# Kent E. Vrana, PhD, FAAAS

Dr. Kent E. Vrana is the Elliot S. Vesell Professor and Chair of Pharmacology at the Penn State College of Medicine and Milton S. Hershey Medical Center. He received his B.S. with honors in Biochemistry from the University of Iowa in 1978, and his Ph.D. in Biochemistry (Pharmacology minor) from the Louisiana State University Medical Center in 1983. His post-doctoral fellowship training was in embryology and molecular biology at the Carnegie Institution of Washington in Baltimore, MD (on the Johns Hopkins University campus).

In 1986, Dr. Vrana joined the Department of Biochemistry at the West Virginia University Health Sciences Center as an assistant professor and, in 1991, moved to the Department of Physiology and Pharmacology at the Wake Forest University School of Medicine where he rose through the ranks to full professor in 2001. In 2004, Dr. Vrana assumed the position of Professor and Chair of Pharmacology at the Penn State University College of Medicine.

Dr. Vrana is a member of the editorial boards of several scientific journals (including Editor-in-Chief for Pharmacology (Karger Press) and Associate Editor of the Journal of Pharmacology and Experimental Therapeutics (an ASPET journal) and has served as chair/member of over 110 scientific review panel meetings for the federal government and non-profit organizations. He has co-authored more than 175 scientific articles, book chapters, and monographs (including two textbooks). His research has focused on molecular neurobiology of substance abuse, neurotransmitter biosynthesis, stem cells, neurodegenerative disease, and the potential medical benefits of cannabinoids. In 2009, he was named an honorary professor of the School of Medicine of the Peruvian University of Applied Science in Lima, Peru, and was inducted into the Society of Distinguished Educators at the Penn State College of Medicine. In 2015, he was elected a Fellow of the American Association for Advancement of Science (AAAS). In 2017, he received the Outstanding Research Mentor Award from the PSU College of Medicine. He is the President-elect of the national Association of Medical School Pharmacology Chairs (2019-2021).