



Association of University Technology Managers®
Advancing Discoveries for a Better World®

AUTM 2017-2018 Election Board of Directors



Joann MacMaster, MBA

*Director of Business Development
University of Arizona, Tech Launch Arizona*

Candidate's Background

As Director of Business Development at Tech Launch Arizona (TLA), Joann leads a team that supports commercial assessment of new inventions and creates startup companies founded on University of Arizona intellectual property.

Prior to her work at TLA, Joann served as Director of the Arizona Center for Innovation (AzCI), a nonprofit technology business incubator serving University and community inventors and entrepreneurs to transform their innovation into commercial success, and she served as Program Director for the University of Arizona McGuire Center for Entrepreneurship

Joann has an extensive background as an entrepreneur with three successful exits, including one IPO. Her background includes software translation, simulation, network software/hardware, and healthcare education. Joann serves as immediate Past President of the Arizona Business Incubation Association, and has an appointment to the Arizona District Export Council. She holds an MBA in International Business/Entrepreneurship from Edinburgh University, Scotland.

Candidate Questionnaire

1. Why do you want to be on the AUTM Board of Directors (What motivates you to join the AUTM Board of Directors?)

Now, more than ever, universities face unique challenges in the commercialization of IP through venture development. Regional ecosystems are rapidly changing and other organizations are working to help university venture development teams move their startups forward. This effort should be led by AUTM. We have the position and expertise to identify best practices and to help our members find innovative ways to create successful startup companies. My interest in joining the board is to serve the venture development voice, to help AUTM gain the lead in this effort, collaborate with other organizations and serve its members.

2. Have you served in a volunteer leadership role for other organizations? If so, please explain.

Yes. Much of my work prior to coming to Arizona has been in Europe and I currently serve on a panel for Science Foundation Ireland, a group that brings together Irish universities focused on technology commercialization. For the past 15 years, however, I've been dedicated to building a stronger Arizona startup infrastructure. I served on the startup team to form the Desert Angels, now a top-5 nationally ranked angel investment group. In addition I've volunteered in the following:

- President, Arizona Business Incubator Association (AzBIA)
- Appointed member, District Export Council Arizona (AzDEC)
- Board member, Arizona Optics Industry Association (AOIA)
- Board member, Southern Arizona Biosciences Cluster (BIOSA)

3. What special experience do you have that you feel will benefit AUTM and its members (what makes you stand out above all others)?

I have a somewhat unique perspective as an entrepreneur, investor, educator, and mentor in the university commercialization space. As an entrepreneur I have experience commercializing university technology and I've faced different outcomes: acquisition, failure, and IPO. As an educator I served as adjunct faculty and then program director and administrator for a nationally recognized entrepreneurship program serving both graduate and undergraduate students. As a mentor I've supported and coached hundreds of entrepreneurs and faculty inventors and served in a leadership role at two technology business incubators serving university commercialization. These experiences overlap to give me a broader sense of venture development, which I hope to share with other AUTM members.

4. What do you see as the major strategic issues facing technology transfer today?

Universities face many challenges across the continuum of commercialization, from research funding to successful startup launch and return back to the university, and this continuum is in a constant state of change. Universities must balance the needs of traditional faculty and licensing concerns with a new workforce and rapidly changing market needs. Other organizations are working hard to help universities connect at different points along this continuum with positive results, but they need our support and direction so that together we can become a catalyst for future opportunities and successes.

5. What would be your number one goal as a member of the Board of Directors for AUTM? (List the issues you would like the Board to focus on for next few years.)

My goals as a board member would be to ensure continuation of our mission and vision; to serve our members; to strengthen venture development activities and help AUTM become the driver to collaborate with other relevant partner organizations; and to improve member volunteer engagement.

6. How do the terms (both responsibilities and time commitment) of the position fit in with your other responsibilities?

The terms align directly with my current responsibility leading the venture development efforts here at the University, and the work I've been doing in our community. I've recently resigned from all other board activities to dedicate my full time on university commercialization. I have full support of my boss and my team to commit the time needed to this cause.

7. What is a challenge AUTM faces that you feel could be addressed by strategic thinking and discussion at the Board level?

AUTM has a strong vision and mission for our current members, but we have the opportunity to lead our industry moving forward with a bigger vision. What are the future {10-15 year) needs of technology transfer? What role should a university play within its own ecosystem? How do we better partner with national, international, or local community partners to serve the needs of our members? How do we light a spark within our members so that they are evangelizing AUTM rather than other organizations for venture development or asset development?

8. How has AUTM benefitted you in your work and career?

I've been with AUTM for a limited time (3 years), during which I've attended 3 annual conferences. I'm registered to attend an upcoming regional conference. I've served on a couple of volunteer events and have offered to volunteer further. I see immediate value in the organization as a member, and have had the opportunity to learn more about the licensing process and connect with others who also focus on venture development.

9. Is there anything else you would like AUTM members to know about you before they vote in this year's election?

My entire career has been dedicated to building technology startup companies. Having experienced the process of university commercialization first-hand as an entrepreneur, mentor, partner and now venture development team director, I have a unique sense of the tough job our teams face every day. We need to find new and innovative ways to be successful. I hope to bring that experience and passion to the AUTM board, to be a voice for our venture development teams, and to find new ways to engage our members.

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