

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

Intellectual Property Committee Meeting

December 18, 2013, 12:00-1:00p.m.

325 Burruss Hall

FULL COMMITTEE

The Intellectual Property Committee (IPC) met on December 18, 2013.

The following members were present: Anthony Berlenbach, Justin Barone, Steve Capaldo, Laurie Coble, Bill Knocke (chair), Barbara Lockee, Ken Miller, Beth Tranter, and Bob Walters. Wendy Vaughn attended and recorded the minutes.

Those members not in attendance: Robert Broadwater, Mark Coburn, Willard Eyestone, Robert Harvey, Kay Heidbreder, Gail McMillan, Joe Merola, Kristen Mittelman, and Peggy Quesenberry.

Call to Order

Bill Knocke called the meeting to order at 12:05p.m. Introductions were made around the table.

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes for the September 18, 2013 meeting. The minutes were unanimously approved.

New Business

Bill Knocke opened the meeting with a few comments for the committee. At the last meeting there was discussion regarding the need for VT faculty who bring visiting scholars to campus to share with those visitors aspects of the VT IP policy that would relate to their work while at VT. This will help minimize potentially difficult situations in the future related to potential IP generated while such visitors are here. Also, VT faculty who are going on Research-Study Leave need to be appropriately aware of the VT IP policy and how it pertains to their research work done at other institutions since VT faculty may at times be asked to sign documentation related to IP as part of an agreement to work at that institution or use their facilities. In an attempt to partially address this issue Bill reported that he sent a memo to Bob Walters (OVPR), Hal Irvin (Human Resources) and Jack Finney (Provost's Office), to alert them to these IP-related issues; further, Bill suggested that information on this topic be included in the Research-Study Leave approval letters sent to faculty. Bill also reported on his efforts to review IP policy information from key VA institutions (specifically UVA and VCU). Bill will share this information at a future IP committee meeting.

Guest Speaker, Beth Tranter

Beth Tranter spoke to the committee regarding the work of the Innovation Ecosystem Review Committee (IERC). A copy of the review committee's final report to VP Bob Walters was distributed to the IP committee prior to today's meeting. As stated in the charge to the IERC from VP Bob Walters the goal of the IERC was to address the innovative ecosystem at VT as it pertains to the academic environment, partnerships, and supporting structures within the university and community engagement

to translate the impact of university-based research to the larger community. The IERC was also asked to perform an inventory of university programs and resources that relate to the innovation ecosystem (information on this inventory is included in the appendices of the IERC report). Through its work the IERC interviewed a large number of key university and affiliated constituents, and also talked with people from industry, individuals who work with IP for a living, and various other public and private partnerships.

The IERC reviewed best practices from peer institutions in a variety of areas, including such things as benchmarking, technology transfer offices, infrastructure, and aspects of administrative organization within the institutions that would support engagement with industry. Some key questions that came up in the discussions and information gathering efforts related to the general VT faculty experience. For example, if VT wishes to be known for innovation and entrepreneurship, what should the university do to encourage faculty to engage in these activities and at what point during their career.

Another key area of IERC focus related to the undergraduate and graduate student experience at VT. Aspects of the report addressed what types of policies and support structures would be necessary to produce an environment for students and faculty that fostered real innovation and entrepreneurial activities. The IERC also reviewed the means within VT to achieve a comprehensive communication plan that would enhance the university's ability to best present ongoing activities in this realm to our constituents within and external to VT.

Identified Needs

The IERC concluded that biggest need is a coordinated point of view and a message on where VT wishes to go with respect to the fostering of a strong innovation ecosystem. Institutional goals and priorities for institutional transfer should be visible, comprehensive and transparent so that people can understand the goals and how to access and function within the ecosystem.

The IERC also felt that VT needed to improve its ability to undertake research-focused partnerships with industry, and to strengthen and build better and more comprehensive relationships with industrial sponsors. Strategic efforts to build upon the many VT alumni who hold key leadership positions in various industries were also identified as an area for increased focus. Beth also mentioned that certain metrics are being measured or captured to better assess impact through technology transfer. Through the Association of Public and Land Grant Universities, some new metrics were developed and were able to collect alumni data on job placement, and were able to code these and see patterns. Beth also spent time reviewing aspects of the IERC recommendations that would ultimately intersect with the workings of the IP committee since the university's policies on IP would have such a direct bearing on relationships with current and future industrial sponsors of research at VT.

Bob Walters followed up Beth's presentation by providing a brief summary of how the IERC members were selected as well as further elaboration on certain of the items presented by Beth.

Discussion among IP committee members followed the comments by Beth and Bob. Certain representative points from the discussion included:

1. There is a need to further address the IP aspects associated with the generation of software by faculty and students at VT.
2. While somewhat peripheral to the topic there was discussion about the need for policies and procedures that address the topic of funding research at VT through "crowd funding"

means. Beth concurred that the issue of crowd funding is coming to her attention on a weekly basis now.

3. Further consideration of the time frame involved with respect to the release of IP to the faculty or student inventor when the university concludes (through VTIP) that it does not have an interest in further development of the IP.
4. In regards to the pursuit of articulation agreements with either established companies or smaller start-ups, there was a feeling among some IP committee members that VT has far more solutions available for working with larger, established companies but not as many for dealing sometimes with the unique aspects of start-ups.
5. There is a continued need for training programs for VT faculty and students in the types of IP that can be patented and how to best protect the IP going forward.

Announcements

Bill Knocke inquired from the committee a procedural question that recently came to light regarding the handling VTIP IP disclosures. For many years this disclosure information was relayed to IP committee members in a batch email transmission. The committee decided that this material can now be placed on the IP committee Scholar site for those wishing to view the information.

The January IPC meeting will be cancelled, and the next regularly scheduled meeting will be held on February 19th, 12-1p.m. in 325 Burruss Hall.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:00p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Wendy Vaughn
OVPR Support