

Strategies for Managing Internal and External Constituencies

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The academic technology transfer professional stands at the nexus of a number of interested parties or constituencies, each of whom may interpret success somewhat or a great deal differently from one another. Of all the skills in the toolkit of the professional, managing interpersonal relationships is central. The professional strives to understand the needs of all parties, interpret them to one another, and find solutions that meet the mission and goals of the institution. At the same time, strong relationships are built with inventors, institutional leaders, and commercial interests. Each of these interested parties is a customer of the professional, some with a greater claim on his or her attention, but all requiring thoughtful response if the professional hopes to be successful.

What Is the Mission of the Office?

The first and essential task of every technology transfer director is to ensure that the technology transfer office is aligned with the goals and missions of the academic institution.

Each member of the office must then ensure that he or she is supporting the mission in his or her daily activity. Whether the professional is the director or a member of the department, a clear understanding of what the institution wants of the office is essential.

Technology transfer is now a recognized profession both within and outside the university community. However, misunderstanding of the purpose, goals, and outcomes of academic technology transfer persists.

