



AUTM Board of Directors 2020 Candidate Form



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Office of Innovation and Tech
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Candidate Biography

My work and achievements have taken me from engineering (where I co-founded and built a company from two to 14 employees) to university technology management in both university and research foundation settings. I currently manage the Louisiana State University A&M (LSU) Office of Innovation & Technology Commercialization (ITC). In my role at LSU, I supervise all intellectual property staff, manage all intellectual property, licensing, commercialization activities, material transfer agreements, cooperative endeavor agreements, and non-disclosure agreements for LSU. Further, I work with faculty, graduate students, and the community to maintain strong relationships to help build the entrepreneurial ecosystem around technology-based startups.

I have developed, grown, and re-branded LSU ITC into a strong asset for the University and the region. Under my guidance, LSU has seen a significant increase in invention disclosures (31 disclosures in 2013 to 76 disclosures in 2019), number of patents applications filed (15 in 2013 to 43 in 2017), number of licenses and options executed (2 in 2013 to 21 in 2017), and the four year startup totals (2 between 2010 and 2013 to 9 between 2014 and 2017) all with minimal change in total operating budget. Additionally, I helped establish and launch the Leveraging Innovation for Technology Transfer (LIFT2) - an LSU established proof-of-concept program started in 2014, the National Science Foundation I-Corps Site Program at LSU for which I am the Principal Investigator, and in 2015 I was nominated, selected, and awarded the designation as one of the Baton Rouge Business Report Forty under 40.

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?

I am excited to serve on the AUTM Board of Directors as AUTM (and the technology transfer profession) is at a unique place in its growth and development. I have spent the last 45 days discussing and meeting with many members of the AUTM community to determine what would be best for AUTM (from the perspective of its members). Many of the comments and ideas identified below come from you, the members of AUTM. Technology transfer, as a profession, is nearing a valuable 35-40 year history. Developing and growing talent in individuals by strengthening the role that professional development plays in AUTM is critical at this point as the organization's membership faces increasingly complex challenges. More than ever, universities and research institutes across the world are facing unique challenges in creating viable approaches to commercialization of innovation and intellectual property. Regional ecosystems are changing as local and state governments recognize the benefits of technology-based economic development. As a leading professional organization for technology managers, AUTM should take a leadership role in training and guiding individuals as they undertake these efforts. AUTM has the history and knowledge to identify best practices and to help its members find new and innovative means to create successful technology commercialization activities. My interest in joining the board is to provide guidance and insight into the value and benefit of nurturing the role of technology transfer as a profession, to guide the important role that professional development and education plays in our profession, to build meaningful collaborations that will support the professional development of AUTM members, and to serve its members.

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

Yes, I have served in many different capacities as a volunteer leader in other organizations. A few of these are listed here:

I serve as a member of the Louisiana Business & Technology Center (LBTC) Advisory Board which meets regularly to help guide and direct the efforts of the LBTC.

I am heavily involved with the University Industry Demonstration Partnership (UIDP) where I have worked on projects to help link Universities and National Laboratories, hosting events in Baton Rouge Louisiana, and strengthen ties between industry and universities.

I am active with the Boy Scouts of America where I have served as a Charter Organization Representative, Troop Committee Chair, Scout Master, Venturing Advisor, Crew Advisor, Troop Advisor, Den Leader, and Assistant Den Leader.

I work closely with the Baton Rouge Area Chamber (BRAC) to help support the regional economic development efforts in Baton Rouge. I am a member of the Tech Sector Working Group and I have been one of BRAC's monthly luncheon speakers.

I have served in many capacities with my church, most recent being the role of volunteer

coordinator for the Baton Rouge Floods of 2016 where I organized and led six weeks of cleanup efforts that involved over 4,000 volunteers each weekend from around the southern states.

I am active as a volunteer coach for Baton Rouge Soccer Club (U13, U7, and other roles as necessary).

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

I believe one of the most significant experiences in my career is my role in helping build and run an engineering start-up company. We grew the company from two individuals to fourteen over several years. This experience has helped me understand what it takes to build a new enterprise. It also helped me understand that we need to encourage others to make similar commitments to help build, sustain, and grow economic regions.

Most all other achievements since that time relate back to the experiential learning that occurred during those years building a new business.

Interestingly, I feel that this provided me with a unique perspective of having built, grown, and exited a startup company.

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

Universities across the world are facing many challenges as they relate to technology commercialization, from dwindling research funds to defining the role that universities play in the regional economic ecosystem. The challenges are vast and different from region to region and constantly in a state of flux. AUTM must support universities as they balance the needs of traditional faculty engagement and licensing concerns with the engagement models that are developing to build workforce and respond to rapidly changing market needs. While other organizations in the world are also working hard to help universities engage appropriately at each touch point - unfortunately, many of these organizations do not understand the role technology transfer and technology commercialization must play in their efforts. AUTM needs to be prepared and able to provide appropriate support and direction to build synergies that strengthen understanding of the value of our role in enhancing future outcomes and successes of universities everywhere.

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

With recent changes, AUTM has a strong mission and vision for its current members. What do the next 5-10 years hold for AUTM? How should AUTM partner with national, international, or local community partners to serve the needs of its members? Strategically, I believe that AUTM can provide significant support to all technology transfer professionals through improved training and professional education. Many of us have arrived at this profession accidentally. The role that AUTM professional development can and should play in supporting the growth, development, engagement, and leadership of all technology transfer professionals is of crucial importance. These conversations must occur at the higher strategic level in AUTM in order for actions to be appropriate, acceptable and widely adopted. On the board, I will be the champion for encouraging every aspect of AUTM activities to strengthen professional development and to

strengthen each AUTM member in their individual career growth and progression.

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

The terms of the Board Member fit well with my current roles and responsibilities as the Associate Vice President for Research and Director of the LSU Office of Innovation & Technology Commercialization. I have the full and enthusiastic support of LSU, my direct supervisor (the VP for Research and Economic Development), and my current team to allow for me to commit the time needed to help AUTM grow and develop over the next three years.

How has AUTM benefitted you in your work and career?

I have participated in AUTM activities since 2010 when I started working at the University of Akron and its Research Foundation. AUTM has supported my career growth throughout this period as early on I attended the AUTM Valuation Course at the annual meeting. I have attended the annual meeting regularly ever since as well as participated in regional meetings when I have been able. In each case I have been engaged to participate in panel discussions, course presentations, or speaking opportunities. Throughout the process, AUTM leadership, experienced professionals and mentors have assisted me in making critical career-guiding decisions. Furthermore, I have attempted to give back to AUTM through volunteering for committees and taking on responsibilities that are of personal interest and assist in my career growth.

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

My career has been guided by and dedicated to the building of technology-based startups and commercializing university technology in one way or another. I have first hand experience as an entrepreneur growing a company. I have been involved in higher education's role in technology commercialization since 2010. I have experienced first hand many of the difficulties that arise while working to commercialize new technologies and ideas. I hope to bring my background and experience as a new voice to the AUTM board, to be a proponent of deep, meaningful professional development, and to work in innovative ways to engage all AUTM members.