Technology Transfer

Relating Commercial Interest to Scientific Research

Heidjer Staecker, J.D., LLM
TreMonti Consulting LLC
9302 Lee Highway, Suite 306
Fairfax, VA 22031
Tel: 703-352-1827
www.tremonticonsulting.com
What is Technology Transfer?

- Technology transfer is a term used to describe a formal transfer of rights to use and commercialize new discoveries and innovations resulting from scientific research to another party.

- **Benefits:**
  - Leads to new products and services that improve our quality of life.
  - Adds billions of dollars to the U.S. economy
  - Supports hundreds of thousands of jobs.
  - Creates new businesses, industries and markets.

- **Statistics:**
  - In 2007, through university technology transfer efforts, 686 products were introduced and 555 start-up companies were established during the year — an average of 13 products and 10 start-ups per week.
How Do Universities Commercialize Their Technologies?

- Universities typically transfer technology through protecting (using patents and copyrights) then licensing new innovations.

- Ways to transfer
  - License
  - Sell
  - Spin Out
  - Give it away

- Identify potential commercial partners
  - Research Sponsor
  - Contact by Licensee
  - Marketing
  - Attending Industry Events
What are the Stages Technology Development?

Research Funding  Invention  Protection  Evaluation  Marketing  Licensing/Venturing  Monitoring

Technology Transfer
What are the Stages of Tech Transfer?

- Research Funding
- Invention
- Protection
- Evaluation
- Marketing
- Licensing/Venturing
- Monitoring

Technology Transfer
Evaluation

- Technologies that are disclosed need to be evaluated for commercial potential
  - What is the commercial potential?
  - What problem does the technology solve?
  - How is the technology an improvement over the state of the art?
  - What are the economic issues?
  - Cost of commercialization vs. Economic benefit
  - Economic vs. social benefit

- Not every disclosure has commercial potential
What are the Stages of Tech Transfer?

- Research Funding
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Technology Transfer
Marketing

- Means of marketing
  - Existing relationships
  - Direct Marketing
  - Websites
  - Industry Meetings
  - Social Networks

- Information provided
  - Confidential v. Non-confidential
  - Why do you need a CDA/NDA?
What are the Stages of Tech Transfer?

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Technology Transfer
Forms of Technology Transfer

- How can rights be transferred?
  - Sale of IP rights
  - License of IP Rights
  - License of Know-How
- License agreements are the most common way to transfer rights
- "Spin Out"
  - Start up company’s still need a license
Overview of Licensing Agreements

- Contract transferring IP rights to third party
- Important sections:
  - Grant – What is being transferred?
  - Territory
  - Royalties & Milestones
  - Return of Rights
  - Research Rights
  - Publishing Rights
- Sponsored Research
Early Stages
Philosophy of Research

• Why are you doing research?
  - Answer questions
  - For profit / scientific interest

• Who is the funding agency?
  – Government?
  – Not for profit?
  – Industry?
  – Institution?

• What is their interest?

• End Goals – Results, Publication and/or Patent
  – Not exclusive
  – Different purposes
Role of the Researcher

- Develop research goals
- Find funding to support research
  - Traditional federal grants and others (foundations, etc.)
  - Corporate sponsored research
- Corporate sponsored research can align with your research goals
- Collaborators can be potential licensees and vice versa
Invention

• When do you have a invention?
  - Scientific/technical breakthrough
  - Concept or reduction to practice
  - Doesn’t have to be a “big ticket” item

• Should you disclose?
  - Yes
  - Are there potential commercial benefits to the discovery?
  - Better, Faster, Stronger, Cheaper, Greener
  - Talk to the TTO

• Scientific breakthrough ≠ Commercial opportunity
Research + Invention = Opportunity

- Publication
- Licensing opportunities
  - Especially if already funded by potentially interested party
- Corporate sponsored research
  - Are there potential commercial benefits to the discovery?
  - Better, Faster, Stronger, Cheaper, Greener
  - Talk to the TTO
- Scientific breakthrough ≠ Commercial opportunity
Relating Research to Commercial Opportunity

• Not at odds with “science as search for knowledge”
• Assess from a research funding standpoint, not from a license product standpoint
• Assess from funding entity’s viewpoint
• How are your research results going to affect your field?
• If you validate your hypothesis, what does it mean in the long term?
Roles of Research Office/Inventor

- **Research Office**
  - Communicate
  - Assist in finding commercial opportunities
  - Assist with patent and marketing process
  - Provide sounding board and support for the inventor

- **Inventor**
  - Communicate
  - Talk to the Research Office before publishing
  - Interact with commercial partners