

TOMORROW'S Technology Transfer

The Journal of the Association of
University Technology Managers™



Hot Topic:
How has the current
economic situation
affected your technology
transfer office?

Highlights:

- How to Identify Opportunities and Threats
- Tax-Related Tips for Sponsored Research Agreements
- Who Leads in Technology Transfer?
- True Patent Reform?
- Re-imagining University Knowledge Transfer through Spin-off Firms
- Venture Capital-University Interface: Best Practices to Make Maximum Impact
- Under What Technological Landscape Do Firms Take Patent Licenses?
- University-Industry Relationships: Potential Risks

Plus:

- Book Reviews
- Idea Exchange
- AUTM Foundation News





Technology Transfer Exchange Program Provides Multiple Benefits

International Resident Affiliate Program in Technology Transfer at Case Western Reserve University

Michael F. Allan

In 2008, Case Western Reserve University (CWRU) instituted *Forward Thinking*, its five-year strategic plan. With a bold vision “to be recognized internationally as an institution that imagines and influences the future,” CWRU’s technology transfer office (TTO) has implemented a creative program to help fulfill that vision.

The International Resident Affiliate Program in Technology Transfer at CWRU provides sponsoring organizations with an opportunity to recruit their best people to work side by side with a U.S. TTO and its staff to combine their technical knowledge and business experience and advance superior technology transfer practices. Participation in the program is intended to immerse the resident affiliate in education and training of methods and tools that promise to produce skills, capabilities, and networks in state-of-the-art technology transfer practices.

Resident affiliates have the opportunity to participate in meetings, public courses, and workshops at no cost or minimal cost to their sponsoring organizations. Courses are recommended to help affiliates acquire skills for planning and transitioning new methods and technologies into their home organizations.

Although the position offers no compensation or employee benefits and the individual and/or sponsoring organization are responsible for the candidate’s travel and expenses, there is no fee required by CWRU to participate in the program. Candidates must follow their country’s VISA requirements for international travel/volunteer status.

CWRU’s first resident affiliate was An-

drea Frosini, PhD, an intellectual property manager in the liaison office at the University of Siena, Italy, who was at CWRU from May through July 2008. In commenting on his exchange experience, Frosini points out that there are many differences in technology transfer between the United States and Europe. Universities in the U.S. have been involved in technology transfer for more than three decades, while those in Europe only started their programs in the last few years. Rather than simply trying to drop the U.S. system into place in Europe, or vice versa, he advocates looking for specific points from one system and applying them to the framework of the other.

Participation in the program is intended to immerse the resident affiliate in education and training of methods and tools that promise to produce skills, capabilities, and networks in state-of-the-art technology transfer practices.

For instance, Frosini says that the U.S. leads Europe in the organization and tracking methodology of technology transfer. “Since I’ve been here, I’ve seen how important it is to have a good organizational structure in place,” he says. “From when we first speak with the researcher and disclose the invention to the signing of the commercial licensing, all points of the process are tracked.”

Frosini’s lessons for CWRU also target global dissimilarities. “If you want to be successful at worldwide technology transfer, you have to be aware of the laws and procedures—which can be very different—in the countries you target,” he says.

For example, he continues, “Having a



U.S. patent on an invention is fine if you are only looking at licensing partners in this country. But to do business in European countries, Australia, Canada, and elsewhere, you have to be familiar with local patent laws.”

According to Frosini, networking is one of the most important components of successful technology transfer.

“The technology transfer office is the interface between the invention and the companies bringing that invention to market,” he says. “Knowing who, where, when, and how to address the right people is so important. If you want to do business abroad, you must have a network in place to get things done.”

Are you interested in learning more about this topic? Have you participated in such an exchange? Has your experience proved valuable? Are you looking for an opportunity like this? How should AUTM support these types of programs? Discuss these topics and more on the AUTM Web site. [Click here to join the discussion.](#)

Each new candidate provides unique opportunities for growing and improving the program. CWRU is currently in its third iteration with Maddalena Furlan, a staff member of the technology transfer service at AREA Science Park in Trieste, Italy. AREA, which is one of Europe’s largest science parks, has executed a memorandum of understanding with CWRU to cement an ongoing relationship with CWRU’s TTO. “We devote a lot of time into furthering the individual’s own professional development,” states Mike Allan, the program’s director. “Going forward, we would like to talk with other institutions that have implemented similar arrangements to share learning experiences.”

To join the discussion visit the subscriptions page of the [AUTM Web site](#). Select “Technology Transfer Exchange Programs—Discuss Your Experience!” from the list and subscribe by selecting how often you wish to be notified when your colleagues

contribute to the thread. You can select to receive the messages in real time in one daily digest or choose “no email” to simply visit the AUTM Web site to read the thread. ▾

Michael F. Allan is director, technology transfer, Biomedical Operations, at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio.

If you have an idea to share, contact Emily Bauer at emily@warf.org.

We all know that the world is becoming flatter. In this changing world, a worldview and insight are essential for those wanting to succeed in business given that the companies best able to commercialize technologies into successful products may not be right around the corner. One of the best ways to improve a worldview is through sharing and learning from colleagues in other countries. These challenges and new realities are being addressed in part through several technology transfer foreign exchange programs, like the one at CWRU. The [France-USA Exchange Program on Technology Transfer](#), for example, has brought together staff from French technology transfer offices (TTOs) such as Hôpitaux de Paris, Université de Nantes, and GRAVIT Grenoble, with staff from American TTOs such as Caltech, University of Chicago, and Boston University. The TTOs of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and North Carolina State, along with the North Carolina Department of Commerce, are partnering with Nagoya University in Japan. Arizona Technology Enterprises (AzTE), the technology venturing arm of Arizona State University, has entered into separate global arrangements to market technologies developed by ASU’s partner universities, Dublin City University in Ireland (through its technology commercialization organization, Invent DCU Limited) and Tec de Monterrey in Mexico.