



## AUTM Board of Directors 2020 Candidate Form



### **Heidi S. Nebel, JD**

Managing Member  
McKee, Voorhees and Sease, P.L.C.

### **Candidate Biography**

Heidi is an IP attorney with over 27 years of experience. She is the Chair of the Biotechnology & Chemical practice group and Managing Member of the Firm.

Heidi participated in the US Supreme Court case, *Pioneer v. J. E. M. Ag Supply*, 534 U. S. 124 (2001), which confirmed utility patent protection for plants. She obtained patent 6,136,320 "VACCINES EXPRESSED IN PLANTS" cited in MIT's Technology Review magazine as "one of five patents that will transform business and technology".

From 2004 - 2009, Heidi led the MVS team in a strategic Alliance with Pioneer Hi-Bred International/DuPont where MVS was the exclusive firm for all outside patent work. She obtained US patent number 10,308,947 METHODS AND COMPOSITIONS FOR MULTIPLEX RNA GUIDED GENOME EDITING AND OTHER RNA TECHNOLOGIES for Dr. Yang from Penn State University. The technology has been cited in over 30 peer review journal publications and has been exclusively licensed to Monsanto for use in their product development pipeline.

In early May 2019, Heidi worked with New West Genetics to file the first PVP Certificate Application for hemp seed variety approved for by the 2018 Farm Bill.

In 2018 she was appointed by the United States Secretary of Agriculture to serve on the USDA PVP Advisory Board, to help shape the country's IP policy for plants. Her clients include over 40 universities and research institutions, as well as fortune 500 companies around the world.

## 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 have been an active member of AUTM for more than 25 years, I have seen many changes with this organization over my career and I am passionate about representing the interests of Universities professionally and in my volunteer time. As a service provider, I believe I bring some additional insight to the organization. The ground breaking research and contribution to the economy of University research and the technology transfer process is critical to the US economy. Recent case law and legislation such as the AIA are threatening this industry and I want to participate as an advocate for my clients. My participation in AUTM has been personally very gratifying and I want to increase my efforts.

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

I have served on the Board of Parks and Recreation and the Public Trails committee for my city. My position as Managing Member and Chair of the Biotechnology Practice Group in my firm are voluntary and non-reimbursed. I participate on the National PVP advisory Board as appointed by the US Secretary of Agriculture. I also teach and volunteer lecture at Drake University Law School.

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

I think my long participation in AUTM and years of practice may differentiate me. I have been involved in representing Universities for 27 years and have seen the ebb and flow of legal precedence, statutory changes and their effects on my clients. I have many contacts in in the Agriculture industry, particularly with plant related technology and can act as a liaison to help AUTM interact better with industry, to provide more long term relationships which are required for such early stage technology and to help to de-risk technology so that it is more attractive to industry partners.

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

The implications of Case law limiting patent eligible subject matter have been devastating to biotechnology. This is particularly so for University biotechnology which is generally embryonic. This presents special challenges in a first to file system. Creative thinking is needed to de-risk these early stage technologies and to promote patent reform to address these. Also the implications of the AIA with post grant review are causing patent costs to grow exponentially and licensing needs to address this to make sure that costs are not simply referred back to the University. I have helped to increase industry participation in AUTM meetings, as true partnerships are needed between industry and universities now rather than singular deals. I have watched AUTM evolve into a strong voice of advocacy for technology transfer and industry partnering. It is essential that this continue.

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

Creative measures to foster long term industry collaborations, ideas to promote the integrity of the US patent system which has been significantly reduced in strength due to recent case law, and legislation which has created significant uncertainty for investors. This is so particularly in the biotech space. I also feel that attrition of technology transfer professionals is a significant issue. Retention of tech transfer personnel is essential for completion of deals and institutional knowledge of relationships that linger many years is needed. Time and again I see that the most successful tech transfer offices are those with stable and consistent staff preferably with leadership that has been there for many years. Perhaps some discussion of structure of tech transfer offices and educational reach out to University administrators to reduce attempts to perpetually reorganize and to understand and support the tech transfer role at various universities. Increasing women inventors, start-ups and venture funding is also imperative. Finally, Some sort of pooling of resources to help smaller office is needed. Missouri is a great model, where several schools combine with a single office.

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

As a senior partner in a private practice firm, I am self-employed. I am privileged to spend my time however, I see fit and I am looking for new opportunities to challenge and inspire me. With my long passion and participation in AUTM this feels like a logical next step.

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

First and foremost the hundreds of friends and colleagues I have met and worked with over the many years. My practice has grown to represent over 40 Universities and tech transfer offices around the world. Attending AUTM has benefitted me to learn of issues facing both my industry and University clients so that I can better represent them.

I have learned teamwork and the ability to coordinate many different personalities to achieve a successful objective, like a partnering forum or Regional meeting. I have also honed my speaking and presentations skills through many presentations on line and in person.

It is personally very gratifying to have a conference of session that is well done and well attended.

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

AUTM is an organization about Universities and I don't want to be presumptuous as a vendor to ask for the opportunity to serve on the board. The Board should be primarily composed of University people. I do feel that after many years of participation that I offer some additional insight and can provide a different viewpoint point that will have value.