

Global Access to University-Developed Innovations: Achieving Results through Student-Faculty-Administration Partnership

Stephanie Doan, MPH; Jackson Hughes, JD, MBA; Carolyn C. Kenline, MSPH
Emory Global Access Partnership, Emory University, Atlanta, GA



Issues: The Role of the University in Access to Medicines

Before 1980, most US innovations developed by universities belonged to the government, with less than 5% of 28,000 patents licensed to industry.¹ In response, the US Congress passed the Bayh-Dole Act, which gave ownership of inventions to the American universities in which the innovations were developed.² As a result, universities have experienced a tenfold increase in the number of patents, contributing \$40 billion annually to the U.S. economy.¹ Since Bayh-Dole, research conducted at universities has been an indispensable part of the advancement of pharmaceutical science and the development of new medicines.³

Even with increasing attention from governments, NGOs, and industry, **the life-saving treatments resulting from university research are infrequently available at an affordable price to people in the developing world.**

Emory University in Atlanta, GA is a premier research institution, especially in the area of HIV and AIDS research — an estimated 80% of people undergoing treatment for HIV take a medication covered under Emory patents.⁴

Emory University is committed to **working collaboratively** for positive transformation in the world through courageous leadership in teaching, **research**, scholarship, health care, and **social action**. . . and being unequalled at translating medical breakthroughs into service and patient care.

~ Emory University Strategic Vision

Emory Global Access Partnership

Emory Global Access Partnership (EGAP) is a student organization dedicated to **ensuring that Emory-developed innovations are accessible to people in the developing world whose lives depend on their use.** Since its founding in 2003, the activities of EGAP have varied, encompassing at different times campus advocacy; university lobbying; university policy creation; education; collaboration with faculty, staff, and administration; and academic research.

In June 2004, after four years of relationship building with key supporters, EGAP directed all efforts to **creating an Emory policy on global access for technology transfer.** The process began when Emory President James Wagner endorsed the creation of Emory's Working Group on Global Access to Medicines.

Emory Working Group on Global Access to Medicines

Purpose: To bring together **students, faculty and administration** to address Emory's commitment to global access to university-developed innovations through improved technology management.

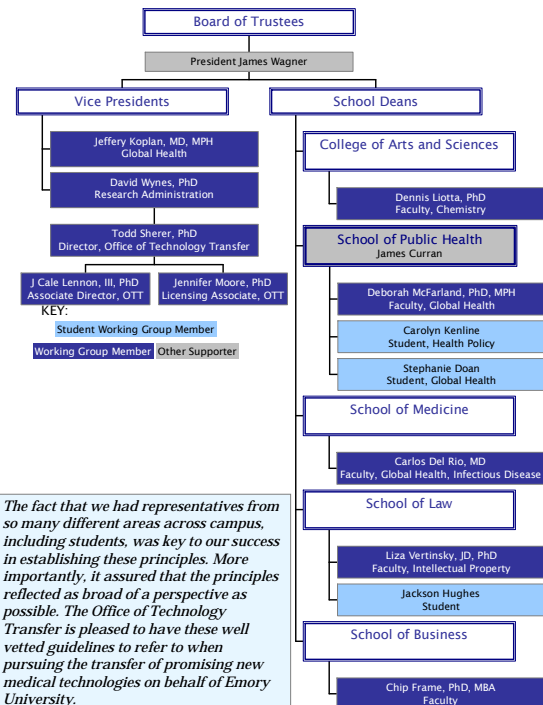
Goals:

- **Clarify Emory's commitment to working toward global access** through technology development and management through a set of **Guiding Principles.**
- **Explore and create a set of Effective Practices** for Emory University to encourage access in the developing world to the end products of university research.

Results: Guiding Principles

1. **Emory reaffirms its commitment to seek out global licensing partners for new and neglected technologies that may be of significant interest to the developing world.**
2. **Emory will engage in open and honest discussions with its industry partners to develop creative and effective licensing strategies that promote global access.**
3. **Emory supports making new products available in the developing world and will therefore negotiate with licensing partnerships in a manner that encourages them to make products available for people who need but cannot afford them**
4. **Emory will continue to follow effective global access principles when licensing Emory inventions.**

Working Group Members



The fact that we had representatives from so many different areas across campus, including students, was key to our success in establishing these principles. More importantly, it assured that the principles reflected as broad a perspective as possible. The Office of Technology Transfer is pleased to have these well vetted guidelines to refer to when pursuing the transfer of promising new medical technologies on behalf of Emory University.

~ Todd Sherer, PhD
Working Group Chair

Lessons Learned

- **Student initiative was essential to the formation and success of the working group.** Working group members and administrators seemed much more willing to get behind a process that was led by students. Administrators, especially, valued the interaction with student leaders.
- **Leverage key relationships and understand the politics of the university.** Students were able to bring this issue to light by placing it into the context of the Emory Strategic Vision. Students identified supporters who had the ability to make decisions within the university and understood the political environment. By providing a politically-viable platform for people to be the champions of this issue, real steps could be made.
- **Anticipate feedback from key decision makers.** The process could have gone more smoothly had the working group done more to prepare specific members of the President's Cabinet (particularly finance members) before the final presentation of the principles.
- **Develop strong relationships with Administrative Assistants.** They open the door (and the calendar).

The process is a valuable start in recognizing a shared interest and responsibility of the university community in promoting global health strategies. The interest and enthusiasm of students is critical in this effort, and the power of student groups in universities across the country to bring about change should not be neglected.

~ Liza Vertinsky, JD, PhD
Working group member

Next Steps

1. **Increase research and funding focused on the development of effective humanitarian licensing practices to improve global access.** Although the Emory Principles create an important framework in which the Office of Technology Transfer can operate, the challenge is great when drafting licensing terms that appropriately deal with the issue of access. As research funding opportunities that require down-stream global access licensing increase (for example, most grants from the **Gates Foundation**), models and licensing terms must be developed that will be both effective in ensuring access to innovations and acceptable to industry partners.
2. **Develop systems of accountability for both the Office of Technology Transfer and the industry partner.** Despite the confidential nature of most licensing agreements, the OTT must find ways to be transparent concerning the steps it takes to ensure access to new innovations. Likewise, shareholders and universities should encourage industry partners to follow through on the terms of their licenses. The guiding principles do no good if they are not followed

I believe our work and its outcome provide evidence that economic development, technology transfer and compassion for under-developed regions of the world are not mutually exclusive principles. The buy-in achieved through this process reflects the broad support within the institution for achieving all of these goals.

~ David Wynes, PhD, Working Group Member

"Emory's Global Access Principles reflect the understanding that the quest for global health equity requires cooperative relationships between not-for-profit researchers and for-profit companies. Funding agencies now prod universities and research institutions to partner with private industry to translate inventions into practical applications. The Global Access Principles will guide Emory, and hopefully others, along that path."

~ Steve Sencer, JD, Working Group Member

3. **Engage other sectors of the university in the goal of increasing access to university-developed innovations.** The challenge of increasing access to medicines is not limited to technology transfer. Student and faculty involvement across disciplines is required to continue to develop creative solutions to the challenge of global access. For example:
 - Public health: Research drug distribution methods
 - Science: Create incentives and support for research on neglected disease
 - Business: Work with industry to create new revenue models
 - Law: Understand intricacies of intellectual property law
 - Medicine: Educate physicians on neglected disease and drug delivery in the developing world
4. **Replicate the model of a student-driven, interdisciplinary partnership in other activist efforts, especially in the area of social responsibility.**

References:

1. Bayh-Dole Act; 35 USC 200-212
2. Innovation's Golden Goose. (2002, December 14). *Economist*.
3. Zycher, Benjamin, et al. (June 2008). The Truth About Drug Innovation. Medical Progress Report, 4.
4. Emory University Office of Technology Transfer. Available at <http://www.ott.emory.edu/>
5. Emory University Strategic Vision. Available at <https://www.admin.emory.edu/Vision/vision.html>

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