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IWU Professor Awarded Green Chemistry Grant

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. – Illinois Wesleyan University Professor of Chemistry Ram Mohan has received a research grant for his work in green chemistry from the pharmaceutical company Pfizer Inc., the world's largest research-based biomedical and pharmaceutical company. The grant consists of \$5,000 earmarked for green chemistry research and education and an invitation to speak about his research at next year's Green Chemistry Symposium to be held at the Pfizer St. Louis site.

Green chemistry focuses on the development of processes that reduce the use and production of hazardous chemicals.

The Pfizer-St. Louis Chemistry Research Grant originates from Pfizer's annual Green Chemistry Symposium. In this symposium awards are presented to Pfizer teams who have emphasized green chemistry in their work. Winners of these awards have grants awarded to different academic institutions each year, Mohan was chosen as the recipient this year.

Mohan plans to use the grant to purchase specialty chemicals and pay a student researcher this summer. His research students will also be able to attend the Green Chemistry Symposium next fall to learn more about green chemistry and meet chemists to discuss their work.

"I feel students are the most important component of all my research and so most of this money will be used in ways that can enrich their experience and raise awareness for the environment," said Mohan.

Currently, Mohan's research focuses on bismuth-based compounds.

"Bismuth is a remarkably non-toxic metal, and we have shown that bismuth compounds are good, green catalysts," said Mohan.

In the future, Mohan hopes to expand his research to study different compounds other than bismuth-based ones including some derived from iron.

Mohan's work also extends to the classroom where IWU organic chemistry labs have become increasingly environmentally friendly, a trend he hopes to continue with his new research.

A graduate of Hansraj College in Delhi, India, Mohan holds a master's degree in organic chemistry from the University of Delhi and a Ph.D. in chemistry from the University of Maryland, Baltimore County. He conducted postdoctoral research at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Mohan was the 2002 winner of the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, Distinguished Alumnus Award and a 2001 winner of the national Henry Dreyfus Teacher-Scholar Award. In the past, Mohan has also received grants from the National Science Foundation, the American Chemical Society, and Research Corporation.

For additional information, contact the Office of University Communications at (309) 556-3181.

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