

UM's Tech Transfer Notes
January 2011
Developing a Strategic Framework

Dear Colleague –

I hope this note finds you off to a great start in 2011!

In the spirit of the new year, and new thinking, I'm going to use this note to introduce three broad themes that will serve as the framework for developing some strategic goals related to the University's future technology transfer and economic development activities. There are two major drivers behind this effort, both of which resulted from a great deal of dialogue with many stakeholders during the past year.

As the first driver, technology transfer in higher education continues to serve as a theme of increasing importance associated with research institutions given the state of the national economy. With this increase in stakeholder interest comes a broad range of expectations spanning from the support of translational research activities on campus, to the creation of jobs in our local and regional communities. Therefore, *strategically defining objectives applicable to an institution in a rural state with our research strengths and level of funding will enhance the regional, state and international impact of our technology transfer and economic development activities.*

The second driver centers around an ongoing trend (in the 21st century) among research universities to support interdisciplinary activities that build bridges between research communities, the private sector, business schools, as well as other areas of academic and community strength, with a goal of stimulating entrepreneurial interests among all stakeholders. Technology transfer and economic development activities serve as a central element to these types of efforts. Therefore, *strategically aligning technology transfer and economic development objectives with the overarching goals of the University will enhance our overall impact as a 21st century research institution.*

With these background thoughts in mind, I'll be working with some key individuals during the next few months to conduct focus groups tasked with thinking through the specifics of the three strategic themes outlined below. This process will be an open dialogue, so if you would like to participate in a focus group or nominate someone for participation in these important discussions, please send me a brief email (at joe.fanguy@umontana.edu) including a name and reasoning for the nomination. Once the focus groups have met and provided feedback, I'll share the takeaways and lay out the next steps in the process through a future UM Tech Transfer Note. As for the three broad themes, and some introductory thoughts on each:

Support a research culture with the vision of impacting humanity through life-changing and life-improving discoveries.

Introductory thoughts:

Strengthen specific areas of University excellence in basic science and applied research.

Develop a clear and transparent process for transferring University derived discoveries to the private sector.

Nurture a spirit of entrepreneurship among university students, faculty, and staff.

Introductory thoughts:

Celebrate activities that stimulate creativity on our campuses.

Build bridges between the University's strengths in research, law, business, and other creative activities.

Cultivate public/private partnerships to launch and grow companies.

Introductory thoughts:

Establish a road-map for start-up companies affiliated with the University.

Build University partnerships with existing technology-driven companies and non-profits.

As always, your thoughts and feedback are of great value, particularly during this time of strategic discussion about the future of research, technology transfer and economic development at The University of Montana. So feel free to drop me a line at joe.fanguy@umontana.edu or give me a call 243.2148 anytime with your ideas and suggestions.

Best wishes for a great spring semester!

Joe

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