

Ed Boyden shares Gabbay Award with optogenetics researchers

Julie Pryor
McGovern Institute for Brain Research

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Edward S. Boyden of MIT, Karl Deisseroth of Stanford University and Gero Miesenböck of the University of Oxford have been awarded Brandeis University's 16th Annual Jacob Heskel Gabbay Award in Biotechnology and Medicine.



Ed Boyden
PHOTO: DOMINICK REUTER

The researchers are being honored for their contributions to the discovery and applications of optogenetics, a technology that allows scientists to control the brain's activity by genetically engineering neurons to fire in response to light. Hundreds of labs have started using the technique to manipulate brain activity in experimental animals, exploring the neurobiology of phenomena such as decision-making and neurodegenerative diseases.

The technique is expected to have significant impact on the [brain initiative](#) just announced by President Barack Obama.

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