UM’s Tech Transfer Notes
July 2011
The Basics, Core Technology Transfer Functions

Dear Colleague –

To set the stage for the strategic aims forthcoming in my next note, I’m going to take a little time to lay out the core functions charged to The University of Montana’s technology transfer office. Rather than provide a long list of all the activities the office is involved with on a day to day basis, I’ll use four broad categories aimed at facilitating improved COMMUNICATION and FOCUS for the campus as well as the office when it comes to the topic of technology transfer. These are highlighted below. Additionally, I’ve provided a portfolio snapshot (along with each category) to illustrate current levels of activity at the University of Montana (Missoula):

SERVING THE RESEARCH COMMUNITY AND MANAGING INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY
Involves the review of intellectual property terms and clauses associated with the University’s grants, (biological) material transfer arrangements, and other miscellaneous agreements; receipt, processing and federal reporting of all inventions arising from University research efforts; patentability reviews in accordance with the faculty Collective Bargaining Agreement, as well as management of those patents and copyrights pursued by the University (filing, prosecution and maintenance).

Portfolio Snapshot: approximately 50 active inventions, 30 issued patents, and 20 pending patent applications.

ESTABLISHING CONNECTIONS WITH COMMERCIALIZATION PARTNERS
Involves building a network with entrepreneurs, investors, small and large businesses, as well as other institutions with which the University can partner to advance its intellectual property portfolio toward proof of concept, prototypes, or development and sale of commercial products.

Portfolio Snapshot: well over 100 partners with which the University has ongoing activity related to intellectual property or commercialization efforts.

TRANSFERRING TECHNOLOGY TO EXISTING OR NEW COMPANIES
Involves the negotiation and management of license agreements (milestones, royalties, etc...) between the University and the commercialization partners referenced above. Additionally, the office assists with the Board of Regents’ (407) approval process for faculty start-ups, as they relate to the commercialization of University intellectual property.

Portfolio Snapshot: approximately 25 license agreements and more than 10 active faculty 407 approvals.

COMMERCIALIZING RESEARCH DISCOVERIES TO BENEFIT SOCIETY
Involves working strategically with our licensees as they strive toward commercialization milestones, product sales, investment raises, and job creation. Additionally, the office distributes the University’s “commercialization” income, which after recovery of costs results in 50% to the inventor(s) as personal income.
**Portfolio Snapshot**: several products in the marketplace and (for the first time) more than $50K in gross revenue (FY11).

Although the statistics included above are only for the UM Missoula campus, it’s important to note that our affiliate campuses are also becoming more engaged in technology transfer activities. As an example, I’ll be traveling to Butte in August to jointly provide a Montana Tech workshop along with a patent attorney out of Washington. As a focus for my talk, I’ll emphasize the four categories discussed in this note as a means for further enhancement of interest, activity, and success in technology transfer at all University of Montana campuses.

Until next time, I hope summer is treating you well!

Joe.

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