

Status Report
Reorganization of Technology Transfer Functions
University of Missouri

Feb 22, 2006

History/Previous Reviews

Since the late 1990's, technology transfer at the University of Missouri has received considerable attention. Recommendations from external and internal reviews from 1999, 2000, and Jan, Aug, and Oct of 2003 have been used as key information.

Process

Meetings with staff, internal/external users, and administrators took place between November and January to verify and update the recommendations from previous external reviews. A meeting of the Chief Research Officers (CRO), Vice-President for Research and Economic Development (VPRED), and the Vice-President for Academic Affairs (VPAA) was conducted in mid-December. The VPRED drafted final recommendations and met with the MU's VP for Research and the Director of the Office of Technology and Special Programs (OTSP) in early February. These recommendations were then discussed with the CROs on February 10th, and with the General Officers of the University on February 15th with a generally favorable reaction. Questions focused on the allocation of funds for patenting and metrics to be used in gauging performance of the reorganized offices. A timetable for the transition to be completed by July 1, 2006 was discussed.

Recommendations

To meet the overall goal of better translating research into economic development opportunities, our technology transfer process must increase the assistance/service to faculty. To accomplish this, we propose 1) expanding education and knowledge of intellectual property and the university/business interface, 2) improving the speed and transparency of the technology transfer process itself, and 3) making widely known the fundamentals of faculty entrepreneurship and how they relate to university policy. It is recommended that the technology transfer functions within the centralized OTSP be reconfigured, and much of the office be decentralized closer to the faculty on each campus.

The UM-System will create a centralized intellectual property (IP) core office to provide those functions which need not be duplicated for administrative efficiency, but also those functions which need to be uniform across all the UM campuses. This office will develop policy and provide legal, fiscal, IT support, and strategic communications/marketing of the University of Missouri's collective intellectual property assets. Its purpose will be to directly support the campus technology transfer offices.

Each UM campus will develop its own office of technology transfer. These offices are expected to be tailored to the individual institutions, and be responsible for providing all services to the faculty and firms for their technologies. They will also make their own business decisions (within the boundaries of legal and intercampus compatibility as determined by the IP Core) regarding licensing, options, and business start-ups.

Accountability

UM-System IP core will report to the VPRED. Each of the campus technology transfer offices will tailor their accountability path as appropriate, likely through the CRO and ultimately to the Chancellor.

Performance Benchmarks

We are starting with the base set of measures typical of university technology managers. These include grants submitted, grants awarded, peer reviewed publications, disclosures, legal expenditures, patent applications, patents awarded, licenses/options signed, SBIR/STTR proposals submitted, SBIR/STTR proposals awarded, licensing income, and business start-ups. We are comparing these to peer institutions and national averages. These measures, and other possibilities, will be customized and chosen by each institution with the IP Core being responsible for maintaining the database.

Timeline

February.....incorporate feedback from administration and staff. Implement transition team.
March.....purchase/develop IP software platform and begin populating database.
April.....announce structural changes and make available new faculty entrepreneurial guide.
May/Junebroad educational effort on technology transfer and process across all campuses.