

Case Western and Cleveland Clinic are tops in licensing income

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Northeast Ohio's two main technology transfer units -- at Case Western Reserve University and the Cleveland Clinic -- lead the state's universities, hospitals and research institutes for the income they collect by licensing their technologies.

Though started in the late 1980s, these units didn't see big increases in licensing income until after commercialization professionals were recruited to head them, said Baiju Shah, chief executive of BioEnterprise, the region's health care business developer.

Mark Coticchia was hired in 2001 to head Case Research Institute office of Technology, which covers University Hospitals Case Medical Center. Chris Coburn was hired in 2000 to establish CCF Innovations, the commercialization unit of the Cleveland Clinic.

Both men have hired dozens of professionals to help turn inventions at their respective institutions into licensing income streams, which often lead to commercial products.

"Their success has been astounding in only a few years," said Shah, whose organization was founded in 2002 by Case Western, University Hospitals, the Clinic and Summa Health System in Akron.

Case Western led Ohio universities, hospitals and research institutes by earning \$29.4 million from licensing its technologies in the three years ended in 2005, according to the recently released FY2005 U.S. Licensing Survey by the Association of University Technology Managers.

In addition, Case Western received 370 disclosures about inventions from professors in the same three-year period, according to the association's report. The university office applied for 43 patents and was issued 16 patents in 2005. It also had four startup companies that year.

"We are certainly in the top 20 nationally, with respect to the other 102 institutions whose research base is \$275 million or less, Coticchia said.

That hasn't always been so. In 2001, the year Coticchia was recruited, the university office had licensing revenue of \$2 million a year.

CCF Innovations earned total licensing income of \$15.6 million from 2003 through 2005, according to the association's report.

The Clinic unit received 409 invention disclosures from Clinic doctors and surgeons during that period, applying for 116 patents, and being issued four, in 2005. CCF Innovations also had four spinoffs in that year.

The licensing results come from two things, Coticchia said. "The investment that the institutions in Northeast Ohio have made in technology commercialization, and the caliber of the programs," he said.

"We truly have world-class capability, when it comes to tech commercialization," he said.