



Dr. Aron Lichtman, Ph.D.
Professor of Pharmacology and Associate Dean of Research and Graduate Studies
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Dr. Aron Lichtman earned his B.A. in Psychology at Rutgers College in 1984 and proceeded to earn his Ph.D. in Psychology with Drs. Michael Fanselow and Catherine Cramer at Dartmouth College in 1989. He received postdoctoral training from 1989-1993 in pharmacology under the mentorship of the late Dr. Billy R. Martin at Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU). He then joined the faculty at VCU and rose up through the ranks to Professor. Dr. Lichtman presented at his first CPDD meeting in 1990 where it played a pivot role in his scientific development. Since then he participated in many CPDD symposia and served on several committees, including the Travel Awards Committee, Animal Committee, and Liaison Committee for Drug Testing and Evaluation for the society. Throughout his career, Dr. Lichtman greatly benefited from the strong interdisciplinary science and mentorship CPDD offers. Accordingly, he seeks join the Board of Directors to give back to the society as well as contribute to the mentorship of the next generation of substance abuse scientists.

Dr. Lichtman's preclinical research program focuses on drugs abuse, with an emphasis on the investigation of the endogenous cannabinoid system. His NIDA-supported research has resulted in the publication of approximately 200 peer-review articles that have revealed: 1) the physiological functions of the endogenous cannabinoid system; 2) the neural substrates and mechanisms of action underlying cannabinoid-induced behaviors; and 3) the consequences of chronic cannabinoid administration (i.e., dependence). His research utilizes a collaborative multidisciplinary approach examining the relationship between the pharmacological effects of cannabinoids on behavior and the underlying biochemical/molecular processes. His research group has provided proof of principle through the complementary pharmacological and transgenic mouse approaches to reveal that the endogenous cannabinoid system contains multiple promising therapeutic targets to treat a variety of disease states. The long-term goal of the Lichtman laboratory is to increase understanding of the physiological functions of the endogenous cannabinoid system and to contribute to the development of cannabinoid-based medications for the treatment of pain and inflammatory disorders, psychiatric conditions, and drug addiction. The International Cannabinoid Research Society recognized Dr. Lichtman for outstanding research contributions to the cannabinoid field by awarding him the 2013 Mechoulam Award. He also is a co-inventor on two patents and serves on the Scientific Advisory Board of Abide Therapeutics and Sea Pharmaceuticals. In addition to his scholarship, Dr. Lichtman is a dedicated teacher and mentor, and has trained 14 Ph.D. students and 11 postdoctoral fellows. He twice received the Professor of the Year Award in the Department of Pharmacology and Toxicology and the VCU School of Medicine recognized him the Distinguished Mentor Award in 2013.