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What Is Technology Transfer?

In the academic sector, the process of bringing discoveries to the marketplace is known as “technology transfer.” Tech transfer is now part of the government’s mandate for institutions that receive federal research funding. By and large, technology transfer is accomplished through the licensing of intellectual property (IP) created by university inventors to companies that have the resources and the desire to develop and apply the technology. In return, universities receive payments (in the form of fees, equity in a company, or royalties on revenues a company earns) for the products or services that have been licensed. Income to the university is distributed according to each institution’s policy, which generally includes compensation to the inventor(s) and a mechanism for channeling revenue back to the research programs of the university.

While technology transfer has been commonplace in the industrial sector for a long time, it is only within the last thirty-five years that the notion of licensing IP for commercial purposes has developed within the academic community due to passage of the Bayh-Dole Act (35 USC 200-212) in 1980.

Tech Transfer Process

Discovery

Once a significant finding has been made, it may be time to consider patenting the discovery. To be patentable, the research must lead to an innovation—a novel, useful improvement, machine, or process. It is always best to disclose a discovery to the Office for Technology Licensing and Industry Collaboration (Tufts Tech Transfer), whether or not you are sure it is patentable. Please see Tufts University’s “Policy on Rights and Responsibilities with Respect to Intellectual Property,” available at http://viceprovost.tufts.edu under “Research Policies.”

Invention Disclosure

To disclose your discovery, please fill out the invention disclosure form located at http://techtransfer.tufts.edu. It is important to fill out the form completely. Providing complete information will make the attempt to protect the discovery easier and less costly. It is also important to be in contact with Tufts Tech Transfer during the invention evaluation process, to continue a discussion of the technology and how it might be approached from a marketing perspective. Please also see “Public Disclosure” section under “Definitions and Points to Consider” on page 8.

Invention Disclosure Form

Defined

An invention disclosure form is used to declare a discovery to Tufts Tech Transfer. Receipt of this form will put into motion the processes of invention evaluation, market assessment, IP protection, and invention reporting to granting agencies.

Why?

Submission of the form helps start communication between you and Tufts Tech Transfer. Communication is an important part of the process and helps create an understanding of the research and how it can be applied to industry.

When?

It is important to disclose an invention whenever a significant discovery has been made. When in doubt, disclose. Public dissemination or discussion of research leading to an invention before a patent application is filed can limit or even eliminate its commercial value and the ability to get patent protection.

How?

The invention disclosure form can be accessed from http://techtransfer.tufts.edu, under “Resources, Downloadable Forms.” Complete instructions on how to fill out and submit the disclosure are on the form.

Invention Disclosure Evaluation

After the disclosure form is submitted, the technology is entered into the tech transfer database and assigned to a specific manager. The evaluation process often takes about a month but, if necessary, it can be accelerated to accommodate public disclosure or other deadlines. During this period an understanding of the science and research is attained by the licensing manager with the inventor’s help. The manager will also do research on similar technologies to determine if the technology is novel and therefore patentable. Such searches are performed in house or they may be outsourced. The manager will also investigate the commercial
potential of the invention by conducting market research. This effort usually involves database searches, discussions with industry/academic experts, and talks with companies—all geared toward obtaining a better understanding of the invention and its patent and commercial potential. On occasion, a disclosure may be novel but not amenable to patenting—biological materials or mouse models, for example, may fall into this category. Whatever the outcome for IP protection, the goal is to devise the best strategy for bringing the invention to the marketplace.

The inventor’s cooperation is essential during this evaluation process. Tufts Tech Transfer staff work with patent attorneys from several law firms, who are selected for their legal and technical expertise and who aid in the technology evaluation. The inventor’s preferences are considered during the selection of an attorney, who is not likely to be as expert in the field of the invention as the inventor is. Thus the inventor, through written and verbal communication, makes an indispensable contribution to the chances of obtaining superior patent protection.

The licensing manager often prepares—in consultation with the inventor—nonconfidential material for distribution to commercial interests. A next step might be to disclose technical details of the invention to potential licensees under a confidential disclosure agreement (CDA) or nondisclosure agreement (NDA), which often involves direct communication between a company and the inventor. Throughout this process, the licensing manager is mindful of information about public disclosure dates that the inventor supplies, so as not to jeopardize U.S. or foreign patent rights. The manager determines whether Tufts University should file for patent protection on the invention. Once the director of Tufts Tech Transfer ratifies this decision, the office will devote resources toward the patenting and licensing process.

**Intellectual Property (IP) Protection**

There are four forms of IP: trade secrets, trademarks, copyrights, and patents.

**Trade Secrets**

A trade secret is proprietary information that gives rise to a competitive commercial advantage—the IP is protected by locking it away. Commercial enterprises that sponsor or are otherwise involved in university research may seek to protect their trade secrets with agreements requiring the maintenance of confidentiality. Universities will not generally enter into such agreements involving university research because of the resultant conflict with academic practice, which requires the free and open publication of university research.

**Trademarks**

Trademarks are words, logos, designs, or other marks used to identify the source of goods or services. Trademark rights accrue to an owner through use in commerce, and owners of marks used in interstate commerce can apply for trademark registration with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. Tufts University owns federal and international trademark registrations on the words TUFTS and TUFTS UNIVERSITY, on the university seal (with the descending dove), and on various marks specific to individual schools and units. Tufts Tech Transfer administers Tufts University’s trademark registrations.

Use of Tufts trademarks is governed by the “Policy on the Use of Tufts University Name and Insignias” at http://legal.tufts.edu under “Policies and Procedures.” The Office of University Counsel coordinates all requests for use of the Tufts name and logos, with final decisions being made by the senior vice president for university relations. Requests for name use approvals may be sent to nameuse@tufts.edu.

**Copyrights**

Original works of authorship are protected by copyright from the moment they are fixed in a tangible medium of expression. Works do not have to be published, registered, or contain any copyright statement or symbol to be protected. Except for conditions outlined in Tufts University’s “Policy on Rights and Responsibilities with Respect to Intellectual Property” at http://viceprovost.tufts.edu under “Research Policies,” and in keeping with academic tradition, Tufts does not usually assert ownership in copyrightable works produced by its faculty. Exceptions from this tradition include works produced with significant use of university resources, institutional works, or works subject to contractual obligations. Tufts Tech Transfer administers copyrights owned by Tufts. In cases where Tufts University is the owner of a copyright, the following notice should be used: Copyright or © [year] Tufts University.

Copyright does not protect facts, ideas, systems, or methods of operation, although it may protect the way these things are expressed. Although not required to maintain copyright, registration of a work with the U.S. Copyright Office affords additional advantages: http://www.copyright.gov.
The Scholarly Communications Team at Tufts provides information to faculty, staff, and students about copyright, author’s rights, and scholarly publishing: http://sites.tufts.edu/scholarlycommunication.

**Patents**

Patent rights (if granted) generally last for 20 years from the date a patent application is filed and, unlike copyrights, patent rights must be awarded by a national organization such as the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office.

There are three types of patents in the United States:

- **Utility patents** cover new and useful processes, machines, articles of manufacture, or compositions of matter. They also include improvements to existing processes, machines, articles of manufacture, or compositions of matter.
- **Design patents** cover new, original, and ornamental designs for an article of manufacture.
- **Plant patents** cover new plant varieties.

**Patent Applications**

As of March 16, 2013, the America Invents Act (AIA) became effective. The AIA is the most significant overhaul of the U.S. patent system in over 50 years. Most importantly for inventors at universities and research institutions, the AIA changes the first-to-invent rule to a first-to-file rule, under which an inventor will be denied patent protection if the invention being claimed has been previously disclosed or claimed in a publication or patent application of another inventor.

The AIA brings U.S. patent laws closer to those of the rest of the world, which has long required absolute novelty in order to obtain patent protection. The AIA does provide an exception to absolute novelty—a one-year grace period during which publication of an invention by the inventor or someone who obtained the invention from the inventor does not negate patentability. Although this grace period may seem appealing to academic investigators, publication of an invention may limit an inventor’s ability to obtain patent protection for the broadest scope of the invention and remove the possibility of obtaining non-U.S. patent protection (because most other jurisdictions continue to require absolute novelty as a condition of patentability).

Under the AIA it is still possible to file a provisional patent application; however, a provisional application may not be filed for a design patent.

A provisional patent application will never be reviewed on its merits. The purpose of a formal—or nonprovisional—patent application is to be examined and found worthy of a grant of patent protection. A formal application (also known as a utility application) will contain all the information needed to allow a patent examiner to make an informed decision on whether to grant or deny a patent. It will include a detailed description of the invention, specific claims of what the invention embodies, information about the inventor(s), and every reference to public information that the inventor used to arrive at the inventive step.

Once submitted, a formal patent application will be reviewed for completeness. If any forms or materials have been omitted or improperly completed, the applicant will be notified. If everything appears to be in order, the application will be sent to an examiner deemed competent (by the patent office) to review the subject matter of the invention. Because of the volume of applications submitted to the United States Patent and Trademark Office, it may easily take three or more years before an application is examined in detail for validity and patentability.

The examination process is fairly straightforward. The examiner will study the reference materials provided and occasionally discover additional material. S/he will review the application and consider the merits of each claim. Questions will be asked. Claims will be challenged—some may be allowed while others may be stricken down. This back-and-forth exchange between examiner and inventor (through the agency of the patent attorney) may take several years and may result in one or more claims being allowed (found to be patentable), or it may result in all claims being rejected (found not to be patentable). Usually the results are mixed—with some claims being allowed and some being rejected.

If any claims are allowed, a U.S. patent will be granted upon payment of an issue fee.

**Patent Protection Outside the United States**

If patent protection is desired outside of the U.S., a similar but separate process must be followed. Applications can be filed directly in each country, but this would require lengthy (and costly) prior art searches and patent prosecutions. A much simpler method exists thanks to the Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT).
The PCT is an agreement among more than 120 countries, including the U.S., and it provides a uniform system for filing international patent applications. One files an application with the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), and any subsequent applications receive the benefit of that filing date. Upon expiration of the PCT application, 18 months after filing, the owner elects to file patent applications in as many or as few of the member states as desired. This process is known as “entering the national phase.”

During the 18 months of a PCT application’s pendency, an international patent search is conducted. In other words, the WIPO checks the novelty of the patent claims. If the invention has been disclosed previously in public in any manner at all, foreign patent rights are forfeited. The WIPO will also publish—or make publicly available—the application. Anyone wishing to may raise objections for valid reasons.

Assuming that the application survives the prior art search and the public comment period, it will enter the national phase and examination will begin in individual national patent offices. The European Union currently has a combined patent office, the EPO, which conducts patent examinations. If an application is allowed by the EPO, a patent will issue automatically in all selected member states.

Length of Patent Prosecution
The complexity of a patent application determines the time it takes to prosecute it to completion (acceptance or final rejection). A simple device with a straightforward purpose may zip through the patent office in a year or two, while a new method for diagnosing and treating osteoporosis may take seven years or more before its patentability is finally determined. Because of the lengthy period of prosecution, it is vitally important that any inventor named on a patent application inform Tufts Tech Transfer if s/he moves or changes telephone numbers or e-mail addresses.

Cost of Patent Prosecution
Again, the complexity of a patent application is a major factor in the final cost of patent prosecution. Drafting the application, filing the application, and replying to the patent examiner’s questions and rulings may run into the tens of thousands of dollars. A typical patent application in the United States might cost $10,000 to $15,000. A typical PCT application costs between $7,000 and $10,000. Each country selected for the national phase will add between $10,000 and $15,000 to the overall expense. Prosecuting a patent application to issuance in the U.S. and other major countries can exceed $100,000.

No Patent Protection
Not seeking IP protection for an invention is also an option. Some inventions such as biological materials would see more use if transferred directly to the market. Other inventions may not meet all the requirements to qualify for patent protection.

Licensing Process
Once IP protection is obtained for a technology, usually in the form of a patent application, it is important to figure out the best way to transfer the technology to the marketplace. One approach is to set up a license with a commercial entity either to develop the technology further or get it out to the marketplace in its current state. This process includes seeking information on market risk from potential licensees. Another approach is to use the technology to develop a start-up venture. Start-ups often begin with a university research relationship geared toward moving the technology closer to public use. This research may be conducted in the inventor’s lab or by a commercial collaborator under an agreement with the university. Tufts Tech Transfer administers all agreements relating to Tufts University IP.

At this stage in the licensing process, the Tech Transfer office revisits the preliminary strategy developed during the evaluation of the invention disclosure. Additional feedback on marketability will be sought from candidate licensees and venture capital firms, usually under nondisclosure agreements. As part of these discussions and their own due diligence efforts, the companies will evaluate the commercial and patentability potential of the invention and convey their conclusions to the licensing manager.

As the negotiations proceed, a license term sheet (a nonbinding understanding of the terms of the proposed license) is developed. License negotiations are intricate and lengthy processes that require flexibility and creativity from both parties in order to reach a mutually beneficial agreement. Once license terms are agreed upon, Tufts Tech Transfer drafts a contract with the licensee. Typically it takes several months from the start of negotiations to the execution of a license.

The signing of a license agreement begins a long-term relationship between the university and the licensee. These relationships often lead to funding for additional research, the advancement and
dissemination of additional knowledge, additional inventions, and the use of inventions for the public good. Tufts Tech Transfer monitors a licensee’s performance—especially the product development and financial milestones recited in the agreement—throughout the term of a license. Often it is necessary to amend a license to adapt to changing economic conditions or product development timelines. On occasion, the university will terminate a license for lack of performance.

Revenue

Income realized from licensing activities is distributed according to Tufts University’s “Policy on Rights and Responsibilities with Respect to Intellectual Property,” which is available at http://viceprovost.tufts.edu under “Research Policies.” The following is excerpted from the policy:

Costs and Net Royalty Income

Unless otherwise agreed, net royalty income shall mean gross royalties in the form of cash or cash proceeds whether from the sale of equity or obtained in licensing transactions, less commercialization costs, including but not limited to billed costs for protection of intellectual property, marketing, legal fees and other licensing costs, as well as a 10% share of royalties (after commercialization costs have been deducted) for nonreimbursed costs.

Distribution of Net Royalty Income

With respect to intellectual property owned by the University hereunder, net royalty income shall be distributed (usually annually) as follows:

• 40% creator(s) (personal)
• 20% creator’s department or equivalent unit (for support of research and other creative activity)
• 20% creator’s school (dean’s fund for support of research and other creative activity)
• 20% university (president/provost/vice provost’s funds for discretionary support of research and other creative activity)

Definitions and Points to Consider

Authorship v. Inventorship

“Authorship” and “inventorship” are not synonymous. Authorship is defined as “the quality or state of being an author,” as well as “source; origin.” To determine authorship on a paper, one examines the finished product and acknowledges all who contributed to its creation. Thus, authorship will include the researchers who conducted the subject study. It may also include individuals who contributed algorithms, equations, or figures used during the research, as well as the person who committed the research to paper or the mentor who suggested a comparative approach.

Inventorship, on the other hand, is a precise legal term. What differentiates an inventor from an author? An author is someone who contributes to the final product, but an inventor is someone who participates in the inventive step. An author might imagine an outcome or a solution, but an inventor shows the steps and mechanisms necessary to get there.

The American Heritage Dictionary defines an inventor as someone who has produced or contrived (something previously unknown) by the use of ingenuity or imagination. The U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) defines an inventor as someone “who conceived the invention. Unless a person contributes to the conception of the invention, he is not an inventor . . . .” Thus, the issue of inventorship hinges on the legal definition of “conception.” Fortunately, the USPTO provides clarity taken from case law surrounding this issue. Conception is defined as “the complete performance of the mental part of the inventive act” (Townsend v. Smith, 36 F.2d 292, 295, 4 USPQ 269, 271 [CCPA 1930]). Conception also means providing a description of the invention thorough enough to allow someone skilled in the art to reproduce the invention without “exercise of the inventive faculty” (Gunter v. Stream, 573 F.2d 77, 197 USPQ482 [CCPA 1978]).

It is extremely important to get inventorship right on a patent application. Honest mistakes may be amended, but willful misrepresentation (naming an inventor who didn’t contribute to the conception of the invention or failing to name someone who did contribute) can lead to serious difficulties with IP rights—up to and including invalidation of the patent. Ultimately, the question of who is an inventor is best decided by a patent attorney.
Conflict of Interest
The integrity of a community of scholars requires the exchange of ideas in an atmosphere free from commercial conflict and influence. Thus, universities must ensure that reports of research and scholarship are disseminated on an open and timely basis without externally imposed restrictions, in keeping with academic tradition. To this end, all members of a university community are expected to be open about involvements with—and obligations to—external parties that could be interpreted as leading to such restrictions. This is especially important in cases where relationships with external parties could lead to personal financial benefit from the scholarly work or ideas of an investigator or from that investigator’s access to the work or ideas of colleagues including faculty, students, and staff. For more information on Tufts University’s conflict of interest policy, please visit http://viceprovost.tufts.edu.

Consulting
Consulting can affect many aspects of the patenting and technology transfer process, and relationships from consulting work often lead to the identification of potential licensees. For information on Tufts University’s conflict of commitment policy, please visit http://viceprovost.tufts.edu.

Equity
Technologies disclosed by university researchers are offered to licensees at an early stage of development. Because early-stage technologies require considerable additional research to prove their value or to support good patent protection, universities look for licensees that are adequately financed (or can obtain financing) and willing to focus resources on the research necessary to advance the technology. Early-stage technologies are typically launched by small or start-up companies that find it difficult to lay out significant cash for development expenses. Universities usually accept equity as partial consideration for technology licensed to start-ups.

Invention
The Random House Dictionary defines an invention as “a new, useful process, machine, improvement, etc., that did not exist previously and that is recognized as the product of some unique intuition or genius, as distinguished from ordinary mechanical skill or craftsmanship.” Additionally, a patentable invention must not be anticipated by prior art. Examples of prior art include obviousness, where the subject matter would have been obvious to a person having ordinary skill in the art, and prior public knowledge of the inventive step. When questioning whether a discovery is an invention or not, contact Tufts Tech Transfer at http://techtransfer.tufts.edu.

Public Disclosure
To protect patent rights in an invention, it is important that inventors contact Tufts Tech Transfer as soon as possible before a public disclosure. Public disclosure includes, but is not limited to, journal articles, posting on the web, grant awards, conference abstracts, oral presentations, and poster presentations. Foreign patent rights are lost immediately upon public disclosure.

Publication
Applying for patent protection before publishing research is ideal. Public disclosure can inhibit the ability to patent an invention. It is always best to contact Tufts Tech Transfer before publishing in order to determine if a patent application should be filed in advance of publication.

Reduction to Practice
In the context of invention disclosure and reporting, “reduction to practice” is considered to be the point at which a concept is embodied in an invention with recognizable utility.

Research Sponsorship
Industry sponsors of university research are often entitled to review publications in advance to determine if a patentable invention will be disclosed or if information confidential to the sponsor will be disclosed. Universities generally agree in the sponsored research agreement to a delay in publication so that patent applications can be filed. At a sponsor’s request, an investigator may be required to remove a sponsor’s confidential information from a publication.

Use of Resources
“Use of resources” is defined as any substantial use of university laboratories, equipment, funds, personnel, or facilities. Questions about whether someone has made significant use of university resources, should they arise, are resolved by the vice provost for research of Tufts University.
Laboratory Notebooks

A laboratory notebook is a legal as well as scientific document. It details all the experiments the investigator has tried and all the steps s/he has taken to validate the work. A laboratory notebook is also a valuable evidentiary document that can be used in drafting patent applications and clarifying issues of inventorship. What follows is a description of practices to follow—and avoid—in maintaining a laboratory notebook that would stand up well if called on as evidence.

Notebook
The notebook must be permanently bound. The pages must be prenumbered to prevent the later addition or deletion of pages.

Recommended Practices
• Make all entries in permanent ink.
• Never erase, eradicate, or remove errors. Cross out mistakes with a single line so that the erroneous entry is still legible. To be safe, initial and date the strikeout.
• Date each entry. Dated entries should appear in chronological order.
• Account for all space on a page. If a large portion of a page needs to remain blank for some reason, draw a diagonal line through the space and write “This page/section intentionally left blank.” Initial and date.
• Likewise, account for all time during experiments. Offer explanations for large gaps. For example, a week’s vacation, properly noted, will attract no undue attention; however, a six-month gap in the record will probably be used in court to refute a notebook’s validity (not to mention drawing into question an inventor’s diligence in performing the experiments).
• Identify all participants and observers. Describe the role each one has played in the experiment as well as in the inventive process. An accurate record of who did what and when will make it easier for a patent attorney to determine whose contributions rise to the level of inventorship.
• Permanently attach all printouts and photos to a notebook page. Sign and date.
• Define all abbreviations and acronyms.
• Index and cross-reference related documents within the text of the description.
• Write each entry in language that is understandable to a person of normal intelligence. Assume that the reader will have a passing knowledge of your field of research. Reading your laboratory notebook may give a patent attorney a better understanding of your invention. This will result in a better-written patent application.
• Write each entry with sufficient detail to enable a person skilled in the art to grasp the importance of the findings.
• Write each entry with sufficient detail to enable a person skilled in the art to reproduce the results.
• Provide a detailed description of experiments and resulting data. Do not offer personal opinions or speculate too broadly on the results.
• Have a neutral, disinterested witness sign and date each entry. The recommended format is “Read and understood by: . . . .” Remember: One witness is required; two or three are better.
• Whenever possible, have your witness(es) observe the actual experiments being described in the notebook.
• Record all discussions with collaborators and colleagues. Hopefully, these conversations will be cross-referenced in their laboratory notebooks as well.
• Sign and date each entry.
Office for Technology Licensing and Industry Collaboration (Tufts Tech Transfer)
http://techtransfer.tufts.edu

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is Tufts Tech Transfer?
We facilitate the protection of intellectual property (IP) and the commercialization—or transfer—of discoveries resulting from research being conducted at Tufts University. We are here to translate scientific innovation into tangible products or methods that advance knowledge and serve the public good, while returning income to the inventor and the university.

What is the benefit of disclosing my invention to Tufts Tech Transfer?
Disclosing to Tufts Tech Transfer is an important step in protecting IP rights in your discovery. The Tufts Tech Transfer office will evaluate your invention (with input from you and other experts) to determine the best method of protection, if any, and then take action. While this is going on, the Tufts Tech Transfer office will also analyze the market for your discovery and look for a commercial entity to take it further. Commercialization of inventions can lead to personal income, notoriety, and sponsored research funding for your laboratory.

If I invent something at Tufts University, who has ownership rights?
All inventions or discoveries are deemed to be of proprietary interest to Tufts University if the inventor was employed or otherwise financially supported by the university or if he or she—whether compensated or not—used university facilities, materials, resources, or time to conceive or develop the discovery or invention. If your research was sponsored by an outside agency, such as the federal government, the sponsor may hold certain rights in the invention in addition to Tufts University’s rights.

Does Tufts University own an invention I created on my own time?
An employee is obligated to disclose to the university any invention that was created using Tufts University resources. If you did not use university funding, facilities, staff, equipment, students or salary support to create the invention, the university does not have an ownership interest in it. Please note, however, that Tufts Tech Transfer does not expend university resources on IP protection or marketing for inventions Tufts does not own.

I developed an invention prior to coming to Tufts University. How do I clarify ownership of it?
Just as with an invention an employee develops on her own time, if you did not use university resources to develop your invention, the university has no claim of ownership to it; however, if the invention was created at another institution, and you are continuing to research this area, please see below.

I am continuing research on an invention I started at another university before coming to Tufts. Should I notify Tufts Tech Transfer?
Yes. Since the inventive work began, or was completed, at another institution, your former employer most likely has ownership rights. We will need to contact the technology transfer office at your previous institution to learn what was disclosed and what steps, if any, have been taken to protect the IP rights surrounding your invention. Once Tufts Tech Transfer has established this information, we will know where to begin our efforts. Any improvements to your existing invention or new discoveries arising from your continued work while using Tufts University resources will fall under Tufts policy, so it is important to work out the details as early as possible.

How do I know whether I should contact Tufts Tech Transfer?
When you are unsure whether your discovery is patentable or whether to disclose your discovery, or when you have any other question pertaining to the technology transfer process, please contact us. The Tufts Tech Transfer website will guide you to the manager responsible for your research concentration: http://techtransfer.tufts.edu.
International, Federal, and State Resources

World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)
http://www.wipo.int
The WIPO is the international equivalent of the U.S. copyright and patent and trademark offices. The WIPO site is a comprehensive resource for all these matters and includes general and legal information, instructions, and registration information. The site also allows you to search international copyright, patent, and trademark databases for matters pending and issued.

U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO)
http://www.uspto.gov
The official site of the USPTO, where you can find information from general to legal and search patent and trademark databases.

U.S. Copyright Office
http://www.copyright.gov
The official site of the United States Copyright Office, where you can search copyright records, locate registration forms, and look into fees, publications, law, and policy.

U.S. Small Business Administration
http://www.sba.gov
Topics range from planning to starting up and running a business, including exit strategies, and the site has links to many other resources for start-ups.

National Human Genome Research Institute at the National Institutes of Health
http://www.genome.gov/19016590
This site covers issues relating to IP and genetic and genomic research, from legal and ethical standpoints.

National Institutes of Health Office of Technology Transfer

Biotechnology Industry Organization (BIO)
http://www.bio.org
BIO is the world’s largest biotechnology organization, providing worldwide advocacy, business development, and communications services.

MassBio
http://www.massbio.org
MassBio links new entrepreneurs and founders with seasoned biotechnology professionals.

MassChallenge
http://www.masschallenge.org
Connects entrepreneurs with resources. Primary activities include running an annual, global start-up competition, documenting and organizing key resources, and organizing training and networking events.

Massachusetts Technology Transfer Center (MTTC)
http://www.mattcenter.org
The MTTC has a government mandate to help any inventor at a nonprofit research institution to commercialize his or her technology.

IP Information

Google Patents
http://www.google.com/patents
In addition to having a familiar flavor, Google Patents is somewhat easier to use than the USPTO search engine and displays patent documents and images using standard web applications (Adobe Acrobat and JPEG).

Guide to Patent Searching from the University of Texas
http://www.lib.utexas.edu/engin/patent-tutorial/index.html
Never searched for patents? This is a good place to start, with introductory information as well as strategies for searching.

The IP Mall at the Pierce Law Center
http://law.unh.edu
A resource for legal matters pertaining to IP and technology transfer. Also provides access to the Pierce Law International Technology Transfer Institute.

Technology Transfer Tactics
http://www.technologytransfertactics.com
Monthly coverage of technology transfer. The site includes both free and subscription-based content and displays blogs, vendor information, and job listings. Technology Transfer Tactics also provides information on conferences worldwide.
Professional Associations

The Association of University Technology Managers (AUTM)
http://www.autm.net
The site includes general information as well as access to publications, a calendar of events, job listings, and other resources. Much of the material is free to all users, though the site does include content and services exclusive to AUTM members.

Council on Governmental Relations (COGR)
http://www.cogr.edu
Association representing the interests of research universities that receive a significant share of their funding from the federal government. The association currently has 150 member universities. The site contains information on a range of topics; a portion is available only to researchers working at member universities.

Licensing Executives Society (LES)
http://www.lesusacanada.org
The LES is a professional society of more than 6,000 members engaged in the transfer, use, development, manufacture, marketing, and licensing of IP within the United States and Canada. Most of the material is free to all users, but some content is reserved for members.

Women Entrepreneurs in Science and Technology (WEST)
http://www.westorg.org
A nonprofit organization for entrepreneurs and aspiring entrepreneurs.