



## AUTM Board of Directors 2020 Candidate Form



### **Jacob Johnson, MS**

Founder  
innovosource

#### **Candidate Biography**

I have been a proud member of AUTM (14 years) and the university technology commercialization community for my entire career through various university, government, entrepreneurial, and volunteer endeavors. Through these experiences, I have grown a passion for what we do and a respect for the people that do it.

Currently, my firm, innovosource, focuses on working with university partners, high-tech companies, and investors to identify promising future technologies/startups and create innovation partnerships. To support this effort and community-building, innovosource regularly publishes reports and holds workshops on university POC, startup, and venture gap funds/accelerators (Mind the Gap) and university-industry collaboration approaches.

Prior to innovosource, I was a consultant to the DARPA Microsystems Technology Office, and a founding member of three, technology/startup commercialization, economic development and corporate relations units at the University of Minnesota.

I enjoy spending time with my wife and 1.5 yr old daughter, traveling, cooking, and chipping away at my never-ending home remodel projects.

I hold degrees in Biology and Business, and a M.S. in Management of Technology

## Candidate Q&A

### **Why do you want to be on the AUTM Board of Directors and what motivates you to join the AUTM Board of Directors?**

Every day, we each have the honor to play a pivotal role in the coolest, most complex, and rapidly evolving professional spaces in the world---to advance innovation from research institutions, through commercial, entrepreneurial, and investment partnerships, to benefit society.

Our responsibility is to constantly improve and to embrace a holistic view of what it means to be a tech transfer professional. This includes a broader definition of this profession beyond licensing/protecting IP to include, startup acceleration, campus engagement, innovation ecosystem development, and industry/investor relations. AUTM remains the core community of practice to support this evolution. The Board sets the trajectory of the community.

Through my experiences, both as a member of various university commercialization units, and as an entrepreneur who advocates for best practices and works with universities to create industrial/investor partnerships, I will bring a unique perspective to Board as AUTM grows to effectively support/represent our ever-evolving membership.

### **Have you served in a volunteer leadership role for other organizations? If so, please explain.**

Board Member, Commission on Economic and Community Engagement (CECE), Association of Public Landgrant Universities (APLU): A leadership group that advocates for economic engagement models and support the Innovation and Economic Prosperity (IEP) University Program

Board Member, Midwest Research University Network (MRUN) : A consortium of midwest-based research institutions that shares best practices directed and commercialization and startup development and investment partnerships

Founding Board Member, Network of Academic Corporate Relations Officers (NACRO): A professional community of corporate relations officers that develops industrial partnership approaches

### **What special experience do you have that you feel will benefit AUTM and its members? What might distinguish you from other candidates?**

I have spent my career both inside (as a member of university tech transfer/corporate relations/economic development units) and outside of the university as the founder of innovosource, working as an external partner to support commercialization objectives.

Specific experiences that will support my perspectives on the Board, include:

- Founding member of three different commercialization focused units at the University of Minnesota, including one of the first "front door"/holistic offices for on-campus corporate innovation engagement
- Creation of the Pardon the Disruption process that has supported R&D teams at corporations, like 3M and Medtronic, to identify, fund, and partner with university innovation assets
- Six years as a visiting professor to teach undergraduate students innovation management, venture pitching, tech transfer, and customer adoption

### **What do you see as the major strategic issues facing technology transfer today?**

I see three issues as challenges for the tech transfer profession are 1) being undervalued relative to our contribution, 2) missed opportunity, and 3) managing our positioning on campus

1) We have the coolest, most complex, and rapidly evolving professions...that, if we are being honest with ourselves, most people have never heard of...We need to continue to talk about what we do and demonstrate/define our role(s) in the early-stage innovation process. This includes defining impact, setting expectations, both on our campuses and to the larger innovation community

2) The appetite for early-stage partnership is growing and can be seen through the launch of corporate open innovation, private accelerators, venture funds, and other investment and partnering models. We will regret it if we don't take the lead in figuring out how to set ourselves up for success in this ecosystem.

3) Changes in patenting strategy, globalization of intellectual property, and protection of our assets are all issues facing our profession and universities. As these issues enter more regular public discussion, our offices need to remain the leaders on campus in setting policies, maintaining our relationships with inventors, and securing our position as the go-to trusted resource to those that have/or don't yet know they have an interest in commercializing their work.

### **What challenges does AUTM face that you think could be addressed by strategic discussion at the Board level?**

-Proactive partnering strategies: AUTM has made great strides in bringing commercial and investment partners into the tent. We need to continue this momentum. One area of great interest to me is increasing engagement of entrepreneurs and startup mentors in our community.

-Managing support of evolving programming/skill sets will still remaining true to the core focus of technology transfer, IP management, licensing and commercialization.

-Alternative participation/membership/revenue structures to allow for additional participation from universities/partners of all sizes, budgets

-Distinguishing itself from other professional organizations, partnering where possible

**How do the terms (both responsibilities and time commitment) of the position fit within your other responsibilities?**

I view active participation in the community as a natural extension of professional enhancement and is core to what I do day-to-day. I have flexibility to make the necessary commitment.

**How has AUTM benefitted you in your work and career?**

AUTM was the first community that I joined. It provided me a place to form my perspectives, and a platform to bring those ideas to life with other passionate practitioners. AUTM brings together the experience of where we have been with the energy to advance this living-breathing and evolving knowledge management system

**Is there anything else you would like AUTM members to know about you before they vote?**

I'd be honored to represent you and will always have an open-door policy to hear and discuss your thoughts and ideas.