

# **Suggested Guidelines for Releasing Intellectual Property Rights to Faculty Inventors**

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In 1980 the Bayh-Dole Act provided a set of rules for federal grant recipients to elect to retain ownership of inventions made with federal funding. Since the advent of this act, most U.S. universities and academic research institutions that receive federal grant funding have established technology transfer offices within their organization or as part of a separate affiliated research foundation. Each year these offices are responsible for reviewing thousands of invention disclosures and deciding, on behalf of their organization, whether to elect to retain ownership and invest in pursuing patent protection for these inventions.

Many of these disclosures are pursued, but a large portion are abandoned for a variety of reasons. In addition, many of those cases that are initially pursued will be abandoned sometime after a patent application is filed based on further developments or changed circumstances. In most cases, inventors concur with the decision to abandon their invention.

Occasionally, however, an inventor will disagree with an abandonment decision and seek the right to pursue an invention on his or her own. In these cases, having a clear efficient process for releasing intellectual property (IP) rights is important. Releasing IP rights to inventors creates an opportunity for development of a technology that would otherwise be abandoned.