

I am applying for a travel fellowship for the Western Regional Honors Conference, to be held this spring in Spokane, Washington. Participation at this conference is a great honor, and I am most happy to be allowed to present this year - my second consecutive year being accepted. My presentation, titled "The Transcendence of Virtual Minds" is a philosophical presentation dealing with the complex issues involved in the study of phenomenological occurrences in artificial intelligence systems. My presentation progresses from the work of John Searle with his famous "Chinese Room" argument, and proceeds to analyze how modern connectionist networks (neural networks) can bypass the architectural problems involved in creating conscious machines. This presentation will be enormously valuable to me academically, since my undergraduate thesis is an expansion on the same topic. The criticism of fellow honors students from around the region will undoubtedly aid me in sorting out some of the more difficult objections to my claims. It is my sincere hope that you will grant the funding hereby requested.

Signed,