

February 10, 2012

To Whom It May Concern:

Re Bob Porter's proposal development workshops:

I can heartily endorse Bob's expertise in, enthusiasm for, and explication of the grant application process. I attended a workshop of Bob's a few years ago at RI College. I had never written a major grant application to a state or federal agency before that. Since then, over a period of six years, I have been PI or Co-PI on grants from INBRE, EPSCoR, The RI Board of Governors for Higher Education, and the RI Science and Technology Advisory Board for a total of more than \$400,000 in funds to support basic research and to engage undergraduates in it. My first two proposals were greatly facilitated by Anne Pasucci, who was our grants administrator at the time, but I would not even have been able to use her assistance optimally were it not for the information I got from Bob's program.

Giving your self the best odds for success is always a good plan, but especially with the current low success ratio for funding and dearth of funds for everything at both the state and federal level, professional insight and guidance are essential.

Bob's program can give you both.

Regards,

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[Dr. Williams' academic background follows]

John Williams



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Academic Background

Professor Williams graduated from Milsaps College in Jackson, MS with a BS in Chemistry in 1967 after spending his freshman and sophomore years at Vanderbilt University as an English major. He took a PhD. in organic chemistry from Tulane University in New Orleans in 1972 under the direction of Adam Aguiar and joined the RIC Physical Sciences Department as an Assistant Professor of Chemistry.

His interests have included synthesis, toxicity and electrochemistry of organophosphonium salts, synthesis of novel cephalosporins, photochemistry of aryl phosphines, and computational chemistry of chromogenic cephalosporins.

Sabbaticals in computational chemistry with Ken Houk at LSU, organometallic synthesis with Dwight Swigart at Brown, and solid state polypeptide synthesis with Chris Seto at Brown have informed his research at RIC.

Over thirty of his former undergraduate research students have successfully completed PhD's and pursued careers in industrial or academic chemistry. Others have become MD's, PharmDoc's Optometrists, or secondary school chemistry teachers.

Most recently, his undergraduate research group has been involved in research projects funded by RI-INBRE and EPSCoR and in collaboration with chemistry and biology faculty at the college on the toxicity of arylphosphonium salts to DNA in vitro and in vivo, and malignant cell lines. Funding for a new project to synthesize and screen selective estrogen receptor modulators has just been granted by the RI Science and Technology Advisory Council in a competitive grant competition for which twenty cent of the proposals were funded. This project includes researchers at RIC, URI and an industrial partner who is the CEO of Organomed, Ltd.

A couple of years after I arrived at RIC a guy with long hair and casual attire (even for a student in the early 70's) came to my office and said he wanted to major in chemistry and do research. I was dubious, but had just come back to my office from my lab where I was unsuccessful in completing what I thought was the very simple task of making a solution of electrolytes in a mixed solvent. So I showed him my lab and suggested he try his luck making the solution. I went back to my office and about twenty minutes later he came back and said he had solved the problem. It turned out that the order of addition of components is important; and the novice high school graduate, using empirical methods, solved a problem the Ph.D. couldn't quite figure out.

Jimmy Covill is now the NAFTA Area Director for Clariant Corporation's operations in the western hemisphere. He was one of the first RIC BA chemistry graduates. He started at the old Hoechst Chemical plant in Coventry as a pilot-plant chemist, using a wheel barrow and shovel to mix chemicals, and moved up from there as the company evolved into Clariant over the last thirty years. There are scores of similar stories about my students and those mentored by my colleagues in chemistry, physics and biology. Students not only can do basic research as part of their education, but, in the sciences, where it is essential, we actively recruit students to include research as part of their undergraduate program. Experimental science is one of the last surviving crafts where apprentices learn from masters, but, unlike the Medieval model, the "masters" also learn from the "apprentices" like I did many years ago from Jim Covill.

RIC BA and BS chemistry graduates are in the process or have taken Master's or Ph.D's in chemistry from Brown, Yale, Dartmouth, UNC at Chapel Hill, University of Florida, UC Berkeley, University of Connecticut, SUNY Stony Brook, U of Georgia, Brandeis, U of Wisconsin, and others. The much younger BA degree in Physics has sent students to Harvard, Princeton, the U. of Cincinnati and the University of Pittsburg for graduate degrees. Other graduates have gone to Brown or the New England College of Medicine for MD degrees.

RIC alumni are employed in industry and academia; DuPont, Glaxo-Wellcome, Pfizer, Lily-Ponds, Paratek, Genentech, Clariant, Cal State at Northridge, University of Arkansas, University of San Diego, College of the Holy Cross, Woods-Hole Oceanographic Institute, Scripps Oceanographic Institute, to name a few. Others have entered middle and high school science teaching in various school districts all over Rhode Island and southern New England.



John Williams
Professor of Chemistry