

Members Only



AMERICAN
PSYCHOSOMATIC
SOCIETY

*Dedicated to the Integration of Biological,
Psychological and Social Factors in Medicine*

Newsletter

Winter 2014

[Home](#) > [News](#) > Current Newsletter

President's Message

New Criteria for the Paul D. MacLean Award for Outstanding Neuroscience Research in Psychosomatic Medicine

Richard D. Lane, M.D., Ph.D. (APS President, 2005-6)

William R. Lovallo, Ph.D. (APS President, 2007-8)

From the Editor

The Paul D. MacLean Award was created in 2010 to honor Dr. MacLean and promote outstanding neuroscience research in psychosomatic medicine. In the five short years since its inception a great deal has been accomplished: 1) Five outstanding neuroscientists have been selected for this annual award --at the 2014 Annual Meeting in San Francisco Dr. Karl-Jurgen Bar from Jena, Germany will be the fifth recipient and give a plenary talk; 2) In 2012 our fund raising efforts enabled us to permanently endow the award lecture, which is the first such permanent endowment in APS history; 3) A MacLean Scholar Travel Award program has been established that funds up to 5 travel awards to the Annual Meeting for outstanding neuroscience trainees; this program is funded through 2019. The fact that the award lecture is permanent has led the APS Council to create a long-term plan for the award. This plan has important implications for the criteria that will be used in the selection of future awardees. Below we explain these changes so that those of you who submit award nominations can take these changes into account.

Annual Meeting 2014: Get Ready for San Francisco

Getting to Know You... **Gianaros**

Getting to Know You... **McDonald**

History of MacLean Award

Paul MacLean was a physician whose visionary neuroscientific research career at Yale Medical School and NIMH was inspired by his recognition of the importance of emotion in clinical medicine and everyday life. Dr. MacLean, who coined the term limbic system, brought an evolutionary perspective to brain research and is considered by many to be the father of modern affective neuroscience and social neuroscience. In his seminal paper in [Psychosomatic Medicine](#) in 1949 on the visceral brain, he hypothesized that psychosomatic disorders arose from an impairment in communication between the limbic system and neocortex. With the advent of modern brain imaging and other neuroscientific techniques, support for this perspective has started to emerge.

MacLean Award Criteria

The original criteria, which have been in place for the first 5 years, have sought to honor Dr. MacLean and to highlight and energize the line of research that he created on emotion, the brain and physical disease. The primary criteria included:

Journal Announcements

Diabetes Special Issue

- outstanding neuroscientific research;
- research that advances knowledge directly related to Paul MacLean's hypothesis regarding altered cortical-subcortical interactions affecting physical disease outcomes or mediating processes (e.g. autonomic, neuroendocrine, immune) that can be directly linked to such disease outcomes (physical disease outcomes being given priority over mediating processes, and the combination given priority over either alone). Of particular note is that the research must involve direct brain measurements; psychological, social or peripheral physiological variables as an indirect expression of brain function are insufficient.

Newsletter PDF

Other secondary criteria aimed to attract neuroscientists to APS. These included:

- Has not typically been a regular attendee of the APS annual meeting and
- Has not received a major award (e.g. Barchas Award, Distinguished Investigator Award, Young Investigator Award) from APS previously.

In October 2013 the APS Council approved a plan to adapt these criteria in light of the permanent endowment. These changes include: 1) During the next 5 year (2015-2019) the third criterion (not a regular participant at APS meetings) will be waived and 2) the fourth criterion (has not received a major award) will be modified so that previous award winners will be eligible if at least 5 years have passed since the award. The purpose of these changes is to make eligible for the award outstanding neuroscientists who are active participants in APS Annual meetings. With the permanent endowment this was a change that was inevitable and we believe that this is an appropriate time to make it. Please keep these new criteria in mind as these will be in effect for the 2015 award. Another important change in 2015 is that the due date for nominations will be aligned with those of other APS awards and will be due on August 31, 2014.

The APS Council initially approved the MacLean Award for a 10-year period. Now that we have permanent funding, a key issue is how to preserve a focus on foundational neuroscientific research in psychosomatic medicine while also honoring Paul MacLean's broader legacy. Our current thinking, which has not yet been finalized, is that beginning in 2020 the focus could broaden to include basic affective or social neuroscience that is related to peripheral physiology and/or systemic physical disease, integrative physiology of emotion necessarily including the brain, or evolutionary perspectives on the brain, emotion and physical health. The research could be basic in nature and focus on animals or humans. Direct brain measurements would remain essential. The research should either directly relate to systemic physical disease or else the applications of the research to systemic physical disease contexts should be clear. Our current thinking is that research on or related to primary brain disease (e.g. dementia, demyelinating diseases) that does not relate to peripheral physiology or systemic physical disease should not be the focus. The research targeted by this award should ideally include the original focus derived from Dr. MacLean's 1949 paper. It is recognized, however, that such research is unusual, that approximations to this ideal are acceptable and that the field is likely to evolve in unanticipated ways. A cornerstone of the plan for the permanent endowment is that a thorough review of the award will be performed by the APS Council every 10 years.

Please let us or others in APS leadership know your thoughts. We welcome the active participation of APS members in facilitating the evolution of the MacLean Award.