

UW TechTransfer Diversity Appraisal

January 31, 2004

UW TechTransfer manages intellectual property created in the research programs at the University of Washington. In this role, we work broadly across campus to manage patentable inventions, software, databases, and other digital works created by UW researchers.

The mission of UW TechTransfer is to extend the impact of University of Washington research through the creation of partnerships that encourage investment in innovation.

To achieve this mission, UW TechTransfer is organized into four units that report to the Vice Provost for Intellectual Property and Technology Transfer.

- **Invention Licensing** manages patentable inventions and works primarily with research programs in the School of Medicine and the College of Engineering.
- **Digital Ventures** works with software, databases, and other digital works and works broadly across many disciplines from education to genome sciences.
- **Policy & Strategic Initiatives** assists in policy analysis, prepares communications, and organizes events to help further the mission.
- **Finance & Business Operations** manages the financial affairs of the unit.

Demographics: Our unit demographics are 30 professional staff, and 12 classified staff; 30 female employees and 12 male employees. Fifty-nine percent (60%, 18 of 30) of the professional staff in UW TechTransfer are female. In leadership positions, the directors of Invention Licensing and Policy & Strategic Initiatives are female and the directors of Digital Ventures and Finance & Business Operations are male. The low number of racial minorities in our unit (no African Americans, 4 Latino, and 3 Filipino) reflects the low number of minority representation in the feeder systems to technology transfer as a whole. We typically have very few applicants from racial minorities for open professional staff positions.

Professional Staff Qualifications and Recruiting: UW TechTransfer works at the interface between the university and the business and venture community, and it is critical that staff work well with faculty. Technology transfer is a very specialized field that requires professional staff to combine expertise in science, commercial evaluation, intellectual property protection, marketing, and negotiation. In general, we seek candidates who demonstrate a strong science background in an area that is close to the area in which they will be working. It is essential that they understand the innovations that they are working on, and have credibility with researchers. We also prefer

candidates with experience in marketing or sales in a technical field. We find this to be consistent with an outgoing personality that is necessary to market early stage innovations to companies, and also it is helpful in understanding how to develop materials and approaches for marketing. Six of our professional staff have Ph.D. degrees, four have law degrees, and four have MBA degrees.

We seek to attract qualified candidates through advertisement in local newspapers and on the UW web page. We also advertise nationally on the job postings pages of the web sites for professional organizations for our profession: the Association of University Technology Managers (AUTM) and the Licensing Executives Society (LES). We have found listing position openings on these sites to be the most productive for generating pools of qualified applicants.

In addition to advertisement for open positions, I also frequently discuss careers in technology transfer with scientists, business development professionals, and attorneys who are looking for job opportunities or a career change. These meetings have become more frequent with the down turn in the economy and have contributed to some very good candidate pools for recent openings.

Additional Thoughts: The above discussion reflects current thinking about staffing and current efforts to recruit for qualified candidates. However, I think that part of an appraisal of our unit includes thinking more broadly about the adequacy of our current efforts and alternative approaches to attract minority candidates to positions in our unit.

- What can you do if there are few minorities in the profession as a whole and few in the typical feeder system? Are there other publications or associations that will place openings in front of qualified minority applicants? We should seek to identify organizations that have a higher percentage of racial minorities as members and advertise available position with these organizations.
- Can we develop a strategy to provide opportunities for minority candidates to acquire the appropriate skills and a career path to increase diversity? Developing talent in the absence of a diverse feeder system is a reasonable alternative that we plan to explore further.

As a last point, I would like to thank the committee for providing us with an opportunity to provide input on the diversity of our unit. It is useful to rethink the kind of people that we look to attract to our unit and the ways that we go about recruitment. I welcome the opportunity to discuss the topic and to think more deeply about the efforts to create a more diverse unit.