



2024 SRS Board of Directors Candidate

Director-at-Large

Rebecca Spencer, PhD



Dear Colleagues:

I am self-nominating for the Sleep Research Society's Director-at-Large position primarily because of how valuable SRS has been to my career and the support it offers for my trainees. I have experiences both under SRS and outside of the society which I believe will be useful to the Board in the role they play in the leadership of our field.

I am excited about collaborating with the board to devise strategies to improve Society offerings, increase diversity in our field and membership, and support sleep and circadian science and education broadly and learn from our membership and board through this work. It is important to me to learn from feedback of the membership, and not letting that feedback be biased by historically dominant groups.

Supporting and listening to the trainees and junior researchers will be essential to the future of the Society and a focus in my leadership.

Qualifications

- I have been a member of SRS since 2008. I am committed to the Society's goals of supporting education and research in sleep and circadian science.
- My research in the cognitive functions of sleep from early childhood to older adulthood, intersects with the work of much of our membership.
- I bring knowledge relevant to many of the Society's operations including scientific offerings (I am currently the program chair for SLEEP 2024, have served on the APSS programming committee for 4 years, served on the planning committee for the first Advances in Sleep and Circadian Science meeting (2019); strategic planning (as I have developed strategic plans for our graduate program to our Athletics department); and career development (I have served

on several mentoring panels, am a mentor to many junior faculty and trainees, and developed a trainee guide and course for grant writing)

Relevant experiences

- Most valuable to taking a role on the Board, is my past and current involvement in SRS functions. This includes:
 - **SRS Single-track Meeting, Organizing Committee (2017-2019):** This committee developed what is now the Advances in Sleep and Circadian Science bi-annual meeting including leading the programming of the first meeting in 2019.
 - **SRS Scientific Review Committee (2020-2022):** I was a member of this committee which oversees the implementation and selection of the Early Stage Investigator Awards.
 - **Association for Professional Sleep Societies (SRS+APSS) Planning Committee (2020-present):** We develop the scientific content for the SLEEP annual meeting. I was chair of SLEEP 2023 and currently am chair of SLEEP 2024 which will be the end of my service to this committee.
 - **Section Editor, Fundamentals of Sleep and Circadian Science, SRS (2023-present):** I am supporting the development of this book, an effort of SRS, by overseeing the contributions on human sleep (phylogeny/ontogeny).

- Additional relevant leadership roles and experiences:
 - **NIH and NSF Study Sections:** I have been a standing member and ad-hoc member of both regular, fellowship, and program grant panels. This experience gives me perspective on membership challenges with funding and the mentoring and resources which may be useful for our membership because of this.
 - **Campus leadership:** I have served as the director of the UMass Neuroscience and Behavior program, member and chair of campus Rules Committee, faculty senator, member of the University Branding Committee, Steering Committee for the Center for Human Health and Performance, and interim director of the Human Magnetic Resonance Imaging Center. Thus I have extensive experience working on committees, an understanding of external pressures on decision making,

exposure to large budgets and making decisions based on our treasurer and CFO, understanding of branding and marketing, and much more.

- **NCAA leadership:** My experience as Faculty Athletic Representative for the University of Massachusetts for the past 10 years has given me an amazing array of surprisingly relevant local and national experiences. Locally, I work closely with leadership on strategic planning and visioning, have been on hiring committees for high-level administrators (chancellor, AD), and through this developed relationships from student-athletes, to local administrators, to commissioners. I have served as chair of the Atlantic-10 FARs and on the finance and other committees of the conference which required working closely with university ADs and presidents. I have sat on the national NCAA Research Committee and currently sit on the high-level NCAA Name, Image, and Likeness Committee which gets national media attention for the significant impact it will have on the future of college athletics. Collectively this gives me experience with everything from budgeting and marketing and working with donors to high-level (and at times confidential) decision making all with the membership's best interest in mind.
- **Diversity Committees and mentoring:** I chaired my department's Diversity Committee and led action-focused efforts, currently co-lead the Diversity Committee for the Neuroscience Program, developed and led a Ford Fellowship Application program to mentor many students through the process of applying for Ford Fellowships (5 were successfully awarded diversity fellowships), and mentor graduate and undergraduate students through programs supporting students historically underrepresented in STEM. This experience is invaluable for understanding and contributing to the efforts of SRS in diversifying our field and membership.
- **Graduate Grant Writing Program:** I developed a program and wrote a guide to help trainees (graduate student to post-docs) write fellowship applications. This experience is valuable in considering the needs of the trainees and junior scientists in SRS.
- **Media Experience:** Our research has been featured in everything from local media (frequent features of MassAppeal (WWLP, Springfield, MA) to national media (Netflix Babies (season 1, episode 5), PBS NOVA, and news outlets). I have given comments to media for both my own research and in advance of the SLEEP meetings.

As I finish my role on the APSS Planning Committee at the conclusion of SLEEP 2024, I look forward to a new role serving my colleagues in SRS. I believe I have experiences and views that will be a useful contribution the Board.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Spencer, PhD