NIH TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

January 2026

Chikungunya Vaccine License Receives LES Deal of Distinction Award

Richelle Holnick, OTT

The NIH Technology Transfer Program was honored with its record 7th "Deal of Distinction Award" at the 2025 Licensing Executives Society Annual Meeting. This award was given to NIH and its licensee Bavarian Nordic for the deal that led to the new chikungunya virus vaccine Vimkunya®. Vimkunya received FDA approval on February 14, 2025, as the first virus-like particle (VLP) single-dose chikungunya vaccine and the first chikungunya vaccine for individuals over the age of 12. It uses virus-like particles designed to mimic the chikungunya virus without the ability to infect cells, replicate or cause disease. This is an important public health development as chikungunya is a mosquito-borne disease caused by the chikungunya virus. In 2024, 620,000 cases of chikungunya and over 200 deaths were reported worldwide. Most patients recover, but 30-40% of those affected may develop chronic symptoms that can last for months or even years. Recent data suggest that chikungunya is severely underreported and often misdiagnosed as dengue fever.

Since its discovery, the chikungunya virus has been identified in more than 110 countries, with evidence of transmission confirmed in more than 50 countries over the past five years. As climate change continues to expand the reach of mosquito-borne illnesses like chikungunya, this vaccine underscores the importance of cutting-edge solutions to safeguard travelers and vulnerable populations and is now a critical tool to combat this emerging and growing health challenge.

The intellectual property that is part of this non-exclusive license consists of 15 issued US patents and corresponding international patents related to the development and use of a VLP based chikungunya virus (CHIKV) vaccine. The licensed technology includes plasmids for generating recombinant virus-like particle based CHIKV vaccines and a production cell line required for characterization, research, development, and manufacture of such vaccines. Use of VLPs is an important safety feature since they only mimic the chikungunya virus without the ability to infect cells, replicate or cause disease.

The Licensing Executives Society has awarded NIH, and specifically NIAID as the technology came out of its Vaccine Research Center, a 2025 Deal of Distinction Award. Congratulations to all involved!

In This Issue

NIH Inventors Elected to National Academy of Inventors

Richelle Holnick, OTT

Two National Institutes of Health (NIH) inventors, Drs. Steven Rosenberg and John O'Shea, have been selected as 2025 National Academy of Inventors (NAI) Fellows. NAI Fellowship is the highest professional distinction awarded solely to inventors.

The National Academy of Inventors is a member organization comprising U.S. and international universities, and governmental and non-profit research institutes, with over 4,000 individual inventor members and Fellows spanning more than 250 institutions. The 2025 Fellows hail from 135 research universities, governmental and non-profit research institutions worldwide and their work spans across various disciplines. They are not only phenomenal researchers holding prestigious honors and distinctions but are also incredible inventors who collectively hold over 5,000 issued U.S. patents and whose innovations are making significant tangible societal and economic impacts today and will well into the future.

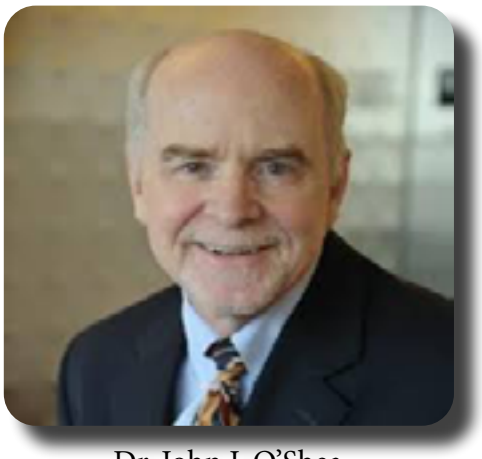
Dr. Steven Rosenberg

Steven Rosenberg, M.D., Ph.D., is the Chief of the Surgery Branch at the National Institutes of Health's National Cancer Institute. Dr. Rosenberg is often regarded as the father of cancer immunotherapy as he began working on immunotherapy in the 1970s when little was known about T lymphocyte function in cancer. In the late 1980s, he began working on advancing the usage of T cells as immunotherapy, specifically the use of chimeric antigen receptor (CAR) T cells. This work resulted in multiple patents that are foundational in the CAR T space. Dr. Rosenberg pioneered the development of immunotherapy that has resulted in the first effective immunotherapies for selected patients with advanced cancer. His basic and clinical studies of interleukin-2 directly resulted in the approval of this immunotherapy by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for the treatment of patients with metastatic melanoma and renal cancer, many of whom remain disease-free over 25 years after treatment. His studies of cell transfer immunotherapy using tumor infiltrating lymphocytes (TIL) that resulted in durable complete remissions in patients with metastatic melanoma were the first to directly demonstrate the effective role of T lymphocyte in human cancer immunotherapy and the approach has now been applied to the treatment of patients with metastatic solid cancers. He pioneered the development of gene therapy and was the first to successfully insert foreign genes into humans. He was the first to demonstrate the clinical effectiveness of genetically engineered CAR T-cells to mediate the regression of B-cell malignancies in humans, a treatment now approved by the FDA for widespread use. In recent work, Dr. Rosenberg established new approaches for the application of immunotherapy to patients with a variety of common solid epithelial cancers by targeting the unique mutations present in the patient's cancer. This recent work has resulted in the regression of metastatic cancer in patients with melanoma, sarcomas and lymphomas.

He holds an extraordinary 884 patents; 135 US and 749 foreign. Dr. Rosenberg has published over 1200 papers in peer-reviewed literature and co-authored more than 30 books. He is a member of the National Academy of Medicine, a Fellow of the American Association for Cancer Research, received the National Medal of Technology and Innovation by the President of the United States,

and is now a Fellow of the National Academy of Inventors. Dr. Rosenberg was an NIH Distinguished Lecturer for the 12th Annual Philip S. Chen, Jr., Ph.D., Distinguished Lecture on Innovation and Technology Transfer hosted by the NIH. His talk was on Cells as Anti-Cancer Drugs: Entering Mainstream Oncology.

John J. O'Shea, M.D., is a Senior Investigator and Chief of the Molecular Immunology and Inflammation Branch of the National Institutes of Health National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases (NIAMS). Dr. O'Shea is a leading inventor in the field of cytokine signal transduction, specifically in dissecting the role of the Janus kinases (JAKs) and signal transducers and activators of transcription (STATs) family transcription in immunoregulation. Dr. O'Shea discovered and cloned the tyrosine kinase, JAK3, which is essential for inducing the cascade of effects caused by immune system molecules called cytokines, including one known as interleukin-1 (IL-2), and demonstrated its role in pathogenesis of severe combined immunodeficiency. Dr. O'Shea identified the role of STAT3 in regulating T cell cytokine production in Job's syndrome. More recently, Dr. O'Shea's laboratory has employed deep sequencing to understand the epigenetic regulation of T cell differentiation and the role of STATs in these processes.



Dr. John J. O'Shea

There are now 11 approved JAK inhibitors for multiple forms of arthritis, inflammatory bowel disease, dermatologic disorders, and COVID-19. He has been elected to the Association of American Physicians, the American Society for Clinical Investigation, the National Academy of Medicine, and is now a National Academy of Inventors Fellow. Dr. O'Shea was an NIH Distinguished Lecturer for the 11th Annual Philip S. Chen, Jr., Ph.D., Distinguished Lecture on Innovation and Technology Transfer hosted by the NIH. His talk was on Cytokine Signaling: Genes, Genomes and Drugs.

NAI
NATIONAL ACADEMY OF INVENTORS

Data Quality: A Two-Pronged Approach

Tim Leahy, OTT

Ensuring the quality of NIH Tech Transfer's data is everyone's responsibility. As each IC owns their own data, they are largely responsible for ensuring data quality, however, the Office of Technology Transfer (OTT) helps to monitor for any missing or incorrect data that slips through.

Credit: iStock/champpixs

OTT empowers the ICs to monitor their own data by using the Data Quality Working Group to provide best practices and standard operating procedures to ensure that every IC is aligned in how data is managed. Additionally, OTT provides tools, such as the Critical Field filters, which allow users to quickly identify and update missing or incorrect data. Catching missing data early helps to ensure that monthly and yearly reports can come out on time and accurately.

OTT's internal data quality initiatives include holistically reviewing subsets of newly created Agreements, Technologies, Patents, and Patent Prosecution Activity records for accuracy and completeness. This also applies to Annuities, where data quality is integrated into everyday workflows. Furthermore, OTT regularly consolidates duplicate Contact and Company records and cleans up or fills in fields as needed.

By positioning the ICs as the first line of defense for data quality, and with OTT providing secondary oversight, we have begun to streamline the processing of data for monthly and annual reports. Monthly reporting helps to identify and resolve issues with critical fields promptly. As these processes become more robust, OTT aims to expedite the turnaround time for annual reports, such as the NIST, TAP, and NIH Tech Transfer Annual Report, ensuring data consistency both within the year and across different years. It is crucial that our external reporting aligns with and conveys a cohesive narrative.

The volume of data quality work that OTT conducts each month is very large, exact numbers per record type vary month to month, but an example of a recent month of completed work looked like this:

- Reviewed and cleaned up ~400 Japanese Patent records with missing publication details
- Cleaned up ~2,000 Leidos IC/Division links on Agreement records
- Completed review of agreement hierarchy for CASE/Transactional/CRADA Agreement records and made edits where applicable:
  - ◇ 65,000 CRADA/Transactional links
  - ◇ 5,125 Case/CRADA links
  - ◇ 9,096 License links
- Flagged ~15 Agreement fields for potential removal
- Condensed 342 Contact and 363 Company records

In the future, we hope to automate our monthly and annual reports to the extent possible. By standardizing our data and processes, we will be able to adapt these reports for changes or use them for ad-hoc data requests.

NIH Tech Transfer Website Launches New Awards Page

Richelle Holnick, OTT

The NIH Technology Transfer Community has a long history of being recognized by outside organizations for our outstanding and innovative work. In prior years, there was a document on the NIH Tech Transfer website detailing the awardees, focused on awards from external organizations. We have now turned the document into a dynamic web page. You can search through the awards by keywords, by IC, by category, and by year.

We have created an entry for every award that we are aware of, however, we could use the TTO's help in updating the page with any awards we may not have information on. If you have awards to include on this recognition page, please contact Steve Ferguson and Richelle Holnick. Please provide:

- Awardee Organization
- Name of Award
- Year Won
- Title of Submission
- Description
- Awardees and their respective ICs
- An image (if available)

Credit: iStock/ PCH-Vector

Additionally, if you have any images from accepting an award that we have already included on the page, please send them to Richelle Holnick.

You can view the new webpage here.

Award From	Category	Type	Award	Year	Center(s)	Applications	Description
Licensing Executives Society (LES)	Award	Deals of Distinction Award	Chikungunya Vaccine License Receives LES Deal of Distinction Award	2025	NIAID	Vaccines	The NIH Technology Transfer Program was honored with its record 7th "Deal of Distinction" award at the 2025 Licensing Executives Society Annual Meeting. This award was given to...
Federal Laboratory Consortium (FLC)	National Award	Impact Award	FDA-Approved RSV Vaccine Bsed on NIAID's F Protein Technology	2024	NIAID	Vaccines	THE PROBLEM: Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) is a common virus that typically causes mild, cold-like symptoms-but it can be deadly to older adults, young children and people with chronic heart...

Staying Connected Through the FLC

Whitney Hastings, Fermilab/FLC

I want to start this note with some personal news. After many years working in technology transfer within the Department of Health and Human Services — including roles at the Food and Drug Administration and most recently at the National Institutes of Health — I've begun an exciting new chapter as the Division Head of the Office of Partnership and Technology Transfer at the Department of Energy's Fermilab. Leaving NIH and my colleagues at NCI's Frederick Unit was not easy; this community has been central to my professional life, and NIH will always be important to me.

That said, this transition is not a goodbye to the tech transfer community or to the Federal Laboratory Consortium. In fact, it marks a first for the FLC: I am now the first FLC Chair to serve from a government-owned, contractor-operated (GOCO) lab. I'm excited to bring a fresh perspective to our shared work and to continue strengthening the connections that make federal technology transfer so impactful across agencies.

With that spirit of connection in mind, I'm especially looking forward to the 2026 FLC National Meeting. Registration is expected to open in February, and I hope to see many of you in Seattle as we gather in person again after being virtual last year. As always, the National Meeting will offer opportunities to build upon your skills, meet peers from other labs and agencies, and engage with potential partners from industry and academia. You can also expect thought-provoking sessions, engaging presentations, and meaningful discussions designed to help you stay ahead in a rapidly evolving tech transfer landscape — and keep your skills sharp and your success rate high.

Beyond the National Meeting, there's a lot happening across the FLC right now. The FLC Tech Marketplace highlights licensable technologies and federal facilities from FLC Business, organized around a different theme each month. Find the Tech Marketplace on the FLC website and in the biweekly Digest newsletter, and they're a great way to surface opportunities and see what's happening across the federal innovation ecosystem.

THE TRANSFER FILES
Inside the World of Federal Innovation

I'm also excited to share that Season 3 of *The Transfer Files* podcast launches in March. Stay tuned, subscribe so you don't miss the first episode drop, and consider being a guest. There are so many great stories and lessons within the NIH tech transfer community that deserve a broader audience. If you're interested, contact Andrea Nelson at anelson@federallabs.org.

The FLC Learning Center has also been refreshed with a new look and improved navigation. It's now easier than ever to find courses, webinars, and materials tailored to your career path, experience level, and role. If you haven't explored the Learning Center recently, I encourage you to take another look.

Looking ahead, the Call for Nominations for FLC elected positions will open in February. This year, the national position up for nomination is Member at Large, along with six regional leadership roles: Regional Coordinators and Deputy Regional Coordinators for the Far West, Mid-Atlantic, and Midwest regions. These roles are a meaningful way to contribute to the FLC and help shape its direction. Look for more information online and in your inbox.

Finally, the 2024 FLC Annual Report is now available online. I hope you'll take some time to review it — it's a powerful snapshot of the collective impact of federal technology transfer and the incredible work being done across agencies, including NIH.

Even as my role and agency affiliation have changed, my commitment to supporting NIH technology transfer professionals and the broader FLC community remains the same. I hope you'll continue to engage, share your ideas, and make full use of the resources, connections, and opportunities the FLC offers. I look forward to staying connected and working together in this next chapter.

Eric Green Honored as Fierce 50 Innovation Honoree

Richelle Holnick, OTT

Eric Green, M.D., Ph.D., has been awarded by Fierce Pharma as a Fierce 50 Innovation Honoree. The Fierce 50 is designed to honor the 50 most influential leaders and organizations shaping the future of biopharma, healthcare, and life sciences. The Fierce editorial team choses honorees who exemplify excellence, vision, and impact-setting new standards for innovation, advancing equity, and driving progress for patients worldwide. Fierce breaks down the honorees across the categories of leadership, breakthrough, health equity, innovation, and social impact.

Dr. Eric Green

Dr. Eric Green served as the director of NHGRI from 2009 through 2025 and had been with the Institute since 1997. Prior to that, he played an integral role in the Human Genome Project. Green was at the forefront of efforts to map, sequence, and understand mammalian genomes. He was heavily involved in the Human Genome Project from start to finish, which spawned a program in comparative genomics that provided important insights about genome structure, function, and evolution. His laboratory identified and characterized several human disease genes, including those implicated in certain forms of hereditary deafness, vascular disease, and peripheral neuropathy.

Dr. Green has been highly innovative in the field of genomics. The word “genomics” had only just begun being used when he graduated in 1987. When he took over as Director of NHGRI in 2009, the Institute was the major funder of genomics. However, NHGRI quickly became a very small funder, dollar-wise as most other NIH Institutes began funding genomics in their research area, thanks to the evangelizing of genomics that Green and his NHGRI colleagues were doing. The other Institutes were fitting in genomics research into their field of expertise, from heart disease to lung to disease to cancer and so on.

We are glad to see Dr. Green be recognized as the innovative pioneer that he is. His contributions to NIH were immeasurable, and we wish him luck on his next endeavor!

In Memoriam – Richard Leshuk

As a community, we are saddened to hear of the passing of Richard Leshuk in December 2025.

Many of us remember him well as the lead instructor or guest speaker for many years for the TECH 513 "Introduction to Technology Transfer" series of courses held originally at the USDA Graduate School and then later at both OTT and the NIH campus. Originally working as an IBM engineer, he was employed in their product development laboratories in both line and product management functions. Richard's work at IBM largely focused primarily on manufacturing technology and engineering economics for which he received multiple patents. His academic background included both bachelor's and master's degrees in industrial engineering from Purdue and the University of Michigan, respectively, as well as holding both Registered Professional Engineer and Certified Manufacturing Engineer qualifications. Following Richard's career at IBM, he took an interest in technology transfer and became a key figure in the local tech transfer community. He was active in the Inventors Network of the Capital Area while also serving as the Education Chair for the Technology Transfer Society – DC Chapter (T2SDC). His passion for these interests eventually made him the backbone of these organizations.

Richard Leshuk

We will miss his many contributions to our community and extend our condolences to his family.

New Handbook on the Commercialization of Intellectual Property and Invention Now Available

Steve Ferguson, OTT

The US Department of Commerce has published a new Technology Transfer Handbook as a policy primer for the commercialization of intellectual property and invention. You can access a free copy of this handbook here: Technology Transfer Handbook: A Policy Primer for the Commercialization of Intellectual Property and Invention

Join the Licensing Executives Society at No Cost

Steve Ferguson, OTT

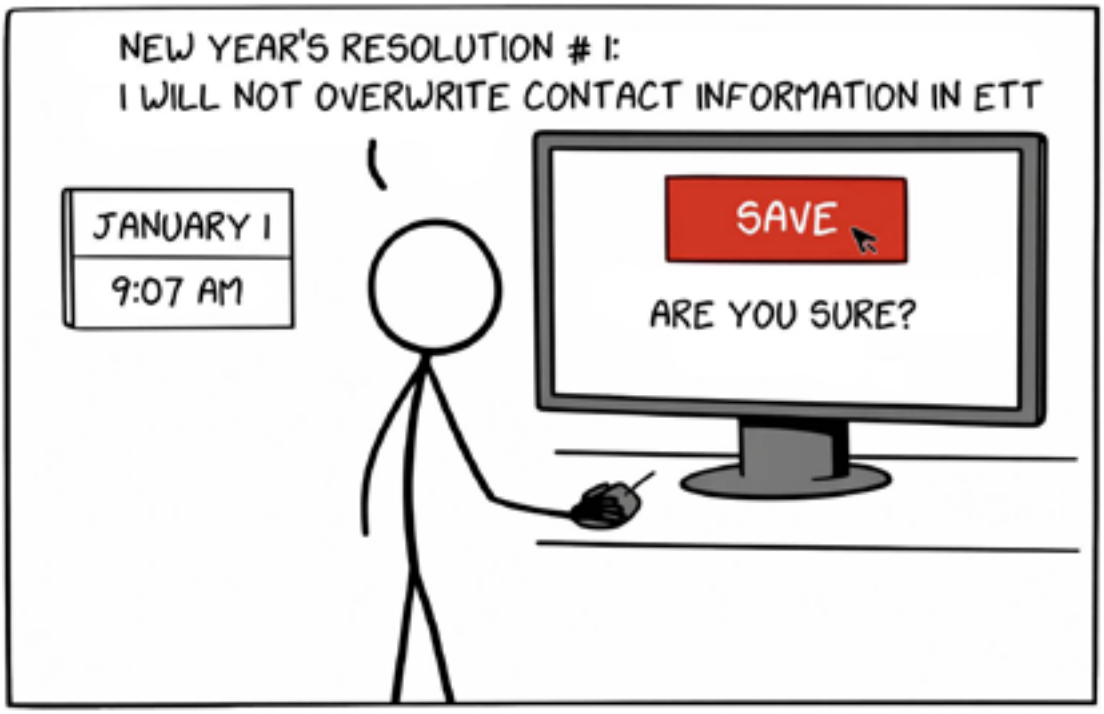
The NIH Institutional Membership in the Licensing Executives Society (LES) is now active and is available for you to join at no additional cost! This is a trial institutional membership that initially will run through May 11, 2026.

There are lots of excellent reasons for you to take advantage of LES membership, including receiving the results of the new life sciences royalty rate survey, access to the articles in les Nouvelles, and getting member discounted rates (often free) for various licensing-related training programs, workshops and conferences. As a bonus, there is also a very active local LES chapter here in DC.

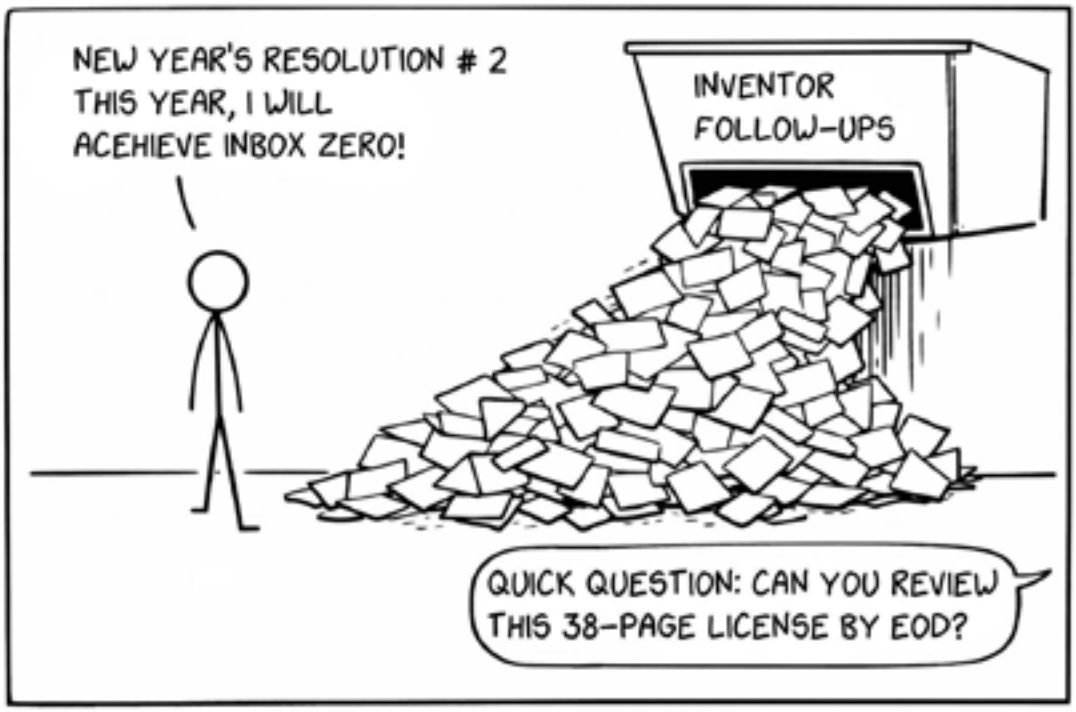
So far, 65 people have joined the LES with this new Institutional Membership! To register now as a new LES member, please click this link and follow the provided instructions. If you experience any difficulties with registration, please let Steve Ferguson know.

TechToons

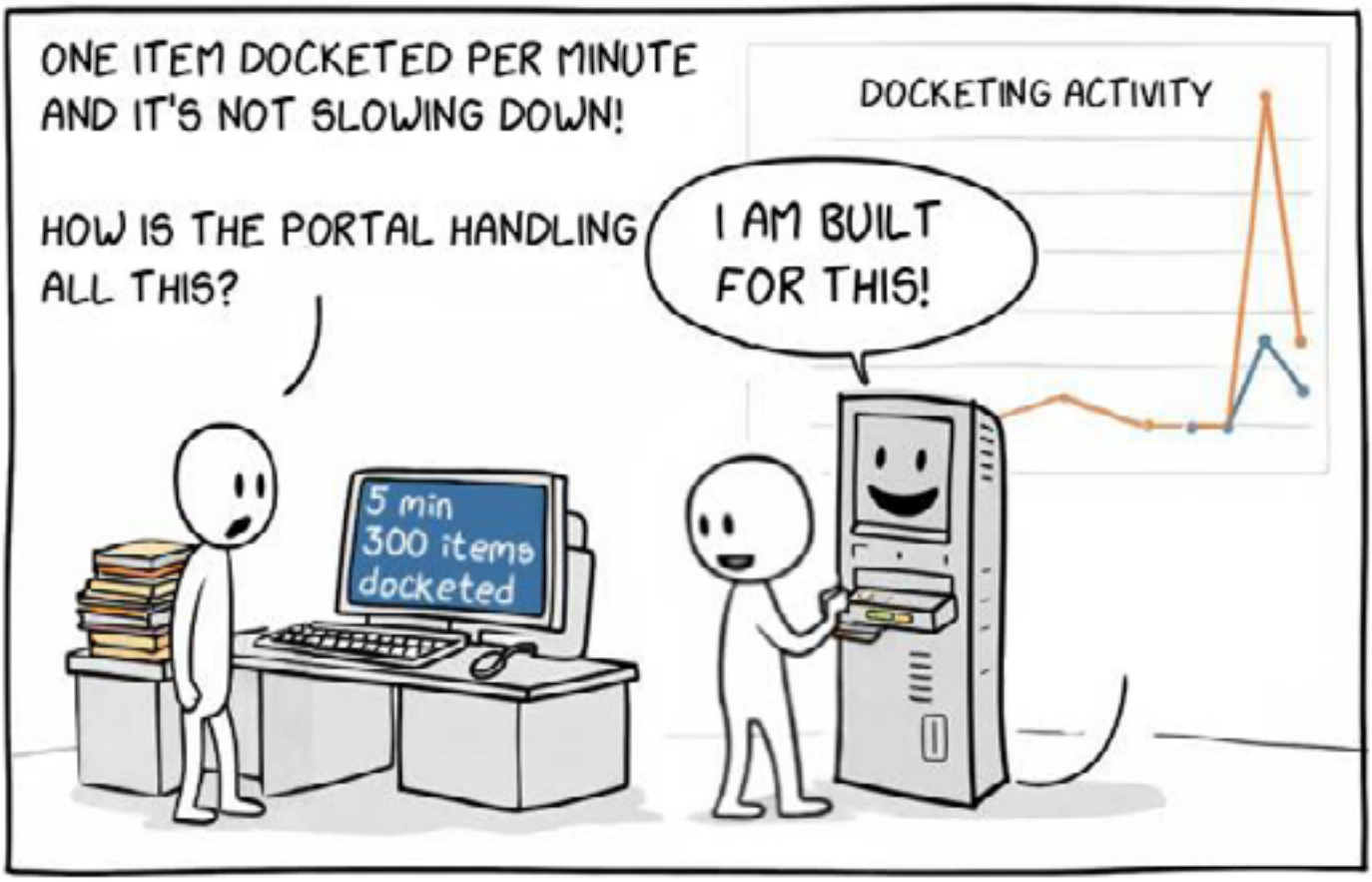
Wayne Pereanu, OTT



CLICK.



SOMETIMES, CONFIDENCE IS INVERSELY PROPORTIONALTO VISIBILITY



WHEN THE LAW FIRM PORTAL TURNED ON AGAIN DURING THE SHUTDOWN

Comings & Goings

Fuki Mathaudhu has moved from the NIH Office of Technology Transfer to the NIAID Technology Transfer and Intellectual Property Office (TTIPO). She has a background in patent prosecution, IP agreements, and licensing across corporate, legal, and federal sectors. Previously, she worked at TTIPO as a patent paralegal contractor for two years and spent about ten years as an in-house IP Paralegal at W. R. Grace, a Maryland-based chemical company. During her tenure at OTT she contributed to the Benchmark Project as a member of the Licensing Compliance and Administration team. Fuki is excited to continue collaborating across the NIH Technology Transfer community in her current role at TTIPO.

Theodoric (Ted) Mattes will be departing NIAID TTIPO at the end of January. Ted joined TTIPO as a ORISE Fellow in 2019 and became a full-time Technology Transfer and Patent Specialist in 2021, serving in Branch C. He will be joining Oakland University in Rochester, Michigan, as a Research Development and Technology Commercialization Officer, where his scientific training and technology transfer expertise will continue to serve the research enterprise. He will miss his colleagues in the Federal T2 environment and wishes you all the best.

Darex Vera Rodriguez has joined the NCI Technology Transfer Center's Technology Analysis and Marketing Unit (TAMU). He earned his PhD in Biochemistry and Biophysics along with a micro-credential in Regulatory Affairs from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC). During his time at UNC, Darex worked as a technology commercialization consultant for a startup developing a medical device aimed at improving treatment outcomes for individuals with Parkinson's disease. Through this experience, Darex discovered his passion for technology transfer and decided to leverage his scientific and business skills to pursue a career in this field.