



AUTM Board of Directors 2020 Candidate Form



Patrick Reynolds, PhD

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Candidate Biography

I am currently the Assistant Director of Faculty & Startup Services at the Emory Office of Technology Transfer in Atlanta, GA. In this role, I split my time between internal technology scouting for the university and helping our startups secure early stage funding. As Emory's technology scout, I meet with several hundred faculty, staff, and students throughout the year to both educate them on intellectual property matters and to identify promising technologies for our office to evaluate in greater detail. This has led to all-time high numbers of invention disclosures every year since I began. Prior to working at Emory, I was a licensing associate at the University of Tennessee Research Foundation, where I managed a portfolio of primarily life science technologies. While in Tennessee, I was also the first non-founder employee of a digital media startup company in the music industry. Before working in technology transfer, I was a post-doctoral fellow at Emory University, and I received my PhD from UNC-Chapel Hill.

I have been a member of AUTM since 2011, and an AUTM volunteer since 2012. In 2012, I joined the AUTM Better World Project committee (BWP). I became the BWP co-chair in 2016 and the chair in 2018, receiving Volunteer Service Awards in 2016 and 2019. I worked with AUTM staff and the BWP committee to develop the new Better World Project page seen on the AUTM website today in an effort to make it easier to submit and find success stories.

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?

AUTM has always been receptive to suggestions I have made. But some changes are not so easy to implement and require more strategic planning. This is one of the duties of a Board

Member, and I would like to be a voice at the table during such discussions. I have had several people suggest I run for a Board seat, and my first thought was "But I'm not a TTO Director." After pondering it further, I decided that is actually a potential strength, as I am at a different stage of my career than many on the current Board and can offer different perspectives consistent with our diverse membership. AUTM has been quite valuable to me in my career growth, and I would like to be able to help it continue to grow and flourish in the future as a Board Member.

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

I do not serve in a volunteer leadership role outside of AUTM. However, I have volunteered within AUTM for almost as long as I have been a member. I joined the Better World Project committee shortly after I transitioned into technology transfer at the encouragement of a colleague. I do, however, volunteer on my office's Marketing and Communications committee, helping us keep open lines of communication about what we do with our various stakeholders.

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

I have seen technology commercialization from multiple angles. From a more traditional TTO side, I have licensed technologies to companies, and I have helped secure funding for startup companies spun out of universities I have worked for. But I have also been part of a startup company myself. So I have seen firsthand the chicken-and-egg challenges of technology development and securing funding. I pitched the company I was a part of to many investors and walked away feeling like we were definitely getting funded, only to never hear from some of those investors again. Since all TTO's have faculty service as a central tenet, this experience on both sides is key to walking a mile in a faculty entrepreneur's shoes. So my numerous experiences with getting back up after failure bring a viewpoint that I hope will resonate with the AUTM community.

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

Educating faculty and administrators on what we do as well as the value of what we do. When I was a graduate student, I had never heard of technology transfer. It's easy for those of us who have been in the world of technology transfer for a while to forget that most people don't know what we do. Trying to explain it to a family member at Thanksgiving is a good reminder of this. It is crucial to educate the already very educated faculty and administrators we work for/with about the value of intellectual property protection and technology commercialization on a fundamental level. We often look at technologies far in advance of knowing if a new drug or medical device or agricultural technology will see the light of day. And having TTO's know about these breakthroughs before they show up on the cover of Science is key to our ability to protect these ideas and drive them forward.

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

Burnout is common in tech transfer. One of the main factors that drove me into research and then into technology transfer was a desire to help patients with terminal or debilitating illnesses live longer, happier lives, since you never know when you will be a patient. AUTM's Better World

Project has made strides helping the world see not only the financial impact but also the human impact that our work has. I think increasing the presence and voices of patient advocates who can speak to the value of what we all do and motivate tech transfer professionals would be very beneficial.

On another note, there is a long list of members interested in volunteering without enough positions available. While there is value in having experienced leadership head the various committees, I think it is wise to consider having rules in place that encourage regular cycling of interested volunteers throughout committees and to help groom more people into leadership roles. I believe the Board could help find ways to plug more interested volunteers in.

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

I have served as an AUTM volunteer with increasing time commitments over the past 8 years, and I have managed to make it work successfully. I have looked through the responsibilities of Board Members, and I am confident this will not be an issue. I welcome the opportunity to engage in strategic planning discussions with leaders in the field.

How has AUTM benefitted you in your work and career?

AUTM has been invaluable to me in my career growth. From learning about open source licensing strategies to best practices in technology scouting, I have grown a lot from courses at the annual meeting as well as subject specific AUTM conferences. The annual meeting in particular is an amazing opportunity to meet and have discussions with other tech transfer professionals and learn what works well and what has failed miserably for them. AUTM has also helped me grow my network, both of university and hospital tech transfer peers as well as industry business development professionals. Building these networks before you need them is invaluable when you have an exciting technology and need to find the right partner for licensing, partnering, or further development.

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

I have been an outside the box thinker my whole life. If you want a Board Member who is willing to bring in alternate views and get deep conversations started, I'm the right pick for the gig. Also, I have been a lifelong musician, and that has been very important for me as a stress management tool in my professional life. Perhaps we can get an AUTM annual meeting jam going sometime for other musically inclined members!