



## **AUTM Board of Directors 2020 Candidate Form**



### **April Turley, MBA**

Director  
Commonwealth Commercialization Center (C3)

### **Candidate Biography**

April is currently the director of the Commonwealth Commercialization Center (C3), a newly created science and technology nonprofit in Kentucky that is a partnership of all state public universities and the community & technical college system. In this new initiative, she works directly with regional comprehensive universities and colleges to provide technology commercialization services, which is a service that these campuses did not previously have.

At the onset of April's career, she was an intellectual property paralegal at Tampa Bay law firm Smith & Hopen, P.A. In this position she gained extensive knowledge in both domestic and foreign patent & trademark protection and prosecution.

Following her time at the law firm, April joined the University of South Florida (USF) Technology Transfer Office where she spent eleven years. While with USF, April held a variety of roles from protection of intellectual property, operations & compliance, contract management and director. As director, April provided leadership and management for the Technology Transfer Office by driving licensing, patents and start-up activities. She also enables the coordination among university researchers, administration, outside counsel, external parties, and government agencies. While leading the technology transfer program at USF, the university was recognized as being one of the top 20 American Universities for technology transfer by the prestigious Milken Institute.

April received a BA in Paralegal Sciences from Eastern Kentucky University and a MBA from Florida International University.

## 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?**

My entire career has been devoted to university technology commercialization. I have had the great opportunity to take on many roles in commercialization, from IP management to director. As someone with a desire to continue to learn and professionally grow, working with the AUTM Board of Directors will allow me the opportunity to give back to the organization that has had a meaningful impact on my career. Our profession continues to grow and change, and as the lead organization of technology commercialization, AUTM needs to continue to do the same. The organization has seen great changes in the last several years and we need to continue with that forward momentum. Over the last 12+ years I have developed a skill set that will not only add value, but a unique perspective as well.

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

My previous institution is the home of the National Academy Inventors (NAI). What started out as an internal university organization gained significant traction and grew into a large international organization. I worked with leadership on many of the organization initiatives and was the local treasurer for several years.

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

I am a naturally curious person with a desire to continue to learn. Because of that, I have been fortunate enough to hold a variety of roles in the technology commercialization profession from intellectual property management to director. Becoming a member of the Board would give me the opportunity to give back and share with the organization all the knowledge and experience that I have been able to gain over the last 12+ years. I would strive to bring a perspective that is inclusive of all AUTM membership.

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

There was a time, early in my career, when a member of my leadership came to an AUTM conference. When we were leaving the meeting he looked at me and said, "I guess this really is a profession." It was then that I realized that you could be meeting all your goals and metrics and changing the world, but if no one is telling the story, its like it never happened. In order to continue to show our relevance we need to continue to talk about our successes and the impact that our profession truly has. With help from AUTM, we need to showcase our accomplishments year after year. The transition of the Licensing Activity Report highlighting stories of success was a huge step in the right direction. As an organization, we need to continue to come up with innovative ideas of showcasing our impacts.

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

Rather than looking at things as a challenge, we should look at them as an opportunity. Many of our universities and organizations are turning toward the experts in technology commercialization and raising the expectations of the traditional metrics. With evolving roles in

corporate partnerships, economic development, new ventures and entrepreneurship, AUTM has the opportunity to continue to provide education and resources to our expanding profession. Additionally, AUTM has a powerful voice that has the ability to influence legislative decision makers. It's increasingly important that AUTM leadership continue to advocate on matters that impact the overall mission of what we do, which is to bring ideas to fruition.

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

The responsibilities of the position are in line with my current responsibilities as a leader in developing a new model of technology transfer. I am excited about the opportunity and see the benefit of the commitment to the organization.

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

AUTM has given me the opportunity to be engaged and learn from leaders in the profession. I have been able to grow professionally, but personally, with a network of people that are open, inviting and encouraging of sharing great ideas so that we can all grow and be successful.

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

I believe that having a career in university technology commercialization is both challenging and rewarding. Challenging in that you have the ability to learn something new every day. Rewarding in that you get the opportunity to have a behind the scenes look at the impact you can have on everyday life. If we haven't met before, I hope we have a chance to connect at the next conference!