

June 1, 1937

Dr. Warren Weaver
The Rockefeller Foundation
49 West 49th Street
New York, New York

Dear Warren:

I am glad to have your advice regarding the revision of our application for grants in support of work in organic and structural chemistry and in biology. Professor Horgen will write to you regarding biology; I understand that he proposes to apply for \$10,000 a year for a five-year period, and also to suggest the possibility of obtaining support for Dr. Hungen-Sait's researches after this year. I have begun the preparation of a more detailed and considered description of the chemistry project. Would it be satisfactory to you if the revised application were submitted in July (after Dr. Millikan's return), or should its preparation be made less leisurely? In the meantime I would hope to benefit by your advice on several points, one of which is the following.

As the result of your kindness in calling him to our attention, we shall have Dr. Carl Niemann as one member of our enlarged staff in organic chemistry. As you know, Dr. Todd of the Lister Institute is also being considered; the chance that he could be brought here seems, however, to be small. I have been looking for other organic chemists who might be suited to our needs, and have felt that both R. K. Williams and Roger J. Williams might well be worthy of serious consideration. It had seemed improbable that R. K. Williams would leave his present position with the Bell Laboratories. However, during a recent visit to Corvallis I learned from Roger Williams about plans which he and his brother are making which throw new light on the situation.

Roger Williams is in line to be made the head of the chemistry

department at Oregon State in a year or two. With a few exceptions, the quality of the staff is very poor, and the financial and political situation is such as to make the prospect of improving the department small. He feels that his acceptance of this appointment would lead to an uninspiring and uninteresting life of routine administration, but that on the other hand his situation in the college would be unsatisfactory if he were not to accept it. He would prefer to carry on research more intensively than he has been able to in the past, rather than less intensively. R. R. Williams also would like the opportunity to devote himself whole-heartedly to research such as that which he has carried out on vitamin B₁, and he would be willing (according to Roger) to resign his \$20,000 job and accept a research position at a salary of about \$5,000. Roger has in mind a proposal to the Rockefeller Foundation that a new institution for biochemical research be founded, perhaps in the Northwest, where Roger and R. R. could carry on their work.

I doubt whether your Foundation would be inclined to favor this proposal, involving the permanent endowment of a new institution. It is possible, however, that our own plans for developing organic chemistry at the California Institute could be carried out with R. R. Williams, Roger Williams, and Niemann as the new professors. I have a high opinion of Roger Williams, based on his significant research contributions despite a heavy teaching load, his authorship of two good textbooks, and his pleasant and retiring personality (which has not prevented him from being aggressive in research), and I feel sure that he would fit in well here. I have met R. R. Williams only once; I would rate him on the basis of his vitamin B₁ research as an able organic chemist and on the basis of his position in the Bell Laboratories as a man who does his work effectively. The problems in which the two men are interested, vitamins and growth hormones, are important

ones, in which further great developments may occur soon, and they fit in well with Went and Koeplli's work on plant growth hormones already under way here. I am accordingly inclined to think that Roger Williams and R. R. Williams may have the qualities that we want, and that they might be brought into our plan. Would you give us the benefit of the information you have regarding them, and especially of your own opinion regarding the men themselves and the part that they would play in our project?

If these men were to come here, working on vitamin and hormone researches, our organic work would lie in the following fields:

1. Vitamin B₁ and similar substances: R. R. Williams and assistants; also Dr. E. R. Buchanan, formerly assistant to Williams, who will begin work here June 9, 1937, with a Ph. D. assistant (Dr. Richardson of Johns Hopkins), on the synthesis of substances closely similar to B₁, hoping to find some with B₁ activity. Dr. Buchanan receives no salary, having a private income; his assistant's salary is paid by the Research Corporation.
2. Pantothenic acid and other water-soluble growth substances: Roger J. Williams and assistants (see attached sheets).
3. The relation between structure and activity in the heteroauxins and other plant growth hormones: Dr. J. B. Koeplli, in collaboration with Professor F. W. Went and Dr. Haagen-Smit of the Division of Biology.
4. The isolation, structure investigation, and synthesis of the bean-test hormones: Dr. James English, Jr., Lalar Fellow, in collaboration with Professor Went.
5. The structure of proteins and carbohydrates: Professor Carl Niemann and assistants, with the aid, I hope, of the group working in structural chemistry.

6. Researches in general organic chemistry, especially of the olefins:
Professor H. J. Lucas and students.

7. Applications of the work in molecular structure to organic chemistry.

The first four of these fields are very closely related. I feel that this concentration of effort may be an advantage. Niemann and Lucas keep the specialisation from being complete. What is your opinion of this plan?

I am enclosing a copy of a description of Roger Williams' general program which he sent to me, at my suggestion, after my talk with him in Corvallis. I made no intimation to him, of course, of the idea of including him in our project.

With best regards and sincere thanks for your kind advice, I am

Cordially yours,

Linus Pauling

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