



2024 SRS Board of Directors Candidate

Director-at-Large

Rebecca Robbins, PhD



Dear Colleagues:

My name is Rebecca Robbins (PhD). I completed my PhD in 2015 at Cornell University in health communication and health marketing. I am passionate about leveraging marketing and communication tools and techniques -- often used to sell products -- instead for designing, implementing, and disseminating evidence-based sleep health interventions and dismantling health disparities. For instance, tools such as campaigns, slogans, and emotionally evocative appeals are needed to improve the uptake of behavioral interventions and nudge and navigate individuals toward improved sleep health behaviors and sleep disorders care. I completed a postdoctoral research trainee position at the NYU School of Medicine where I helped design a tailored intervention to promote awareness about sleep apnea among Black and African American individuals. Currently, I am an Assistant Professor of Medicine at Harvard Medical School and a Sleep Scientist at the Brigham and Women's Hospital where my research is focused on designing novel behavioral interventions that support individuals, particularly those from vulnerable and underserved communities, with the sleep and sleep disorders information and resources to reap the benefits of good sleep and health. I am currently nearing the end of a K01 award from the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute where I was funded to design and evaluate a text messaging intervention that supports U.S. Department of Transportation highway maintenance operators in the U.S. Northeast.

The Sleep Research Society has played a pivotal role in my development as a scientist. I have benefited tremendously from learning, networking, and development opportunities through the Society. Eager to give back, I served on the Trainee Education Advisory Committee in 2016, then joined the Communications Committee

that same year. In 2021 I was appointed the Chair of the Communications Committee in 2021. During my tenure as Chair, a time of immense change in the traditional and social media landscape, I expanded our SRS Communications Committee to include a Social Media Subcommittee, comprised of trainees, to create a content calendar that aligned our communication as a Society with timely events across the calendar year. In addition, I have overseen strategic expansion into new social media domains (e.g., Instagram, LinkedIn, SRS podcast). I also have nurtured relationships with key media partners, including Everyday Health, for events, such as an annual SRS x Everyday Health Twitterchat during Sleep Awareness Week. Evidence-based and effective science communication is at the core of my training and most salient intellectual interests. As a Board member, I would hope to continue the >8 years of experience I have amassed engaged in science communication efforts and strategy for the SRS, further contributing to, nurturing, and amplifying the excellent efforts happening across the Society to communicate sleep health information in a powerful, engaging, and evidence-based way.

A core component of my formative development was business training. I received my bachelor's degree in hospitality and business management, where I took classes in economics, business management, and product design/innovation. This foundation in the rudiments of business is something I rely on today in several ways. For instance, my team (the Sleep Matters Initiative at the Brigham and Women's Hospital) and I have been fortunate to receive several grants from industry sponsors to evaluate sleep-related products or services. Several of these I brought in through my interactions at conferences and other venues. I am passionate about nurturing effective industry-academic partnerships. As a board member, I would be very interested in helping identify appropriate industry partners and thinking about opportunities for the SRS to collaborate with industry.

Finally, I am passionate about mentoring. Although relatively junior I have had the great fortune of mentoring more than 40 high school, college, and medical/graduate students. In 2020 I received the Pillar Leadership Award for my work to nurture and support trainees. As a Board member, I would pursue initiatives to support underrepresented individuals and ensuring that the sleep field is a supportive, nurturing environment for junior people, especially those historically underrepresented in science broadly or sleep specifically.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Robbins, PhD