



April 30, 2014

To,
The Nord Grant Committee:

Rekha R. Srinivasan
Instructor of Chemistry

Department of Chemistry
Case Western Reserve University
10900 Euclid Avenue
Cleveland, Ohio 44106-7078

Phone 216-368-3741
Fax 216-368-3006
E-mail: rxs111@case.edu
<http://chemwww.case.edu/>

One of the main challenges for university faculty is to develop instructional approaches that transform students from passive listeners to active learners. The traditional method of lecturing works well for some subjects. Organic chemistry is a subject where students learn a lot of structural and synthetic concepts. But more importantly, organic chemistry is about problem solving and putting molecular puzzles together. Solving puzzles require students to be involved, engaged and to collaborate with each other.

To this end an active learning classroom combined with peer - peer interaction can engage students more by being hands-on, participating in the analysis, synthesis and evaluation of concepts and problems. Lack of training and equipment needed to support active learning is a barrier in many institutions to the use of such strategies. Though the classroom use of active learning strategies will always involve some level of risk, by carefully selecting only those strategies that are at a personally comfortable risk level, one can maximize the likelihood of success. My goal is to carefully construct an organic chemistry class room that will be a combination of active learning and traditional lecturing approach, and to evaluate the learning outcomes of such a class. To this end, I would like to request the Nord committee for funding to attend a NSF funded CCWCS (Chemistry collaborations, workshops and committee of scholars) workshop on 'Active Learning in Organic Chemistry' to better equip myself with the tool necessary to re-design the large organic chemistry courses that I teach. As an instructor, I do not have many options of funding to attend conferences, workshops or to carry out research in chemistry and chemical education. This workshop will enhance my current pedagogical skills including the use of technological devices like clickers and ipads in the class room, leading the way to re-designing the large organic chemistry courses I teach in the fall and spring semester every year.

Sincerely yours,

Rekha R. Srinivasan, Ph.D.
Instructor of Chemistry,
Case Western Reserve University