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Meet the Presenter: Michael Dilling

Background

- Ph.D. in Genetics from Texas A&M University – 1993.
- Post-Doc + Associate Investigator at St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, Memphis, TN.
- MBA (Finance) from University of Memphis – 1999.



Meet the Presenter

- Director of Baylor Licensing Group at Baylor College of Medicine (BCM)
 - Position held since 2011.
 - 5 Licensing Associates on my team. Hired four.
- 18 years experience in academic technology transfer.
- Hired by BCM in 2000 as a very green, very inexperienced Licensing Associate. AUTM volunteer since 2001.



Meet the Presenter: Robert Brown

Background:

Education:

- JD, Florida International University, College of Law
- Executive MBA, Cleveland State University
- BS, Biology, University of Miami



Professional Experience:

- Registered Patent Attorney
- ~ 10 years legal experience including working at a University General Counsel's Office and as Assistant Attorney General for the State of Ohio.
- ~ 7 years in tech transfer
- Reviewed dozens of job searches for compliance with equal employment and anti-discrimination laws.
- Served on hiring committee for several tech transfer positions and a chair of several search committees



The Licensing Associate: On the Front Lines

- Incredibly varied, challenging role.
 - Should the job even be called, "Licensing Associate"?
 - Requires diverse knowledge in STEM, law, and business.
- The tech transfer office's primary point of contact with:
 - Faculty members.
 - Licensees/commercial partners.
 - Patent counsel (internal or external).
 - Other academic institutions.
 - University administration (in some cases).



Licensing Associate Professional Qualifications

"Hard" skill sets:

- Strong oral and written communication skills:
 - Ability to communicate complex ideas and information.
 - Ability to understand the audience with whom you are communicating.
- Technical background appropriate to the types of technologies the associate will manage.
- Knowledge of patent law and procedure, marketing, and other business related subject matter.

"Soft" skill sets:

- An orientation toward providing excellent service.
- A positive mindset and outlook. Academic technology commercialization demands an eternally optimistic outlook.
- A desire for lifelong learning and growth.



Licensing Associate Professional Qualifications

1. Requires a bachelor's of science degree in a technical or business field and a minimum of one year of academic technology transfer experience or similar experience in licensing or business development gained in industry.
2. Ph.D. in Life Sciences + MBA or other advanced degree or combination thereof strongly preferred. Expertise in medical device technologies preferred.
 - Tendency for institutions to favor one advanced degree type over another but not uncommon to seek candidates with different backgrounds to fill in any gaps of knowledge.
 - Michael's bias: technical depth a must.
3. Excellent interpersonal and communication skills. A **strong "customer service" ethic** and desire to provide excellent service to faculty and commercial partners.



Licensing Associate Professional Qualifications

4. Excellent organizational and analytical skills, effective at setting priorities and obtaining closure. Ability to manage numerous projects simultaneously.
5. Ability to work independently and collaboratively with other colleagues. An ability to proactively seek and develop solutions to complex problems.
6. A positive, optimistic outlook and a "can-do" attitude and mindset.
7. An ability to work with diverse and demanding personalities, to resolve conflicts, and to successfully deal with and manage ambiguity.



Licensing Associate Professional Qualifications

8. Resilience: the ability to cope with adverse circumstances and recover and learn from them; the ability to resist getting "knocked off your horse" easily. You can't control events that happen around you, but you can control your response to them.
9. A sense of humor. There are going to be days when your sense of humor will carry you through the day. You have to be able to laugh at absurdity.



Licensing Associate Responsibilities

- Evaluating inventions arising from Baylor's research, performing market analyses to determine the commercial value of an invention and marketing technology to industry.
- Evaluating the patentability of disclosures and managing any resulting patent prosecution
- Negotiating terms and conditions, including financial consideration, of licenses with potential licensees.



Licensing Associate Responsibilities

- Drafting legal agreements for intellectual property licenses and options, confidential disclosure agreements, and inter-institutional agreements.
- Monitoring licensee's obligations to meet diligence milestones, payments, and reporting requirements associated with agreements. Taking appropriate action to address compliance.
- Work collaboratively with industry contracts team to manage IP-related matters associated with sponsored research agreements, collaboration agreements, and others.



Licensing Associate Interview Questions

Interview Process:

- Review and scoring of resume and cover letters.
- Telephone conversation.
- In-person interview with Director.
- Top 2-3 candidates interviewed in-person by team.
- Selection of top candidate.
- Offer sent to top candidate.



Review and Scoring of Resumes and Cover Letters

Search Committees:

- Chair and 2 or more committee members. Should be a diverse committee and members should recuse themselves from reviewing applicants they know.

Minimum Qualifications: (Yes/No)

Preferred Qualifications: (scored and weighted)

For public institutions in particular, affirmative action office/HR certifies that there is a diverse pool of applicants. In specific circumstances, HR/affirmative action office could keep the position open until a showing that there is sufficient diversity in the pool. HR/affirmative action may recommend particular applicants be interviewed.



Licensing Associate Interview Questions ^{RB3}

- Why do you want to be a licensing associate? What is it about this role that interests you?
- What do you think the most important attributes are for being successful as a licensing associate?
- What does the licensing associate role offer you that differs from your current position?
- Why are you considering leaving your current position?



Licensing Associate Interview Questions

- What experience do you have in academic technology commercialization/licensing? Please describe it.
- What are your future career goals? How do you see your career progressing?
- What are your greatest strengths?



Licensing Associate Interview Questions

- What personal attributes are you working to improve?
 - Some interviewers may ask: What are your biggest weaknesses? This can be a bit of a trap for interviewees who can be intimidated by the question. Be ready to answer it.
 - Redirect by stating:
 - "I'm working to improve my skills in _____ by taking a class at"
 - "I'm gaining extra experience in public speaking by..."
 - "I've set a goal for myself to become proficient in _____ by _____."



Licensing Associate Interview Questions

- If candidate is coming from a scientific background: "Explain what was significant about your research program? How did it advance knowledge in your field of study?"
- What were the most important lessons you learned from your graduate work?
- Talk about an example of difficult problem/situation that you encountered at work (or in life), and describe what you did to overcome it.



Licensing Associate Interview Questions

- You have multiple competing deadline-driven projects vying for your time and attention. Tell me how you would manage them.
- You arrive at work to open a blistering email from a frustrated PI. How would you handle it?
- What are your interests outside of work?
- What motivates you? What produces personal satisfaction for you?



Licensing Associate Interview Questions

- Describe your working style: How do you engage with others at the workplace?
- Do you work best as an individual, or as part of a team?
- What questions do you have for me?



Licensing Associate Interview Questions

- What questions do you have for me?
 - As a candidate, you should have some:
 - Describe your training program for new licensing associates.
 - Describe your leadership style as a supervisor. How do you prefer to interact with your employees?
 - Describe the possible career advancement path in your office.
 - How will my performance be graded? How will you provide feedback?



A Day in the Life of a Licensing Associate



A Day in the Life of a Licensing Associate

- 8:00-8:15: Arrive at work; grab a cup of coffee; check email; provide quick responses/updates. Review email from displeased faculty member who disagrees with decision not to file a patent application.
- 8:15-9:00: Respond to faculty member, citing specific examples in prior art that read directly on invention; ask faculty member to explain if they think analysis missed something material about the invention. Suggest a meeting to discuss; potentially engage outside patent counsel to independently assess patentability.
- 9:00-10:00 Meet with industry agreements manager to discuss pending sponsored research agreement where sponsor has advocated for unfavorable IP ownership and licensing terms. Work collaboratively with industry agreements mgr. to craft language and a response. Update faculty member and TTO director on status of negotiation.



A Day in the Life of a Licensing Associate

- 10:00-11:30: Review materials associated with two new disclosures assigned to your portfolio. Prepare a list of questions to discuss during faculty member interview(s). Reach out to submitting faculty members to set up times to meet. Assign disclosures to interns to begin examination of prior art.
- 11:30-12:30: Finish drafting non-exclusive license agreement for knockout mouse model. Forward draft agreement to business development manager at licensee company.
- 12:30-1:15: Grab lunch; take a short walk.
- 1:15-1:30: Discuss response to an Office Action with outside patent counsel. Authorize patent counsel to prepare a response.
- 1:30-2:00: Prepare for departmental presentation.
- 2:00-3:00: Attend departmental faculty meeting with TTO director. Give presentation on TTO activities, processes, results. Field questions from faculty members. Set up meeting with faculty member who has a potential new disclosure.



A Day in the Life of a Licensing Associate

- 3:30-4:00: Update active project logs with recent developments.
- 4:15-5:00: Begin drafting new license agreement for faculty-driven start-up. Founding faculty member has actively advocated for license terms that are favorable to her start-up (but not favorable to university), and has looped in her department chair (who expresses "strong support" for his star PI's new venture). Craft diplomatic response to faculty member gently but firmly reminding them that they cannot negotiate business terms of an agreement against their employer. Suggest that the faculty member designates another person to negotiate on behalf of company. Alert TTO director in case matter escalates.
- 5:00-5:10: Scan email for anything requiring a prompt response; head for home.

THEMES: LICENSING ASSOCIATES ARE COMMUNICATORS. ABILITY TO SHIFT GEARS FROM ONE PROJECT TO ANOTHER A MUST.



This Job Sounds Tough. What's the Upside?

- The ability to make a lasting impact.
 - Each agreement that a licensing associate negotiates and executes opens a door for research/development to happen that might not otherwise.
- Outcomes: To see a product candidate from a deal you negotiated enter clinical development is tremendously rewarding.
- If you're a lifelong learner, there really is no better career as you are exposed to cutting edge innovation on a daily basis.
- You really can change lives in this job!



Licensing Associate Compensation

- Starting salaries in the \$70-\$85K range, and pushing toward the upper end of that range.
 - Private institutions typically pay better than public.
- Salaries for associates with 3-4 years of experience range from high '70s to high '90s.
 - Big differential between private and public institutions.
- Salaries for 5 yrs.+ experience range from the mid '90s to low 100s.
 - Smaller gap between public and private institutions at this experience level.

Source: AUTM 2017 Salary Survey



For Candidates: How to Get In

- Gain experience as an intern.
- **BLG internship program:**
 - Interview process: Bring on new interns in spring/fall. Interviewed by licensing associate team.
 - Training process: Every intern benefits from our training curriculum.
 - Interns work remotely and are assigned projects (IP and market due diligence on disclosures) with deadlines & deliverables. They are paid \$20/hr. They attend lunch events with staff.
 - Interns typically stay with program for 1 year or more.



For Candidates: How to Get In

- As a Director, I use our internship program as a tool to identify talent.
 - Consistently ask project managers: “Who is the shining star among this year’s intern crop? Who does consistently high-quality work and exceeds expectations?”
 - Five (out of ten) BLG staffers are former interns.



For Candidates: How to Get In

- Consider a Licensing Assistant position.
 - Not every office has this position. Typically seen in better-staffed TTOs.
 - Role often focuses on due diligence of new disclosures:
 - Prior art analysis. Market assessment.
 - Little to no independent deal negotiation authority.
 - Supports a Licensing Associate/Manager.
 - Pathway for moving into Licensing Associate role.



Perspective as a Director

- The “soft skills” are just as important as the “hard skills” as determinants of success (perhaps more important). Soft skills are differentiators.
 - Customer service focus. A sincere desire (backed up by performance) to provide consistently excellent service to all constituents.
 - Positive attitude and mindset. When they enter a room, they bring positive energy into the room.
 - Resilience. You’ve got to be able to bounce back from setbacks.



Perspective as a Director

- BCM Values: Respect, Integrity, Innovation, Teamwork and Excellence (RIITE)
- Respect for views that differ from your own. Ability to listen and seriously consider diverging viewpoints. You learn by listening.
- Integrity: Ability to face reality in an unflinching way.
- Innovation: What can we do differently to improve our operations/service?
- Teamwork: Ability to work productively with others to achieve a common goal. Tech transfer is a team sport: We succeed or fail as a team.
- Excellence: Doing everything we do to the very best of our ability; to consistently seek ways to do it better.



Perspective as a Director

- I actively support the professional and personal development of each member of the team.
- Personal philosophy: Hire talented individuals with a desire to lead/serve; provide them with tools they need to succeed; surround them with a supportive, interdependent team; get out of the way and watch them flourish.


