HEALTH AFFAIRS, RESEARCH, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

October 23, 2024

Minutes

The meeting was called to order at 8:31 a.m. by Governor Busuito in the Student Center Ballroom. President Espy commented on the excitement this new committee has raised, and spoke briefly about its areas of concentration. The committee will focus on the importance of research and innovation at Wayne State University, and will complete its work by reviewing and discussing faculty research, innovation, and economic activities. Governor Busuito thanked President Espy, expressed his own enthusiasm for the work that the committee is about to undertake, and asked the Secretary to call the roll.

Secretary Miller called the roll. A quorum was present.

Committee Members Present: Governors Busuito, Gaffney, Kumar and Stancato; Stephen Chrisomalis, Faculty Alternate Representative

Committee Members Absent: Governor Land, Noreen Rossi, Faculty Representative; Mazim Alam, Student Representative, and Vansh Bhardwaj, Student Alternate Representative

Also Present: Governor Atkinson, Barnhill, and Kelly (virtual), President Espy, Provost Clabo, Vice Presidents Gielczyk, Lindsey, Obasi, Poterala, Ripple, and Schweitzer, Chief of Staff Smiley, Senior Vice Provosts Baltes and Ezzeddine, Vice Provosts Cotton, Ellis, and Gardner, Interim Vice Provost Padgett, Acting Vice President Thompson, Associate Vice Presidents Davenport and Hafner, Assistant Vice President Phillips, Director Wallace, and Secretary Miller

UNIVERSITY CONTRACT TO LICENSE TECHNOLOGY TO A COMPANY OWNED BY A SCHOOL OF MEDICINE FACULTY MEMBER

The first order of business was a general discussion of university licensing contracts to companies where there is some level of ownership by a WSU faculty member (COI contracts), and then discussion turned to details of a more specific contract that the Board will consider at its meeting on October 24th, to license technology to a company owned by a school of medicine faculty member. Taunya Phillips, Assistant Vice President for Technology Commercialization, Division of Research and Innovation, was introduced and began with an overview of how technology commercialization bridges research discoveries and the commercial market. She detailed the support the university provides to researchers working in this area, including identifying, protecting, marketing, and

licensing intellectual property, as well as helping with patent processes, market identification, funding, and commercialization plans.

Ms. Phillips then described the university's royalty distribution policy, which shares revenue from license agreements with the inventor, their department, and the university, after recovering patent expenses. As an example of how this has worked, Ms. Phillips highlighted the success story of LUMIGEN, a company formed by Dr. Paul Schaap, a former professor in the Department of Chemistry. The company was acquired for $185 million and led to a significant donation to the university.

At its meeting on October 24th, the Board will consider a new COI contract with WSU School of Medicine faculty member, Dr. Mike Hüttemann. His company, Mitovation, has developed, jointly with the University of Michigan, a non-invasive medical device technology that uses light to treat reperfusion and inflammation injuries. AVP Phillips advised that Wayne State University retains ownership of the technology, jointly with the University of Michigan, while Mitovation has exclusive worldwide rights to commercialize it. She then introduced Dr. Hüttemann to discuss his research and provide further background for its commercialization, and the benefits it will provide.

Dr. Hüttemann explained that the technology is a non-invasive medical device that uses light to treat reperfusion and inflammation injuries, particularly beneficial for heart attacks, strokes, and oxygen deprivation-related brain damage. Dr. Hüttemann' s journey began in 2006 with a high-risk, high-impact grant, leading to the discovery of specific wavelengths of infrared light that can slow down mitochondria and reduce cell damage during stress conditions like strokes or heart attacks. Despite initial skepticism, Dr. Hüttemann secured significant funding, including $3 million from the Department of Defense and over $25 million from NIH and DOD, after the first patent was published. The developed technology includes wave guide silicon patches that adhere to the skin, enhancing light penetration into the brain, with a cap designed for brain applications. The team is awaiting FDA approval for their medical device, with plans to start recruiting patients early next year if everything goes well.

Dr. Hüttemann responded to a number of questions from committee members about how this technology could be used in various circumstances and conditions, and the timing of its release. There was extensive enthusiasm expressed for this technology and how it will enhance medical treatments in the future.

WAYNE OPEN

Next, Vice President of Economic Development Ned Staebler provided an overview on Wayne OPEN. Wayne OPEN is an initiative aimed at improving both internal and external connections by making university resources more accessible and fostering partnerships. The initiative focuses on several key areas. In the area of concierge and customer service, the goal is to provide a service that helps connect people internally and externally, ensuring that inquiries are responded to within 24 hours during business hours. The initiative has set various goals and metrics, including engaging faculty members,

identifying funding concepts, and forming strategic partnerships. The aim is to measure success through metrics such as the number of solicitations, cross-campus coalitions, and internship programs. A new website has been developed with a focus on user-centered design. Its goal is to simplify access to university resources by providing clear, jargon-free navigation. The website includes a CRM system to ensure timely responses to inquiries.

The university also aims to better integrate into the innovation ecosystem and strengthen connections with industry. This includes being the first university partner at New Lab and leveraging resources to support innovation. Wayne OPEN supports entrepreneurs and innovators in a variety of ways, including providing resources, consultations, and access to funding like the Business Accelerator. One such program, the Mobility Accelerator Innovation Network (MAIN) received a large federal grant from the Building Back Better Regional Challenge, amounting to around $50 million. TechTown operates the early-stage piece of this network, with about $14 million, involving partners like U of M Tech Transfer, Invest Detroit, and Centropolis at Lawrence Tech. Wayne State also plans to introduce a faculty in residence program to expose faculty research to industry needs and challenges.

VP Staebler also discussed the lack of funding in the state Smart Zone and early-stage innovation network, where a significant portion of funds going to Ann Arbor and none to Detroit. Efforts are being made to address this imbalance and level the playing field. Vice President Stabler closed his presentation talking about a memorandum of understanding that Wayne State has signed with Michigan Central, identifying 29 specific projects for collaboration. These projects include the Michigan Mobility Fellowship Program, upskilling programs, and efforts to address funding disparities in the innovation economy. The partnership with Michigan Central also focuses on developing nontraditional learning opportunities and upskilling programs to meet the needs of the workforce in emerging technologies.

A question was raised on talking points that could be provided to those interested in patent development; AVP Phillips will provide some information on that process.

Much enthusiasm was expressed for the MOU with Michigan Central and excitement for WSU as Michigan Central's sole university partner.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:21 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Julie Miller,
Secretary to the Board of Governors