

Innovation & Higher Education Policy Proceedings  
PNWER Annual Summit – Big Sky, Montana  
July 15, 2015

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*Co-Chair: Dr. Waded Cruzado, President, Montana State University*

**Speakers**

- Jane Muir, Past President of the Associate of University Technology Managers, University of Florida
  - Dr. Renee Reijo Pera, Vice President of Research and Economic Development, Montana State University
  - Dr. Scott Whittenburg, Vice President for Research and Creative Scholarship, University of Montana
  - Dr. Waded Cruzado, President, Montana State University
  - Dr. Royce Engstrom, President, University of Montana
  - Clayton Christian, Montana Commissioner of Higher Education
  - Janelle Booth, Montana University System Research Director, Montana Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education
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**Welcome & Intro**

Dr. Waded Cruzado, President, Montana State opened the roundtable to all PNWER attendees this year and highlighted the need to cross pollinate ideas for economic development.

Using Innovation and Entrepreneurship to Make a Difference" Technology Transfer: Key Way Universities Impact the Economies of Our Regions

**Session**

Jane Muir, Past President, Associate University Technology Managers, University of Florida gave an in-depth presentation on the work technology transfer managers do for their schools. Research University have made a shift over the last decades based on a mandate from federal government to move into the technological age and utilize their research capabilities for the benefit of the country. Research institutions work to ensure these discoveries are in capable hands and protected.

Tech transfer is a complex profession, in many cases research appears as no brainer but fraught with idiosyncrasies. Two major challenges to research are money and timing. You have to have realistic expectations. Also, it is hard to recreate successes of places like Silicon Valley; unique circumstances existed in the region. Tech transfer managers have to provide researchers and institutions rational goals for any new discoveries and its viability as a start-up or marketable patent.

In the past tech transfer was not held in high regard at most institutions. Today institutions have moved tech transfer into a more customer service oriented organization. Presidents and regents have pushed from the top down the importance of tech transfer and it has resonated with everybody in the research community. Tech transfer managers proactively partner for industries to share facilities or technology. Legislators see the benefit from research through the high wage

technical jobs created in community because of start-ups. Incubators have become an important part of transferring technology to commercial applications. These facilities are not just space but collaborative hubs for moving technology to the market place.

Measuring success was the next topic Jane Muir highlighted. She mentioned that metrics and has an increased appreciation about qualitative not just quantitative results. It is hard to please everybody in the university regarding Technology transfer. It is validation for research and potentially a source of revenue for the university and researcher. There is also the external economic impact legislators are focused on resulting from commercialization of a patent. There is also the societal impact that is difficult to measure.

### **Questions:**

Scott Whittenburgh: Metrics at University of Montana have looked at business touches and how the school supports existing businesses.

Dr. David Docherty, President of Mount Royal asked about how the Incubator operated. Jane Muir spoke about patents done in research foundation. Start-ups want limited resources and take support instead of startup having to pay initial investing fees and costs. The university gets shares in return and can sell shares at any time once company goes public. The university is not in the business of financial management. Jane Muir mentioned that Angel Investors and governments are moving into fill the void of funding that venture capital supplied to new technology

Royce Engstrom: What does AUTM do for tech. transfer offices? Jane Muir spoke about the National organization and the educational opportunities it provides for managers. Through networking and tapping into resource otherwise not aware of or available for Tech transfer Managers. The AUTM has educates legislators on what they're doing in the communities they service.

### **Roundtable**

"Montana's Investments in University Research for Economic Development"

Panel:

Janelle Booth, MUS Research Director, Office of the Commissioner of Higher Ed.- moderator & intro

Dr. Renee Reijo Pera, VP of Research & Economic Development, MSU spoke about the cuts to government funding for research. Because of this reduction the State of Montana has issued an ambitious research initiative. At Montana State 160 applications for research and 6 chosen looking at cleaner fossil fuel technology.

Dr. Scott Whittenburgh, VP for Research & Creative Development, University of Montana, was the next panelist and spoke about the MT World Trade Center in UM. The Montana World Trade Center (MWTC) is a program of The University of Montana. It works with Montana businesses through international trade opportunities, while providing immediately-relevant, hands-on opportunities for students to participate in the process. Over 320 World Trade Centers operate worldwide, but the Montana World Trade Center is unique in its relationship with The University of Montana.

President Waded Cruzado, MSU provided the next comments from the panel on the role MSU plays in economic development for the state. MSU is a land-grant university and research is an important deliverable from the university. MSU works towards practical applications of material at Public University and is a great contributor to the middle class growth in the region. Research

applications bring energy to the classroom, moves economic development. If we don't invest in research the results are stagnation, repetition.

Dr. Royce Engstrom, President, UM spoke about how the research initiatives from the State represent new recognition of higher education. UM was founded as liberal arts based institution but has evolved over the years into research focus institution. Research provides basic knowledge, solves real problems, fosters economic development and, is ultimate form of education.

Clayton Christian, MT Commissioner of Higher Ed spoke about the 15 million research initiative by the state of Montana. The objective is to look at how can we change the state both from a workforce and economic development perspective. The state investment gives Montana University System (MUS) a local say in projects that invest in areas that are important to MT. The campuses vet proposals for MUS research and must meet 3 criteria: is it solving a MT problem? creating MT jobs? Adding to MT economy?

Was collaboration encouraged between the two flagship campuses?  
Commissioner Christian: collaboration but also balance

Pres. Cruzado: strengthening inter-department within schools and collaboration between system schools & flagship

### **Finally Comments**

Rep. Andrea Olsen, MT: proud of the initiative because we have a fiscally responsible state. However, the state leadership agreed to sponsor research through the MUS. Also, leveraging public money with private money: good job of showing how research is positively impacting MT

Jane Muir, FL: MT is on cutting edge because of the involvement with state gov't. and creating awareness amongst industry.