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Nord Grants
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I am writing to apply for a Nord Grant in order to help support my work teaching psychological concepts to the graduate and undergraduate students at CWRU. I have been a full-time member of the faculty since 1988, and I have never received funding through a Nord Grant. However, almost 2 years ago, I applied for a Nord grant and was approved for funding for this same proposal. Unfortunately, there was some miscommunication that created confusion on my part, and I was unable to attend the conference and present these same ideas. Thus, I am now submitting a very similar proposal in the hopes that I can attend this exciting conference and exchange ideas about teaching with a community of colleagues.

I am requesting travel funds to attend the European Psychology Learning and Teaching Conference, to be held in Salzburg, September 18-20, 2017. This is an interesting meeting aimed to improve the teaching of psychological concepts at all levels of education. I have never been able to attend this conference, but I feel it provides a valuable forum for sharing ideas related to teaching psychology courses. For the past several years, I have been working on ideas to share with colleagues at this conference, and I would be excited be able to attend the meeting.

I believe this conference is important for my teaching skills. I am most interested in attending the meeting to learn new ideas and creative strategies that could help to improve the courses I teach. As my departmental responsibilities have shifted in the last few years, I am now teaching undergraduate courses on a more frequent basis. I am eager to learn new ways of engaging students in the material, stimulating classroom discussions, and keeping the learning format interesting and enjoyable for everyone. I am hoping to attend a range of sessions at the meeting, covering topics related to the courses I teach. I hope it will help me to further engage the students in classroom discussions, and explore new strategies to enhance my teaching.

In addition to learning new strategies and generating ideas for teaching, I am hoping to present a summary of some strategies I have found useful. I have a long-standing self-imposed expectation that I will only attend conferences if I am also presenting at the meeting. Thus, if my abstract is accepted for presentation at this international conference, I could present my paper: "Is that your final answer? Teaching psychological topics through



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classroom discussions, games, and activities". I hope to present some of the novel approaches I have used to engage students, and hopefully receive useful feedback to extend and refine these ideas.

My request is not aligned with a specific course. Instead, it is aimed to expand my teaching style across multiple courses. Some of the strategies I am grappling with extend across four of the courses I teach. In this age whereby most lectures are structured through the use of powerpoint slides, I try to avoid the reliance of lengthy paragraphs of text in my slides. I want to ensure that students do not spend the bulk of their class time recording notes from my slides, and remain active class discussions. I also try to avoid distributing copies of the slides to all students because the focus remains on rote memorization, while class discussion is minimized and critical thinking is largely neglected. Finally, I have struggled with the use of class films, role-play simulations, or small discussion groups. The amount of substantive content that is covered through most class activities is relatively small compared to the amount of classroom time devoted to these activities. I am always exploring new ideas that balance classroom interactions with true educational merit. I hope to use the conference to move further ahead with some of my ideas to promote active engagement in classroom explorations.

The Department of Psychological Sciences does not have funds to cover conference travel for faculty members. If I do not receive funding from the Nord Center, I will be unable to attend this conference. I am eager to make plans for this interesting conference.

Respectfully submitted by:

James Overholser, Ph.D.
Professor of Psychology

Endorsed by:

Lee Thompson, Ph.D.
Chair, Department of Psychological Sciences



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Overholser Request for Conference Travel

Budget and Justification

Conference registration \$250

European Psychology Learning and Teaching Conference

Round trip airfare \$1400

Estimated coach airfare from Cleveland to Salzburg and back

Ground transportation \$100

Estimated cost of a taxi from the airport to the hotel (\$50),
and later from the hotel back to the airport (\$50)

Hotel \$1250

5 nights at \$250 per night for a basic room at the conference hotel

Food \$240

\$48 per diem X 5 days

Total Request \$3,240