UM’s Tech Transfer Notes
July 2010

The Commercialization Advisory Board

Dear Colleague,

On August 12, 2010 The University of Montana’s Commercialization Advisory Board will gather for the first time, with a mission of providing guidance on technology transfer opportunities linked to the University’s research enterprise. In light of this new element of technology transfer at The University of Montana, I’ll use this note to introduce the advisory board members as well as provide an overview of the review format the advisory board will participate in:

Advisory Board Members

Dave Opitz
co-founded and ran Visual Learning Systems (VLS), a spin-out company from his research while tenured professor in The University of Montana’s Computer Science Department. VLS was sold to Textron in 2006. Education: Montana Tech (BS), University of Wisconsin-Madison (MS and PhD).

John Sullivan
co-developed CroFab®, a snake antivenom, upon decades of medical toxicology research and experience during which he served as Chief Medical Officer, Medical Director for University Physicians, and Associate Professor in Emergency Medicine at The University of Arizona Health Sciences Center. Also served as Medical Director of the Arizona Poison Center and Associate Director of the Rocky Mountain Poison Center in Denver, CO. Education: Spring Hill College (BS), University of Alabama (MD), University of Phoenix (MBA).

Mike Braun
prior to his current role as Assistant Professor of Management at The University of Montana, served as a director at Stephens & Partners (Los Angeles-based boutique merchant bank) where he initiated, raised capital for, and managed leveraged buyout strategies and transactions for private equity firms. Earlier business development career in publishing, direct marketing, and e-commerce. Education: Cornell University (BA), University of Southern California (MBA), University of Massachusetts, Amherst (PhD).

Gary Bloomer
partner in Boulder, CO seed stage venture capital fund prior to joining TechRanch (technology-based business development organization), where he currently advises clients on financing, hiring and e-marketing as Director of Client Development. Education: University of Colorado (BA and MBA).

Jeremy Brown
corporate practice at Dorsey & Whitney (Missoula) including start-ups, venture capital financing, mergers, acquisitions and reorganizations, private and public securities offerings, and general corporate advice. Earlier career in corporate, mergers, acquisitions and securities group at K&L Gates (Seattle). Education: Seattle University (BA), New York University (JD).

Ed Wetherbee
principal of Colorado Venture Management, an investment and business development company that has managed approximately $20 million of high risk investment capital, supporting the growth and
development of over 50 companies over 20 years. Also served as CEO of two companies, a developer of environmentally friendly natural gas fired electrical generation projects and an agribusiness company growing premium produce in greenhouses. Education: University of Colorado (BS), University of Denver (MBA).

Jere Kolstad
served as CFO and VP Business Development for internet streaming, PC software, and renewable chemical companies over the past 20 years. Served as the first VP of Sales & Business Development for Loudeye, which went public and was subsequently sold to Nokia. Education: Montana State University (BS).

Commercialization Review Format

The inventor, advisory board and the Office of Technology Transfer will participate in individual reviews of technology transfer opportunities on a quarterly basis, using the following topics to guide a discussion regarding the “next steps” for commercialization:

Background
history of research program, development time-line, personal vision and experience...

Product or Service
customer need and the proposed solution, potential for expansion into additional markets...

Market Overview
weaknesses of existing competition, distribution channels...

Business/Commercialization Model
milestones toward product launch, out-licensing strategy vs. spinning out a new company...

Technology Factors
intellectual property protection strategy, stage of development (prototype status)...

As a general goal for these advisory board sessions, we’ll aim to (a) refine early stage ideas into product concepts and (b) provide mentoring for ongoing commercialization efforts (including existing university based start-ups) with regard to issues such as management, operations, and working with investors. Our collective efforts toward these goals will also provide context for a broader discussion regarding The University of Montana’s institutional strategy for technology transfer and commercialization activities. Once we get a few sessions under our belt, I’ll provide you with an update regarding our progress.

As always, feel free to drop me a line anytime!

Best Regards,

Joe.

Joe Fanguy, Ph.D.
Director of Technology Transfer
The University of Montana
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