



Tech Transfer Well Represented at the Research Festival

Richelle Holnick, OTT

The NIH Research Festival was a busy time for the NIH Technology Transfer community! To kick off the Research Festival, OTT had an exhibit table during the Resource Fair on Tuesday. This was a great opportunity to talk with scientists and highlight the resources housed on the NIH Technology Transfer website. We had handouts of “royalties cash” to open the conversation about different ways of being an inventor, a handout about the new OFM portal, and giveaways from the Federal Laboratory Consortium that included an inventor notebook, pens, and luggage tags. The notebooks were especially a hit!



Richelle Holnick, Sabarni Chatterjee, and Karen Surabian

On Wednesday, Tech Transfer had six posters presented during the afternoon poster session! These included:

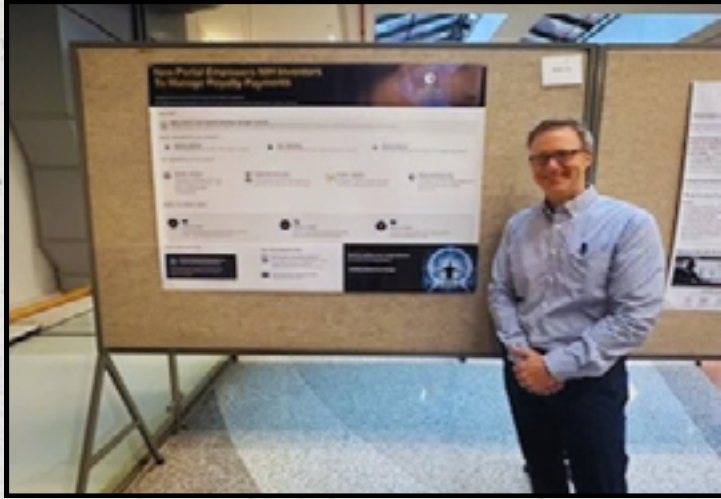
- *Careers for NIH Scientists in Technology Transfer & Business Development*, presented by Steve Ferguson and Balki Balakrishnan
- *NIH Scientists and the Federal Laboratory Consortium for Technology Transfer (FLC)*, presented by Steve Ferguson and Sabarni Chatterjee
- *New Portal Empowers NIH Inventors to Manage Royalty Payments Directly*, presented by Kevin Doran
- *License Monitoring & Enforcement at NIH - Important for Both Inventors and ICs*, presented by Charlene Maddox and Svetlana Smith
- *What are the 53 FDA-Approved Vaccines and Therapeutics Based Upon License Agreements from NIH Technology Transfer?*, presented by Charlene Maddox, Steve Ferguson, and Richelle Holnick
- *Recognizing NIH's Role in Turning Discoveries into Cancer Treatments*, presented by Berna Uygur and Steve Ferguson

You can find all of the posters on the [Presentations and Articles webpage](#). These posters were a great opportunity to talk with curious individuals about what tech transfer looks like at NIH!

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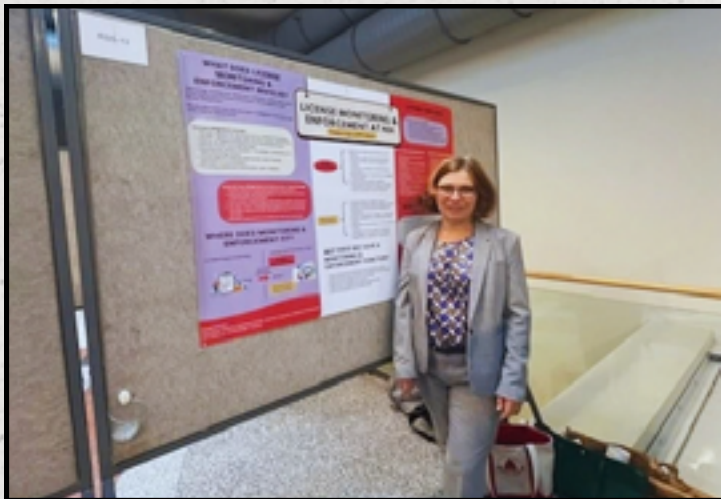
Research Festival Posters



Kevin Doran



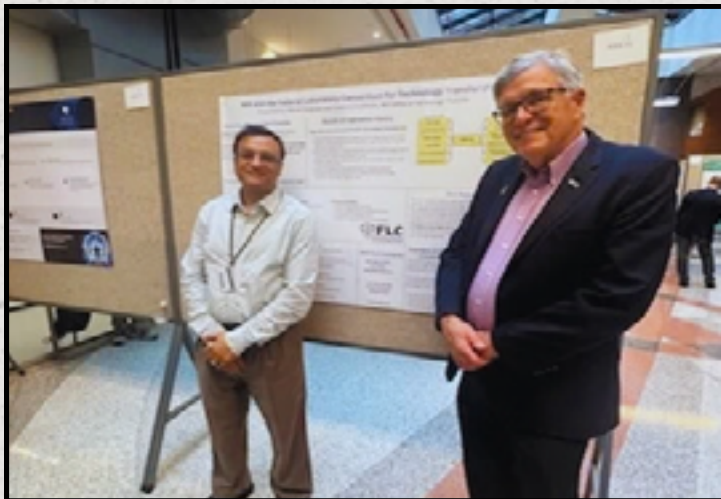
**Balki Balakrishnan,
Steve Ferguson**



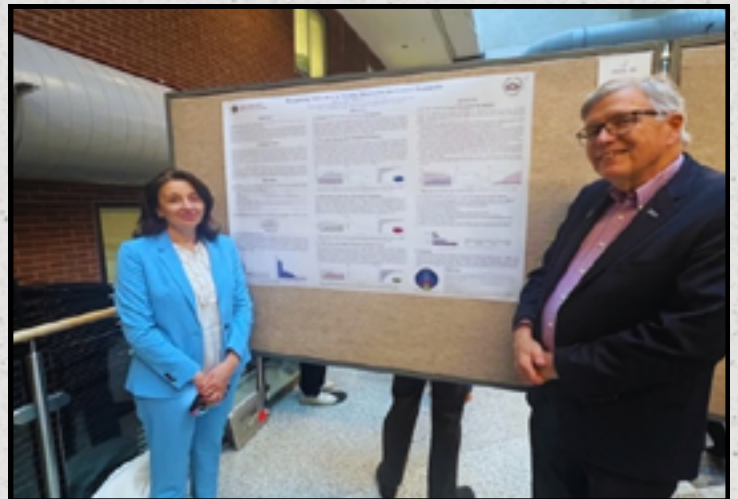
Veta Smith



Richelle Holnick



**Sabarni Chatterjee,
Steve Ferguson**



**Berna Uygur,
Steve Ferguson**

On both Tuesday and Wednesday, the Technology Transfer Community Forum (TTCF) chair, Karen Surabian, organized a time for the Tech Transfer community to come together over lunch and socialize. This was a great opportunity to take advantage of while on campus to connect or reconnect as the community is spread out across many worksites.



Tech Transfer community lunch

We are already looking forward to next year!

MEU Sets New Record of License Amendments Executed

Charlene Maddox, OTT

OTT's Monitoring and Enforcement Unit (MEU) closed out fiscal year 2026 with its most productive year on record, executing 126 license amendments — more than double the 52 amendments completed in FY25!

The milestone comes during a year marked by significant operational challenges. MEU navigated the government shutdowns of late 2025 and early 2026, followed by a wave of policy and operational changes across NIH and HHS.

Despite these challenges, MEU's Monitoring and Enforcement Officers (MEOs) each surpassed their FY25 individual totals, with several setting personal bests. One MEO led the team in total amendments executed and took on one of the year's most complex dockets, working through a licensee's expired licenses with continuing sales.



Credit: iStock/ Nuthawut Somsuk

Science Fiction or NIH History?

Richelle Holnick, OTT

While they may look like something out of an old science fiction movie...these photographs are actually from the NIH archives! The Office of NIH History and Stetten Museum found these photos for OTT to submit to the Federal Laboratory Consortium (FLC) for their 2027 planner.



Photo courtesy of the Office of NIH History and Stetten Museum

The first image is a unique clinical experiment collected important information about human metabolism. In this 1960s photo captured by NIH Photographer Jerry Hecht, National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases (NIAMS) researchers measure a study participant's resting oxygen and carbon dioxide consumption to determine his base metabolic rate.

The second image is a transparent mannequin that was assisting doctors with a scientific breakthrough. In 1962, the National Institutes of Health installed a whole-body radiation counter in the Clinical Center, the first capable of detecting radiation in 18 areas of the human body. To assist in calibration, NIH Radiation Safety Officers, like Dr. Howard L. Andrews and his assistant Dorothy Peterson pictured here, could add a known amount of radioactive isotope to compartments on the mannequin and check the accuracy of the machine's readings.



Photo courtesy of the Office of NIH History and Stetten Museum

Hopefully you will see one or both of these images in the 2027 FLC planner. We will keep you updated on how to order your free copy when it is available!

NCI Fellow Finds Opportunity to Speak at RESI

Darex Vera-Rodriguez, NCI

On September 22–23, as part of my fellowship with NCI's Technology Transfer Center's Technology Analysis and Marketing Unit (TAMU) I attended the Redefining Early-Stage Investments (RESI) conference as part of Biotech Week Boston in Boston, Massachusetts. RESI brings together early-stage life science and healthcare companies with investors, licensing partners, and other strategic partners to foster connections that can advance emerging technologies toward commercialization. The conference serves companies across therapeutics, medical devices, diagnostics, and digital health and provides opportunities for fundraising, licensing, strategic partnering, and networking.



Darex Vera-Rodriguez

As part of NCI TTC's ongoing efforts to raise awareness of NIH's technology transfer and commercialization opportunities, I delivered a workshop titled *"Beyond SBIRs: How the NIH Can Facilitate and Accelerate Your Commercialization Goals."* During the presentation, I discussed the advantages of collaborating with NIH and highlighted how NIH can serve as a strategic partner to companies seeking to advance innovative technologies toward the marketplace. The presentation covered NIH technologies available for licensing and collaborative development, pathways for engaging with NIH technology transfer offices, and practical steps companies can take to establish licensing and research collaborations.

The workshop generated multiple follow-up conversations with emerging startups and industry leaders interested in establishing relationships and exploring potential collaborations with NIH. These types of engagements reinforce the importance of increasing awareness of the many ways industry can work with NIH. They highlight NIH's role as a source of innovative technologies and as a partner in advancing a company's technology along the commercialization pathway.



NIAID TTIPO Launches a Cohort Model for Technology Transfer Fellows

Sheridan MacAuley, NIAID

In mid-2025, NIAID's Technology Transfer and Intellectual Property Office (TTIPO) was operating with less than half of its authorized federal workforce and permanent hiring could not immediately address the staffing gap. However, the workload associated with agreements, patent decisions, and licensing deadlines continued. TTIPO also faced a longer-term problem: Federal technology transfer is a specialized, multidisciplinary profession with no single academic pipeline. It blends science, law, business, negotiation, federal policy, and public service judgment, and is learned largely through supervised experience inside an active technology transfer office.



NIAID TTIPO's 2026 cohort of six
Technology Transfer Fellows.
Credit: NIAID

TTIPO's established contract-based technology transfer fellowship program offered a way to recruit trainees while permanent hiring remained constrained. Yet, the prior training model of pairing each fellow with an experienced specialist was not sustainable, as each specialist was already carrying an expanded portfolio due to the reduced workforce. They lacked the time to build and deliver individual training programs alongside deadline-driven work.

TTIPO Director Surekha Vathyam therefore chose to concentrate the training effort rather than spread it across an already stretched office. She temporarily redirected part of Lead Technology Transfer and Patent Specialist

Maryann Puglielli's portfolio and quality-review capacity to allow Puglielli to serve as fellowship coordinator, prepare and teach a set curriculum, and become the central resource for the cohort. Although the arrangement reduced some near-term senior capacity, it allowed TTIPO to train six fellows together to one office-wide standard. Individual specialists could then focus their limited mentoring time on subject-matter judgment, practical context, and feedback.

A nationwide recruitment effort drew nearly 120 fellowship applications from the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area and across the country. Following detailed application reviews, panel interviews, and reference checks, TTIPO selected six recent graduates with complementary backgrounds in fields including biomedical science, engineering, university technology transfer, patent practice, law, and commercialization. They joined TTIPO in August 2026 as its first intentionally cohort-based fellowship class. By late September, the fellows had moved from foundational instruction to supervised learning involving material transfer agreements and confidential disclosure agreements. Learning together allows the fellows to compare approaches, test assumptions, share resources, and push one another to improve. The fellows are trainees, not substitutes for vacant specialist positions.

Since 2010, TTIPO has trained 39 fellows; 13 later joined TTIPO as federal employees and 12 moved to other government or academic technology transfer offices. The cohort model builds on that record while making the training more consistent and scalable. It accepts a short-term

reduction in scarce senior capacity to develop a broader pool of professionals prepared for technology transfer careers. For other federal technology transfer offices facing hiring constraints, this cohort model provides one approach to develop specialized talent in greater numbers while reducing the need for each mentor to independently provide foundational training.

Prospective applicants can strengthen future applications by gaining experience through a university or organization's technology transfer, commercialization, partnership, innovation, or sponsored research office. For the 2026 opportunity, applicants had to be U.S. citizens and have earned an eligible master's or doctoral degree within the five years preceding the fellowship start date. Eligibility requirements may change for future recruitments. Learn more at the [NIAID Technology Transfer Fellowship Program website](#).

Fellowship appointments are administered through the Oak Ridge Institute for Science and Education (ORISE).

Annual Reporting Season is Coming

Terry Goodell, Sapient



As we have now crossed over into the new fiscal year, OTT is ramping up efforts to evaluate overall data quality in ETT. This effort is crucial for preparing both the NIST and Annual Report for this past fiscal year. As part of our ongoing commitment to maintaining high data quality standards, we are proactively launching a thorough review of all transactional agreements and their families across all ICs data. Our goal is to ensure that these records align with our recommended best practices.

FLC Opportunities for T2 Professionals

Sharon Soucek, NIEHS

As FY2026 comes to a close, the Federal Laboratory Consortium for Technology Transfer (FLC) is offering several opportunities for NIH technology transfer professionals to gain recognition, share expertise, build connections, and access member benefits.



**Federal Laboratory Consortium
for Technology Transfer**

Applications for [FLC PRO™ verification](#) are open through Oct. 12. PRO, or Professional Registered ORTA, is the only professional designation specifically for federal technology transfer practitioners. It recognizes experience, expertise, ongoing education, and engagement in the field — helping practitioners demonstrate credibility to leadership, colleagues, collaborators, and partners.

[FLC Award submissions](#) are open through Oct. 16. The FLC Awards are federal technology transfer's top honors, recognizing labs and partners for outstanding achievements in moving innovations from lab to market. [Past NIH winners](#) include cross-agency collaborations, innovations that fueled disease treatments, and more. Submitting is a high-impact way to highlight your lab's success on a national stage. Winners receive additional visibility through FLC communications, media outreach, and promotion to stakeholders, including lawmakers in the lab's district or region.

The FLC is also seeking volunteers to review award submissions. Learn from strong nominations across the ecosystem and help recognize excellence in federal technology transfer. To learn more, contact Kimberley VandenBrook at kvandenbrook@federallabs.org.

NIH colleagues are also encouraged to [submit topics for the 2027 FLC National Meeting](#), taking place May 11–13 in Chicago. The Call for Topics is open through Dec. 8, offering an opportunity to lead a session, share expertise, and contribute to the federal tech transfer community's premier annual event.



NIH members can also connect with peers through the [Ask the FLC Experts](#) forum on eGroups. Join anytime to ask real questions and get practical answers from experienced technology transfer professionals, business experts, and colleagues across the FLC network.

Finally, FLC members can now access [Licensing Executives Society \(LES\) memberships at no cost](#) to you or your lab. The FLC will cover the membership, giving members another way to build licensing knowledge, expand professional connections, and stay engaged with the broader commercialization community.

Questions about any of these opportunities? Reach out to info@federallabs.org.

NCI/FNL 2026 Technology Showcase

Michael Salgaller, NCI

On September 9th, the National Cancer Institute (NCI) and the Frederick National Laboratory for Cancer Research (FNL) hosted the 2026 Technology Showcase on FNL's campus. It was supported by the *Maryland Technology Development Corporation (TEDCO)*, the *Frederick County Office of Economic Development* and the *City of Frederick Department of Economic Development*. This event attracted over 150 members

from the regional biohealth communities. They came together to network and learn about cutting edge technologies and licensing and collaborative opportunities. The day was filled with speakers, panels, funder pitches and technology presentations.



Partnering Panel

The event's keynote address was given by Jeff Allen, PhD, President and CEO of Friends of Cancer Research, and a former NIH researcher. He stressed the importance of collaborative engagement in the development of treatments and cancer cures, especially through public-private partnerships.

Patient advocate Mr. Carlos Sandi, who's son was the 1st pediatric patient recipient of a CAR-T treatment at the NIH Clinical Center, discussed their treatment journey. He expressed gratitude for the NIH research that made his son's treatment possible and strongly encouraged the NIH and partners to continue developing life-saving technologies.



Conference Keynote Speaker

Attendees also got the inside scoop on how to access capabilities and resources, specifically from FNL's *Patient-Derived Models Repository (PDMR)* and *Antibody Characterization Laboratory*.

They also received guidance and insights from two panels of experts on *the Do's and Don'ts of Partnering with NCI and FNL* and *Moving Things Through FDA Review...Efficiently*.

For companies looking for guidance on securing funding opportunities, experts from State and Federal agencies, private and non-profit funding organizations provided insights and guidance on available programs and walked attendees through their funding process.



National Cancer Institute and Frederick National Laboratory
TECHNOLOGY SHOWCASE

Tech Transfer at BioHealth Capital Region Conference and Investor Forum

Richelle Holnick, OTT

In September, BioHealth Innovation brought together leaders from industry, academia, and government for three days of programming, networking, and regional collaboration focused on “growing the biohealth capital region of tomorrow.”

For NIH Technology Transfer, the conference provided a valuable opportunity to connect with companies that would benefit from licensing NIH technologies or pursuing research collaborations, but who do not realize those opportunities exist. Many attendees stopped by the NIH exhibit table to share that their companies had received a Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) award. In response, Michael Salgaller, head of the NCI Technology Transfer Center’s Technology Analysis and Marketing Unit (TAMU), would often ask, “That’s wonderful. How else are you working with NIH?” The question frequently prompted a moment of surprise and created the perfect opening to discuss the many ways companies can engage with NIH beyond grant funding.

NIH OTT representatives Steve Ferguson and Richelle Holnick worked alongside NCI TTC TAMU representatives Michael Salgaller, Joseph Conrad, Malek Kechrid, and Darex Vera-Rodriguez to cover the full length of the conference as it coincided with the NIH Research Festival.



A More Powerful Admin Console for the LFP

Amber Rush, OTT

The Law Firm Portal (LFP) was built with law firms in mind, streamlining how users respond to requests for quotes, submit documentation, and delivering their work. The administrative side, however, lagged behind—until now. It's worth noting that LFP relies on two distinct roles: end users, who are the law firm personnel interacting with the portal day to day, and administrators, who maintain and configure the system behind the scenes.

The LFP admin console has been significantly enhanced with new data grids, improved search, and more advanced filtering. Searching wasn't easy before; now administrators have more options to filter and locate contracts, including by technology category and other criteria, giving them faster, more intuitive access to the information they need.

Exporting data is also easier than ever. Contract users and labor rates can now be exported directly from the system, cutting down on manual spreadsheet work and reducing errors.

These updates are especially valuable during fiscal year transitions. Administrators enter and maintain labor rates directly within the LFP, and the system automatically applies the correct rate based on when work was performed.

With these enhancements, administrators can work more efficiently and better support both the Patent Legal Services (PLS) contract and contracted law firms.



Credit: iStock/PressureUA

In Memoriam - Amy Petrik

As a community, we are saddened to hear of the passing of Amy Petrik.

Amy joined TTIPO as an ORISE Technology Transfer Fellow in 2013 and later served as a Technology Transfer and Patent Specialist and Acting Deputy Director before joining NCI's Technology Transfer Center in September 2024, where she continued her NIH service until her passing. Her lasting contributions to NIAID and the NIH technology transfer community were matched by the kindness, generosity, and grace she brought to every interaction. Amy made both our work and our lives better, and we are profoundly saddened to say goodbye.



Amy Petrik

Connecting Technology Transfer to the Science It Serves

Surekha Vathyam, NIAID



At NIAID's BioViz Lab, TTIPO staff, contractor colleagues, and Technology Transfer Fellows explored interactive technologies and new ways to visualize and communicate complex science. Credit: NIAID.

In August 2026, NIAID's Technology Transfer and Intellectual Property Office (TTIPO) brought together federal staff, contractor colleagues, and six new Technology Transfer Fellows for a mission-focused working retreat. The program was designed

to connect the agreements, patent strategies, licensing decisions, and records managed by TTIPO with the scientists, facilities, leadership, and public health mission those activities serve.



Christopher Hanson with TTIPO colleagues following a leadership discussion.
Credit: NIAID.

The program began with a clear look at the office's role in helping NIAID researchers collaborate, protect discoveries, and move promising innovations toward public use. Staff mapped the scientific portfolios they support and the expertise they can offer one another, giving new colleagues a practical view of how the office fits together. An NIH Ombuds workshop reinforced negotiation and problem-solving skills that are central to technology transfer.

Christopher Hanson, who was then serving as NIAID's Acting Executive Officer and Acting Deputy Director for Science Management, joined TTIPO for a candid conversation about Institute priorities and the office's role in advancing them. His engagement recognized the sustained work required to keep research partnerships, intellectual property, and commercialization activities moving.



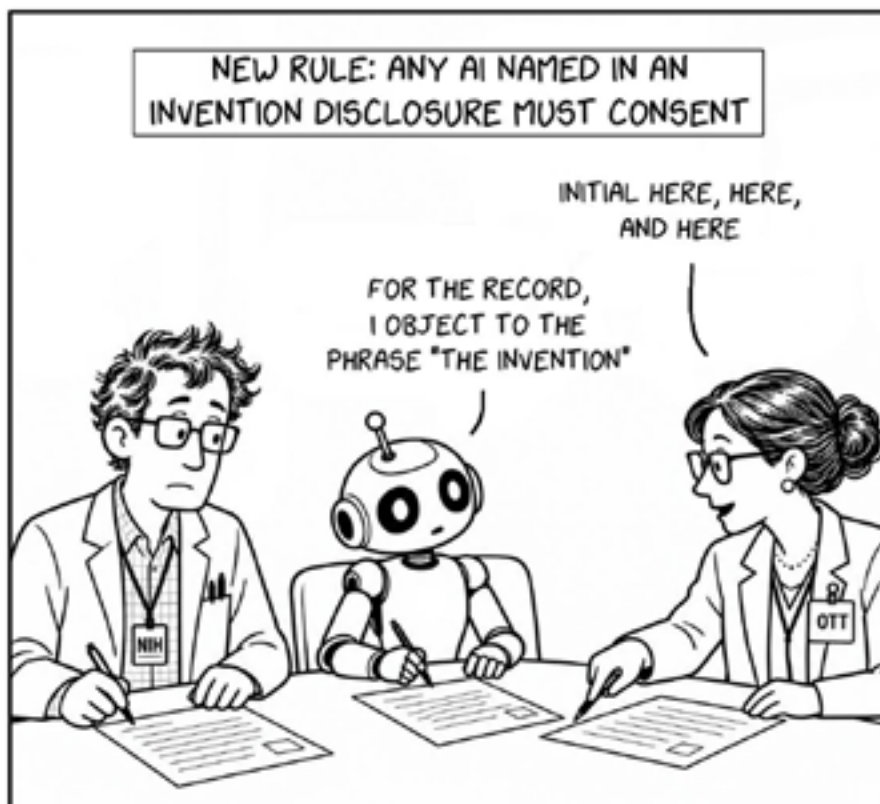
Visits to the NIH Clinical Center and National Library of Medicine connected TTIPO's work with patient-centered research and the enduring history of medical innovation. Credit: NIAID.

The program concluded with Acting NIAID Director John H. Powers III, M.D., leading the NIAID Executive Committee in welcoming TTIPO. The participation of leaders from NIAID's intramural and extramural divisions and executive offices acknowledged the sustained work and effort of the office and affirmed the importance of technology transfer to the Institute's mission.

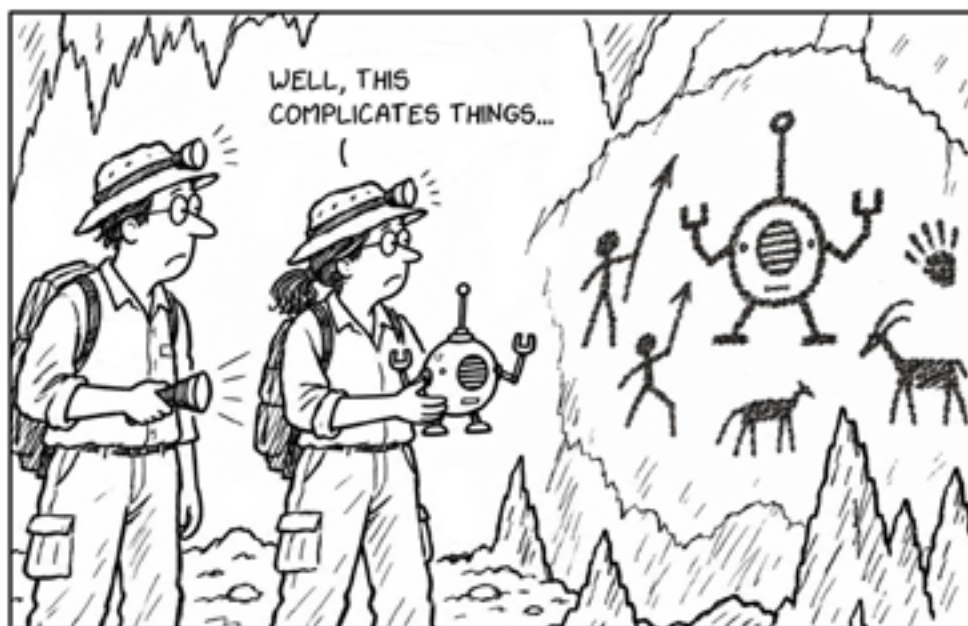


Acting NIAID Director John H. Powers III, M.D., and members of the NIAID Executive Committee welcome TTIPO and recognize the office's contributions to NIAID science and mission. Credit: NIAID.

For the new fellows and recently onboarded contractor colleagues, the retreat provided an immediate introduction to the full arc of TTIPO's purpose. For long-serving staff, it made familiar responsibilities tangible again by reconnecting files and deadlines with the people, places, and public benefit behind them. TTIPO returned to its work with stronger connections across portfolios and a renewed appreciation for the role technology transfer plays in moving NIAID science forward.



THE DISCLOSURE PROCESS SLOWED CONSIDERABLY WHEN "INVENTIONS" WOULD NO LONGER SPEAK WITHOUT COUNSEL PRESENT



THE PRIOR ART SEARCH UNCOVERED AN EARLIER EMBODIMENT

Comings and Goings



Amanda Adams, PhD, joined NIAID TTIPO as a Technology Transfer Fellow. Amanda is a microbiologist with an interest in the business side of science. She holds a PhD in microbiology from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and most recently completed a research postdoc at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, where she worked to improve women's reproductive health by targeting inflammation, viral infection, and microbial dysbiosis. Along the way she spent time as a student management consultant and project manager at Illinois Business Consulting and as a business development fellow at Harvard's Office of Technology Development.



Hiba Alsaffar, PhD, joins NCATS OSA as a Technology Transfer Specialist. Hiba started her career at NIH at NCI TTC first as a Technology Transfer Fellow and later as a Technology Transfer Specialist. During her time at NCI TTC, Hiba managed technology and patent portfolios of both NCI and NEI through evaluating various scientific inventions, managing patent prosecution, commercializing technologies, and facilitating clinical and preclinical collaborative agreements with outside parties. After giving birth to her second child, Hiba decided to take a brief break. During that time she successfully completed USPTO patent bar examination and became a Registered Patent Agent.



Jessica (Jessie) Boulos, PhD, joined NIAID TTIPO as a Technology Transfer Fellow. Jessie earned a PhD in Bioengineering from Clemson University, where she focused on researching drug and gene delivery systems. She has also supported university technology transfer through IP evaluations and has hands-on experience evaluating biotech assets and building competitive intelligence across therapeutic areas. Jessie is excited to be joining the NIAID team. Outside of work, she loves to read, travel, and rock climb!



Cole Brashaw, PhD, joined NIAID TTIPO as a Technology Transfer Fellow. Originally from northern Minnesota, Cole recently earned his PhD in Neuroscience from Oregon Health & Science University (OHSU) in Portland, Oregon. In graduate school, he investigated immune responses to neuronal degeneration and neuroinflammation. In addition to his academic work, Cole interned in the OHSU technology transfer office, supporting the patent protection and licensing of biomarker and diagnostic technologies. This experience sparked his interest in helping translate scientific discoveries into technologies that benefit society. Outside the office, Cole enjoys exploring new hiking trails, trying new restaurants and cuisines, cooking, watching sports, and curling!



Shannon Donnelly, MS, joined NIAID TTIPO as a Technology Transfer Fellow. Shannon is a North Carolina native and for the past four years has been at Michigan State University pursuing a PhD in Biochemistry with a concentration in Molecular Plant Science. At MSU she studied the biochemical mechanisms that facilitate light harvesting and subsequent electron transfer towards energy production for photosynthesis. During her time at MSU and in a past academic institution, Shannon completed internships in Technology Transfer offices where she gained experience in evaluating early- to mid-stage disclosures. She is looking forward to working with everyone at NIAID.



Stephanie Head, MS, joined NIAID TTIPO as a Technology Transfer Fellow. Stephanie is currently an evening law student at Suffolk University in Boston, MA, and she will be finishing her degree in May 2027. Previously, Stephanie was a Licensing and Business Development Associate at MIT in their Technology Licensing Office, which acquainted her with patent prosecution and university licensing practices. Before going to law school, she received her MS from Northwestern University in Chicago, IL, where she studied women's reproductive health. When she is not studying, Stephanie enjoys spending time with her two cats, Missy and Charlie, riding her bike, gardening, and traveling back to her hometown of North Canton, Ohio.



Sheridan MacAuley, MS, joined NIAID TTIPO as a Technology Transfer Communications Specialist. Sheridan previously worked at NIAID in science communications roles in the Office of Communications and Government Relations (OCGR) and the Vaccine Research Center (VRC). Before joining NIAID, she worked for over 10 years as a Biotechnology Patent Examiner at the USPTO and is a registered Patent Agent. She also completed a policy fellowship at NASA and worked as a freelance writer and editor. Sheridan earned her MS from the University of Maryland, where her research focused on developing molecular tools for bioengineering methane-producing archaea. She received her BS in Biology from George Mason University and studied creative writing at Johns Hopkins University.



Lillianne Portilla Weingarten has joined NCATS OSA to assist with several Real-World Data initiatives, such as the NIH Data COUNTS and the NCATS National Clinical Cohort Collaborative (N3C). Additionally, she will provide guidance to NCATS programs, supporting both intramural and extramural agreements to facilitate collaborative efforts and advance organizational goals. After departing NCATS in 2023, Lili expanded her professional expertise by taking on diverse roles across both the private sector and government. Notably, she served as Senior Director of Government Programs at Novavax, followed by a position as a Commercialization Advisor with ARPA-H. Welcome back Lili!



Rebecca (Becca) Plessel, PhD, joined NIAID TTIPO as a Technology Transfer Fellow. Rebecca graduated with her PhD from NYU Vilcek Institute of Graduate Biomedical Sciences, where she worked in the Mohr-Wilson labs on RNA methylation in infection models. During this time, she also had the opportunity to intern with NYU Langone Health's Technology Transfer Office, where she became interested in how discoveries become new technologies. In her spare time, she enjoys yoga, cooking, and playing soccer with friends on Sundays.