

Randy D. Blakely, Ph.D. Scientific Biography

Dr. Randy D. Blakely holds the David J. S. Nicholson Distinguished Professorship in Neuroscience and is Professor of Biomedical Science in the Charles E. Schmidt College of Medicine at Florida Atlantic University (FAU). From 1995-2016, he held the Allan D. Bass Endowed Chair in Pharmacology at the Vanderbilt University School of Medicine. In 2016, he became the founding Executive Director of the FAU Stiles-Nicholson Brain Institute at FAU. He also serves as the Director of the Ph.D.-granting, FAU Neuroscience Graduate Program. Blakely received his B.A. *summa cum laude* in Philosophy from Emory University, a PhD in Neuroscience from the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, working with Dr. Joseph T. Coyle on neuropeptide regulation of glutamate signaling, and then pursued postdoctoral training at the Yale/HHMI Center for Molecular Neuroscience, working with Dr. Susan G. Amara to identify genes whose products regulate synaptic signaling. The latter research led to the cloning of genes that encode the brain's major targets for antidepressant medications (e.g. Prozac, Lexapro, Pristiq), as well those targeted by addictive and therapeutic psychostimulants, including cocaine, amphetamine, and MDMA. Over the past 30 years, Blakely has uncovered molecular and genetic changes in human transporter genes that contribute to cardiovascular, cognitive, behavioral, and neuromuscular disorders, among others. Dr. Blakely's discoveries have resulted in more than a dozen patents, leading to his induction into the U.S. National Academy of Inventors. He is also an elected member of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), the Brain and Behavioral Research Foundation (BBRF), and the American College of Neuropsychopharmacology (ACNP). Blakely has received numerous awards for his research and mentorship, including the Astellas Award and Julius Axelrod Prize from the American Society of Pharmacology and Experimental Therapeutics, two Distinguished Investigator Awards from the Brain and Behavioral Research Foundation, a Zenith Award from the Alzheimer's Association, and a MERIT Award from the NIH, from which he has been funded continuously for more than 30 years. Blakely is committing to conveying the principles and progress of brain research to lay audiences and reducing the stigma associated with mental illness, efforts that have led to both a Lifetime Achievement Award in STEM Education from the Cox Science Center and Aquarium and the 2022, Neuroscience Educator Award from the Society for Neuroscience, the world's largest society of professional brain scientists.