



AUTM Board of Directors 2020 Candidate Form



Ragan Robertson, PhD

Business Development and Information Systems Officer
UCLA Technology Development Group

Candidate Biography

Dr. Ragan Robertson is on the forefront of leadership in the tech transfer ecosystem for over 15 years. Throughout his career in tech transfer, Dr. Robertson has remained active within AUTM. He is currently the inaugural AUTM Cabinet Member overseeing the Metrics and Surveys portfolio, and is responsible for the Licensing Activity Surveys, the Salary Survey, and the TransACT database. For the past four years, he has been the Chair of the US Licensing Activity Survey, leading the efforts to run the survey, generate the annual report, and improve the entire process. He has presented at the AUTM Annual conference several times, leading sessions on Advanced Tools and metrics. For this effort, he received an AUTM Volunteer Service Award in 2016 and the AUTM Bayh-Dole Award in 2018. He has worked at both Columbia Technology Ventures and UCLA Technology Development Group, holding a variety of roles throughout his career, ranging from Fellow to Licensing Officer to Chief Operations Officer. His current role is as a Business Development and Information Systems Officer at UCLA TDG, focusing on the marketing and licensing of gene therapy and small molecule technologies developed at UCLA. He is also heavily involved in implementing operational procedures and changes focused on achieving the office goals.

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?

Tech transfer professionals are working in an increasingly competitive environment. Our institutions are asking us to generate more disclosures, more licenses, and more money. I want to join the Board as I feel that my metrics, operational, strategic, and leadership experience can help AUTM grow and better empower the membership to improve efficiencies and maximize

opportunities. I will not only to assist in the classical core functions of the profession, but also in the expanded roles that continue to be added to our mandates. In order to compete in the modern tech transfer ecosystem, we will need new ideas, new tools, and new initiatives. I would love to be a part of this growth.

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

I currently am on the Board of Directors for the non-profit Long Beach Accelerator in the role of Secretary.

I am an advisor (in a volunteer capacity) for three startups, advising on strategy, science, and intellectual property.

I was a senior volunteer for Summer Stage run by the City Parks Foundation in New York City. My responsibility was to help raise donations and to assist in the daily operations of weekend concerts held in Central Park.

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

I feel that my experience at the interface of strategy and implementation will be of most benefit to AUTM. My extensive experience with metrics and assessing outcomes will allow me to analyze AUTM's activity, and my operational experience provides me insight into how changes could be implemented to better achieve the organization's goals. By understanding how to implement actions and measure the outcomes, I have better insight into developing more effective strategies and communicating them in a clear, concise, and effective manner.

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

1) Return on Investment. The US will soon adopt the need to report on advanced metrics associated to the government's R&D spending, similar to other countries. AUTM needs to be a leader in this national conversation to help advise policymakers on the appropriate, measurable metrics to gather, and how they might be applied to the greatest effect.

2) Patent Erosion. AUTM must continue to lead and advise on policy and court cases that negatively affect the intellectual property foundation at the core of our profession.

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

We need to ensure AUTM's strategy continues its focus on addressing big challenges to the industry. For example, we can use metrics to ensure that we are maximizing return on investment. We will discuss questions including what metrics are missing, what metrics are affected by the decisions made by a TTO, and how do we capture the stories that explain these metrics? We will determine if we should we focus on measuring the ecosystem or something else, such as metrics related to building ecosystems? In regards to Patent Erosion, as our profession manages many different types of IP, how do we balance our support for the different protection strategies used to protect IP? We need to ensure AUTM's strategy continues its focus on addressing these challenges.

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

The responsibilities and time commitment are similar to my current leadership role within AUTM, so I do not anticipate any issues.

How has AUTM benefitted you in your work and career?

AUTM has significantly benefited my career by allowing me opportunities to meet leaders in the field of tech transfer and become involved in discussing and resolving issues that face the field. Additionally, leveraging the professional development that I have gained through AUTM, I have made an impact in tangential areas to tech transfer, including work with WIPO, collaborations with the Vietnamese government, assisting the city of Long Beach, CA, with business development, and having an increasing role in the entrepreneurship ecosystem of Los Angeles.

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

I have lived in 5 different cities in 5 different states (Indianapolis, Seattle, Portland, NYC, and LA), so I know my way around. During the first 16 years of my life, I summered in London, KY (70 miles south of Lexington), so I have a slight southern accent when I'm tired. In my spare time, I like to take walks with my dog, brew my own beer, and hang out with my toddler. Ask me about my quilts.