

This interview with Bill Tucker, Interim Executive Director of the University of California's Technology Transfer office, will be broadcast on multiple airlines by the Sky Radio Network during December, 2005 and January 2006.

*Major Universities help drive our economy in ways beyond providing educated executives and professionals from its graduating classes. Research, and its connection to industry, is a growing priority for schools such as the University of California.*

*William Tucker is the Interim Executive Director of the University of California's Technology Transfer office...he joins us now. Bill, welcome to Sky Radio.*

Dennis, it's a pleasure to talk with you today.

*Give us a short schematic of how the Office of Technology Transfer bridges between the educational function of the university and industry.*

Well, the University of California is the largest public research institution in the world, and a key element of our mission is to advance knowledge through the work of our faculty and staff.. As you noted in your introduction, educating undergraduates and post graduate students, so that they can take this knowledge and use it in business, is one way we fulfill our mission. But another way is to transfer knowledge more directly in ways that benefit the public. I think most people are familiar with the fact that faculty communicate their knowledge through scholarly publications, and in many areas of research, such publications are an effective way for us to achieve our mission. However, in scientific and engineering disciplines, simply publishing research results doesn't result in the technology being developed to benefit the public. In these areas of research, the public benefit mission of the institution is best served by partnering with Industry to translate these research findings into products that you and I can buy on the shelf.

*Is this gaining in traction in terms of the University's mission?*

Well, it's always been there. I think we as an institution are seeing more emphasis on that, and the president of the University, Bob Dynes, has really emphasized that as one of the key tenets of his administration -- which is to strengthen University-Industry

relationships so that we can use the economic engine of the Universities to fuel development in the next century.

*What are the strengths enjoyed in particular by the University of California (and I don't just mean the football teams?)*

As I said, UC is a very large research enterprise. We're staffed with world-leading faculty across every conceivable discipline, so undoubtedly if Industry is looking for an academic research partner, or a technology to build its next product around, its likely to find something within the UC system. And, we can leverage this diversity to create synergies on multiple levels that support relationships with Industry.

*Let me have you extend that idea. What kinds of synergies are possible with this set of circumstances that you have in your hand?*

Well, I see synergies working at several levels within UC. All of them help foster the interactions between our faculty and enhance their research. One level is something we call Multi Campus Research Units. These offer collaborative opportunities for faculty in the same discipline across campuses. There are over 30 of them in the system, from the humanities, to life and social sciences, to physical sciences and engineering. Three that are important in my mind with regards to industrially-related technology areas are: Bioengineering, Energy Research, and Transportation Studies. But there's a whole host of other ones.

Another level of synergy is exemplified by the California Institutes for Science and Innovation. These relatively new institutes, and we call them ISI's for short, are multi-disciplinary, multi-campus institutes that have been created by an unprecedented collaboration between the University of California, the State of California, and Industry. They are focused on addressing fundamental research questions that the Industry is interested in solving. We are in areas such as Quantitative Biomedical Research, Telecommunications, IT Technology, and Nanotechnology.

*So what's the job of YOUR office? How do you enable all these functions to take place?*

The Office of Technology Transfer, my office, provides a range of services that support tech transfer and University-Industry relationships across the system. In the early years, we were the technology transfer office for the entire UC system. But as tech transfer matured as a profession, and as the campuses developed the internal skills to manage their faculty's intellectual property, sister offices developed across the major campuses. Today, we're seeing an acceleration of the transfer of activities from OTT to the campuses to support the "local" aspect of the University-Industry relationships. That doesn't mean that OTT is going away. We're going to be here to continue to support tech transfer across the system and help make sure that the University continues in its leadership position.

The challenge for the future for us will be to develop policies that support the University mission while remaining sensitive our Industry partners in the constantly evolving economic environment.

The other thing we do is educate and train the people who staff the various offices. We've got internal courses in IP management, Research Administration management, as well as keeping them up-to-date on changes in the law and general practices of IP management. That's really an extension of the overall educational role of the University in many, many ways. We are also here to provide some more routine support, such as legal review, accounting services, and database management services that support tech transfer across all of UC.

*Bill, thanks for joining us here at Sky Radio.*

Thank you, it's a pleasure.

*(transcript edited for clarity)*