



Press Release

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Florida Atlantic Brain Researcher Named SURA Distinguished Scientist

Washington, DC – SURA today announced that Randy D. Blakely, an internationally renowned neuroscientist and Executive Director of Florida Atlantic University’s Brain Institute, will receive its 2019 SURA Distinguished Scientist Award.

The annual honor goes to a research scientist whose extraordinary work fulfills the SURA mission “to advance collaborative research and education and to strengthen the scientific capabilities of its members and our nation.” The award, which comes with a \$5,000 honorarium, is announced in conjunction with SURA’s Board of Trustees meeting being held March 28-29 at Georgia Tech in Atlanta.

“Dr. Blakely's work is not only important for the public health benefits that have grown from his research, but also the inspiration it provides to the next generation of neuroscience researchers,” said Jerry P. Draayer, SURA President & CEO.

In his institution’s nomination, it is noted that “Dr. Blakely’s creation of the FAU Brain Institute has been pivotal in establishing a strong academic-industry presence in the region, anchored by formal partnerships with the Max Planck Florida Institute for Neuroscience (MPFI) and Scripps Florida Research Institute,” wrote Daniel Flynn, Vice President for Research. He went on to explain that because of Blakely’s efforts, the university and South Florida region is now the home to one of the few Nikon Centers of Excellence and world-class laboratories.

In his letter supporting the nomination, Joseph T. Coyle of the Harvard Medical School and McLean Hospital wrote, that “Blakely is a worthy candidate both for splendid scientific accomplishments as well as his commitment to scientific education.” Noting his Delores C. Shockley Partnership Award for Minority Research Mentorship and the F. Peter Guengerich Award for Postdoctoral Mentoring while at Vanderbilt University, Coyle added, “Randy has made a special commitment to the training of future neuroscientists.”

Blakely received his undergraduate degree in 1981 in philosophy, minoring in physics and chemistry at Emory University. He received his Ph.D. in neuroscience from the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine in 1987. After post-doctoral training at the Yale University School of Medicine, he began his professorial career at Emory in 1990 for eight years. He served in several positions at Vanderbilt University from 1995-2017, before being named a professor of biomedical science in the Charles E. Schmidt College of Medicine and Executive Director of the Brain Institute at Florida Atlantic University in 2016.

In addition to 262 invited presentations/symposia, Blakely has received or been a part of 58 past grants and four active grants, served on seven professional editorial boards, and has 14 patents awarded or pending. Beyond the Shockley and Guengerich awards previously noted, his numerous honors include the Charles Judson Herrick Award, (American Association of Anatomists, 1992), the Distinguished Investigator Award, (National Alliance for Research on Schizophrenia & Depression, 2005), the Zenith Award, (Alzheimer’s Association, 2005), the Julius Axelrod Award, (American Society for Pharmacology and Experimental Therapeutics, 2008) and the Chancellor’s Award for Research,

(Vanderbilt University, 2013). He was named a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science in 2009 and of the National Academy of Inventors in 2017.

The SURA Distinguished Scientist Award was established in 2007, commemorating the organization's 25th Anniversary. SURA's Development & Relations Committee manages the solicitation, screening and selection of the recipient from a SURA member institution. The president and trustee of each of SURA's 60-member research universities is eligible to make one nomination for the Distinguished Scientist Award.

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The Southeastern Universities Research Association (SURA) is a consortium of over 60 leading research institutions in the southern United States and the District of Columbia established in 1980 as a non-stock, nonprofit corporation. SURA serves as an entity through which colleges, universities, and other organizations may cooperate with one another, and with government and industry in acquiring, developing, and using laboratories and other research facilities and in furthering knowledge and the application of that knowledge in the physical, biological, and other natural sciences and engineering. For more information, visit www.sura.org.