Intellectual Property Fundamentals
And a Story...
University of Memphis
April 24, 2014
Introduction

What is Intellectual Property?
How do I know if I’m inventing something?
Who owns my invention?
What is disclosure?
Why do I need to disclose my invention?
And whatever else you want to ask...
Our story...

Dr. Sara Smith and her grad student Sanjay Gupta
Our story...

NSF grant

results are pretty interesting.
Our story...

new polymer that should make tires shinier

Makes cars more visible at night
Our story...

 publish on-line two weeks from today
Our story...

I haven’t gotten around to telling you
Our story...

everyone tells me we have a year to file a patent application
Our story...

University of Illinois collaborator
Our story...

collaborator at Illinois is great at one of the assays
Our story...

What do I need to do?
Lesson 1

We don’t have that year that everyone talks about
Our story...

I have time between classes tomorrow morning.
Our story...

I’ll send our standard invention disclosure form.
Our story...

but we can talk about it tomorrow.
Our story...

modified an existing compound

Didn’t think it would work...
Our story...

Really surprising
Our story...

I have to be able to keep doing research in this area...
A longer lesson:
What is Intellectual Property?
What is Intellectual Property?

Property rights that protect creations of the Mind
Types of Intellectual Property

Patents

Copyright

Trademark

Trade Secret
Patents
Government granted property right

Right to exclude others

Expires 20 years from filing

Country - Specific
Some new knowledge has intrinsic value

\[ F = MA \]
And can’t be patented

\[ F = MA \]
And some can be

Aspirin, patented from 1900 - 1917
For some, the Supreme Court will tell us...

Software and Business Methods

Alice Corp vs CLS Bank
Patent Requirements

Novelty
Usefulness
Non-Obviousness
Enablement
Novelty

Was the invention known or published or used anywhere?

ONLY the U.S. has a 1 year grace period on publication (Repeat of Lesson 1)
Usefulness

Does it have a specific and credible utility?
Non-Obvious

To a person who knows the field (“Skilled in the Art”)
Non-Obvious

The most difficult to anticipate.

Proxy questions:

Creative?

Contrary to the literature?

Student thought it would work, but Professor laughed / frowned?
Can someone use the invention based on the written description?
Shiny Tire Polymer

Novel?

Publication is still 2 weeks away

No direct hits on preliminary structure search
Shiny Tire Polymer

• Useful?

Shiny Tires!
More seriously: Safer cars.
Shiny Tire Polymer

Non-Obvious?

“The chemical modification usually disrupt structure and so should not make things reflect light in a planar way.”
Shiny Tire Polymer

Enabled?

Makes a substitute tire material shiny

But,

Would it work at scale in real tires?
Shiny Tire Polymer: Patentable?

Novelty? -- potentially

Usefulness? -- Yes

Non-Obviousness? - ? But some reasons to think so

Enabled? -- Preliminary
Shiny Tire Polymer Patent

BUT,

Would it be enforceable?
BUT, 

Would it be enforceable?

Smoking gun: New chemical structure would be found in tires
Shiny Tire Method Patent

Would it be enforceable?

Much harder.

No smoking gun (no new polymer)

Can’t know what happens inside BigCo.
Maintaining Patentability

- Public disclosure can include:
  - Publication in open literature
  - Poster sessions and abstracts (postings to the web)
  - Presentations to an open forum (thesis defense)
  - Personal communications without a confidentiality agreement
  - Catalogues and libraries
Our story...

Would it be less expensive to copyright the formula for the polymer?
Copyright

Government granted right
Exclude others from Copying
Expires 70 years after authors’ death
Granted on completion of work
Our story...

Copyright would not provide protection here.
This seems like a lot of work.
Why should I disclose this to the university?
Some new knowledge needs investment
But, without Exclusivity Investing in Product Dev. No
Before 1980

“We found 28,000 government funded inventions gathering dust on agency shelves...
Before 1980

...with not a single drug commercialized when the government owned the patent.”—Sen. Birch Bayh
The Bayh-Dole Act (P.L. 96-517, 1980)
Allowed Universities to offer

Exclusivity
The right to own federally funded IP and license it exclusively has resulted in many new products from university research...

The THM Rapid Response System
Fully Automated On-line Process Monitoring for THMs

- Patented sample introduction process
- Easily switch between on-line and grab samples
- No reagents, hazardous or otherwise
- Uses inexpensive nitrogen, not helium
- Optimize your treatment on THMs, not TOC:

*Why spend money to remove organics that do not become THMs?*
Bayh-Dole Act

Universities may own technologies funded by Federal agencies

Gave industry a mechanism to generate return on investment for developing and marketing university technologies
Bayh-Dole Act

Academic research is critical to the nation’s economic competitiveness

Strong incentive for industry-university research collaborations and industrial investment
Benefits of Technology Transfer

Encourages industrial partnerships
Path to rewarding jobs for graduate students
Royalty income (shared with inventors)
Bring your discoveries to market
From Lab to Market

Further development/testing

Commercial partner with $$$

Protected intellectual property & effective technology transfer services
Let’s Talk about some:
So, you have an idea, a new discovery
Now What?

Call Kevin Boggs, X1712
kpboggs@memphis.edu

Or Tammy Alexander X1589
tlxander@memphis.edu
U of M owns your invention if it was:
Developed in the course of a project sponsored by U of M, or,
Developed with the significant use of U of M’s facilities, services, or equipment, or,
Developed in the course of a project arranged, administered or controlled by the U of M and sponsored by organizations external to U of M

http://policies.memphis.edu/UM1607.htm
Our story...
The invention was made with federal funds and with U of M facilities. Sanjay Gupta was a paid GA.

But, what about University of Illinois?
Our story...

University of Illinois researcher provided only data.

They are probably not inventors.
What/When to Disclose

**WHAT:** Disclose novel ideas, discoveries, inventions, materials that are timely and useful to the marketplace.

**WHEN:** Disclose with sufficient notice before any publication *(prior to submission if possible)* or enabling public disclosure.

Don’t know if you should disclose? *Please call us.*
Disclosing an Invention

Request an invention disclosure form from Tammy.

On the form, describe in detail the different aspects of your invention.

Submitting the form initiates your interaction with OTT, but does not provide patent protection.

- Invention Disclosure Submission ≠ Patent Filing
Disclosing an Invention

Review of invention disclosure form: Tammy Alexander
The U of M Process: Disclosing your idea

**Researcher Submits Disclosure**
- OTT receives and logs submission
- OTT representative meets with researcher

**OTT Conducts Research**
- Determine patentability
- Determine market potential

**Decision Point**
- Exert, apply for patent, seek corporate partners; or,
- Waive rights, pass on IP rights to researcher
Licensing and revenue distribution

- Identify Commercial Partner and Agree on License Agreement
- Monitor Product Development
- Distribute Royalties
  At least 40% of net revenue to inventors
Patent Application Process

Patent attorney with expertise in industrial polymers writes a draft.
Sara and Sanjay review, answer questions, and edit as needed.
Patent Application Process

Patent attorney files the application.

We can start marketing it.
How We Market Technologies

• Promotional materials for individual technologies

• Contacts with local and international businesses and entrepreneurs (including yours!)

• Technology Showcases and Expos
Our story...

Promotional materials for individual technologies

A tire additive that makes tires more visible and cars safer!

Can be added to existing mfg. process

Several levels of reflection can be offered.
Goodyear is interested!

A key first question: will they develop and sell it, or do they want to keep it from competing?
Thank you

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