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La Crosse

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Travel and Supplies Grants Committee
College of Science and Allied Health
University of Wisconsin-La Crosse

To the Review Committee:

I write to give my strongest support for **Ms. Jennifer Prescher's** supplies request of the CSAH Travel and Supplies Grants Committee. Jennifer is currently a junior chemistry major who has been working on a very challenging undergraduate research project in synthetic organic/medicinal chemistry in my laboratory for one year now. This past summer, she was awarded a distinguished "UW-L Undergraduate Summer Research Fellowship" for which competition was particularly keen. This has allowed her to make great progress on her project, and she is presently about halfway through the synthesis of a set of novel heterocyclic ligands for the serotonin 5-HT_{2A} receptor. As Jen has been quite productive in the lab and a real joy to work with, I am more than willing to continue supporting her efforts any way I can.

Ms. Prescher is perhaps the single most gifted student I have come to know since I have been teaching at UW-La Crosse! She has not only been a leader amongst my own undergraduate research students, but is, in my opinion, one of the most academically-gifted students currently enrolled on our campus. When I had Jennifer in my Organic Chemistry Theory I course last year, she finished the semester as the **#1-ranked student out of 130**, earning a very solid "A" (95%) grade. The class average that semester was an unusually high "C" (67%) because there were many very good students in that class. Among those outstanding students, Jen easily rose to the top. She managed this accomplishment while simultaneously enrolled in several other challenging science and math courses and while managing a busy schedule of tutoring underclassmen in other chemistry courses. Despite her heavy workload, she has maintained a solid, **4.00** grade point average at UW-L and remained active in numerous extracurricular activities, including participating quite actively in the UW-L ACS Student Affiliates chapter. Jennifer is certainly a talented student, and several of my colleagues have confirmed my own observations with similar experiences of their own.

In the research laboratory, Jennifer has been no less outstanding. She attacked her synthesis project with extreme dedication and vigor right from the start (after only one semester of organic chemistry), and has already built up quite a repertoire of organic chemistry skills that will serve her well in the future. The project I assigned to Jen was one that I feared would be too difficult for most undergraduates. While this project has indeed proven to be quite challenging and frustrating (for both of us), Jen has persevered and overcome some major obstacles over the past several months. It now appears that we will be able to complete the desired synthesis given just a bit more time, effort, and creativity. Beyond the lab, Jennifer's abilities have really shone through in the research presentations she has made thus far. At the end of the summer, all of the SAH Summer Research Fellows presented their findings, and Jen really impressed the audience with her talk. A number of faculty remarked to me afterwards that Jen's was among the best talks they had **ever** heard, including those of senior graduate students and faculty! I totally concur with this assessment, and can add that the interdisciplinary topic she spoke on was quite complex, making her understanding of the area even more impressive. Her performance was not really a surprise to me, however, as Jen has consistently been an effective communicator within the more informal setting of my research group meetings. I should also add that Jen gave an equally impressive talk on Nov. 6 at the

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"Tenth Annual Argonne Symposium for Undergraduates in Science, Engineering, and Mathematics" in Chicago. In summary, I already view Ms. Prescher as an accomplished junior chemist, and I strongly believe that she has excellent potential to become a major contributor to the field. Considering this and the fact that she is also one of the most personable, good-natured people I have known, Jen should ultimately be able to successfully pursue whatever future career dreams she may have.

In her application, Jennifer is asking for funding to support her ongoing research. As I have not yet seen such an exceptional young researcher and student, I can only give Jen my very strongest support. Chemicals and glassware are now extremely expensive, with single items often costing one hundred dollars or more. Because Jen has been so productive, she has already required a good deal of financial support—so much that virtually all of my previous grant monies have been used up. Support of Jennifer's request would enable her to continue forward in her ambitious project.

Thank you for your time spent in consideration of Jen's application. I hope that the Committee will look favorably upon this outstanding young chemist's efforts and need. Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can supply you with any additional information about this very fine applicant and her request.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "A. Monte". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "A" and a stylized "M".

Aaron Monte, Ph.D.