sure learn from my colleagues and join forces to move the field forward with each other's insight, expertise, and vision.

Sincerely,

Julio Fernandez-Mendoza, PhD, DBSM