

# Social work dean honored for ‘visionary’ addiction recovery research

July 20, 2018 2:30 PM

Barri Bronston [bbronst@tulane.edu](mailto:bbronst@tulane.edu)



Patrick Bordnick, dean of the Tulane School of Social Work, continues to garner national recognition for his work in the use of virtual reality to treat drug addiction and other behavioral disorders.

Patrick Bordnick, dean of the [Tulane School of Social Work](#), continues to garner national recognition for his work in the use of virtual reality to treat drug addiction and other behavioral disorders.

Bordnick this week received The Visionary Award for Outstanding Contributions to Youth Recovery Research at the 2018 Association of Recovery for Higher Education Conference (ARHE) in Houston.

The ARHE is the only association exclusively representing collegiate recovery programs – university-provided supportive environments that reinforce students’ decisions to disengage from addictive behavior. Such programs are designed to provide an educational opportunity alongside recovery support to ensure that students do not have to sacrifice one for the other.

*“We need to develop and support evidenced based interventions to empower people to achieve long-term recovery.”*

Tulane University

*Patrick Bordnick, School of Social Work dean*

Tulane is working to bring a collegiate recovery program to campus, and Bordnick said the School of Social Work is poised to be leader in this effort since social workers provide most of the treatment services for substance misuse issues.

“We need to develop and support evidenced based interventions to empower people to achieve long-term recovery,” he said.

“ARHE and the recovery community are powerful advocates and can help us all end stigma for mental health and substance misuse disorders”

Bordnick has more than two decades of experience in clinical and laboratory research on cocaine, marijuana, alcohol amphetamine, heroin and nicotine addiction. He is a pioneer in the use of virtual reality for substance abuse assessment and intervention.

At the conference, Bordnick provided an overview of virtual reality applications of substance misuse research and treatment. Virtual reality has been established as a method to study craving and can also be used to teach coping skills and relapse prevention strategies. It is a cutting edge tool that can be used to enhance traditional evidence-based interventions.

Earlier this year, Bordnick received one of five Not Impossible Awards for an innovation called VR-Δ and VR-Qualis Est Vita (quality of life). Still in development, the VR-Δ is designed to put patients into realistic virtual worlds using smartphone-based virtual reality, recreating situations that identify and trigger cravings akin to drug and alcohol addiction.