LEHIGH VALLEY ACS ANNOUNCES DELAYED 2020 ORGANIC CHEMISTRY SCHOLARSHIP COMPETITION

The Lehigh Valley Section of the American Chemical Society will award its 2020 Scholarship for Organic Chemistry this fall due to the COVID-19 pandemic. To be eligible, students must have taken organic chemistry last academic year (2019 – 2020) at an LVACS member institution and be a chemistry, biochemistry, or chemical engineering major. The competition entails taking the ACS Organic Chemistry Examination (45%), a brief, one-page letter of recommendation from the student’s organic chemistry professor (10%), and an essay on a topic in organic chemistry (45%). The value of the scholarship is $1000. Additionally, the top essay will receive $100. Details about the exam, letter, and essay follow below. Students should indicate their interest in the scholarship by September 18th, 2020 to Dr. Michael Bertucci (bertuccim@moravian.edu)

ACS Organic Chemistry Examination: The exam will be administered on Saturday, September 19th, 2020 at Moravian College, Bethlehem, PA from 9:00-11:00 AM. Students should report to the entry foyer of the Collier Hall of Science, which is on the Main Street Campus. “Student participants will be required to PASS an online pre-screening survey to ensure that they have no COVID symptoms and will take the exam in a physically distanced setting while wearing a mask.” For driving directions and campus map see https://www.moravian.edu/about/campus. Juice and bagels will be available at 8:45 AM.

Essay: The student should address the impact of an organic molecule or process in organic chemistry on society and his or her personal interest in it. The essay should be written at a level to interest and educate a general chemist who has completed sophomore-level organic chemistry. If a molecule is chosen, the synthesis, including key mechanistic features and structural analysis, should be covered. If a process is chosen, the physical and chemical basis for its success should be explained. Appropriate use of structures to facilitate understanding of the chemistry is expected. An additional page with references must be included. References should follow the guidelines as delineated in the ACS Style Guide. The essay should run from 1000 to no more than 1200 words in Times New Roman 12-point font with one-inch margins on all sides. The references and figures are not considered in the overall word count. Each page should have a header with the student’s last name, brief essay title and page number. The winning essay after editing may be published in a future issue of the Octagon.

The essay will be rated on:
- Appropriate depth of coverage of the molecule or process
- Appropriate depth of coverage on the impact on society and student’s interest
- Ease of reading, including grammar, spelling, and logical flow of the material
- Appropriate use of scholarly references & formatting

The essay should be submitted electronically to bertuccim@moravian.edu by the student before the exam begins on September 19th. The essay can be submitted at any time before the day of the exam; so, if you have a busy semester coming up, you are encouraged to get started early!

Letter of Recommendation: Professors writing a letter of recommendation on behalf of a student who is applying for the Lehigh Valley ACS Scholarship should speak to the student’s skills in lecture and laboratory in Organic Chemistry I and Organic Chemistry II. Please provide the course grade for Organic Chemistry I and comment on performance on written exams, proficiency in organic lab, and participation in course-related activities. If possible, address the student’s quantitative skills by commenting on her or his performance in quantitative analysis or its local equivalent. The letter of recommendation must be signed on institution letterhead and submitted electronically to bertuccim@moravian.edu by the student’s professor before the exam begins on September 19th.