



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

AUTM 2017-2018 Election Board of Directors



Tamara Wilgers

*Director, Technology Commercialization & Economic Development
University of Missouri–St. Louis*

Candidate's Background

Professional Experience

University of Missouri-St. Louis (St. Louis, MO)

Director, Technology Commercialization & Economic Development (2004-present)

As Director of the Technology Transfer Office of UMSL, which supports faculty research and commercialization efforts to help the University reach its research and economic development potential, responsibilities and highlights include:

- Establishing and implement technology transfer processes and procedures on campus.
- Directing all commercialization efforts of faculty, including developing an entrepreneurial culture on campus, educating faculty on technology transfer opportunities, handling commercialization cases from invention disclosure and intellectual property protection to marketing inventions and licensing IP rights to industry. Overseeing the Technology Transfer staff and interacting with community, industry and state government leaders to promote University of Missouri-St. Louis intellectual property.
- Administering the UMSL Conflict of Interest Committee.

- Identifying and communicating sponsored research opportunities (internal and external grants and partnerships) and industry news to faculty. Assisting faculty with writing and preparing grant applications to federal agencies, internal awards panels and foundations.
- Overseeing a variety of special projects and marketing efforts of the ORA including signage design for the UMSL business incubator, production of the monthly ORA newsletter, marketing materials for research centers across campus, launch of the campus chapter of the National Academy of Inventors, conceptualization and production of the annual Research & Innovation Week at UMSL, and business plan pitch competition training for faculty.

**St. Louis Regional Chamber & Growth Association (St. Louis, MO)
Manager, Technology Gateway Council (2001-2004)**

Managed the Technology Gateway Council, the science and technology ecosystem development arm of the St. Louis Regional Chamber and Growth Association (now the St. Louis Regional Chamber). The council, composed of volunteers from industry and academia, facilitated collaborations among biotechnology and IT companies to advance the region's technology based economy. Responsibilities and highlights included the following:

- Led all internal and external communications efforts including web site redesign, development and maintenance to marketing campaigns for events freelancers, vendors and volunteers in graphic arts, public relations and fund-raising campaign development.
- Conceptualized, developed and launched annual "TechConnect" conference, which debuted in 2002 with 100 participants and \$20,000 in industry sponsorships and grew to nearly 500 participants and more than \$125,000 in sponsorships in 2004.
- Organized more than 50 additional networking and educational meetings annually, including quarterly "Tech Tours" that featured regional technology industry assets ranging from the Donald Danforth Plant Science Center to SAVVIS communication and brought in 175 to 300 people to each event.
- Conceptualized, developed and launched annual "TechConnect" conference, which debuted in 2002 with 100 participants and \$20,000 in industry sponsorships and grew to nearly 500 participants and more than \$125,000 in sponsorships in 2004.
- Organized more than 50 additional networking and educational meetings annually, including quarterly "Tech Tours" that featured regional technology industry assets ranging from the Donald Danforth Plant Science Center to SAVVIS Communications and brought in 175 to 300 people to each event.

**St. Louis Business Journal (St. Louis, MO)
Co-Editor, Art Director – Fast Forward Magazine (1999-2001)**

Fast Forward was a monthly magazine produced by the St. Louis Business Journal focused on entrepreneurs under 40 years old across all industries, from science and technology to food and retail.

- Served as one of two chief editorial decision makers answering directly to the publisher.
- Provided art direction, created monthly layout and oversaw print production for this award-winning publication.
- Recruited and managed photography and art free-lancers.
- With co-editor, developed editorial calendar.

**YMCA of Greater St. Louis, Corporate Office (St. Louis, MO)
Creative Director (1994-1999)**

The YMCA of Greater St. Louis served more than 500,000 people annually at 17 branch facilities in fitness programs, childcare, youth sports, camping, etc., during my tenure.

- Developed and produced association-wide marketing materials, ranging from annual reports, newsletters and brochures to advertisements, videos and billboards.
- Implemented and managed consistent graphic identity for the association.
- Conceptualized, launched and managed the St. Louis Y's first online presence.
- Developed and provided training for branch marketing staff for cost-efficient in-house catalog production, eliminating the need to outsource design and layout.

**Southwestern College (Winfield, KS)
Communications Coordinator (1993-1994)**

Southwestern College in Kansas is a four-year, liberal arts college. As head of communications and public relations in the Alumni Development Office, responsibilities and highlights included the following:

- Served as Managing Editor and Art Director of *The Southwesterner*, the college's quarterly alumni magazine. Managed editorial staff, provided in-house photography services, developed editorial calendar, produced magazine layout, and oversaw print production and distribution.
- Designed and developed communications materials for the Alumni Development Office.
- Directed the college news bureau for student hometown press releases and media relations dealing with the alumni development department. Introduced centralization of campus public relations to create a consistent message.

Education

University of Missouri, School of Journalism (Columbia, MO)
B.J. in Magazine Journalism, *cum laude*

Association of University Technology Managers (AUTM)

Continuing Education (2005-present)

- Technology Valuation
- Licensing
- Technology Operations & Organization Licensing Skills
- Marketing
- Advanced Marketing
- Startup Business Development

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?)

AUTM is critical to small offices like the one I direct – the organization provides critical educational resources and opportunities to build a network among industry peers from offices of all sizes. This is particularly important for small offices, as it provides the possibility to stay on top of the latest issues and best practices in the industry when time is scarce along with connections to other technology transfer professionals who can provide essential feedback on everything from daily TTO activities to new, larger initiatives when there is little such feedback possible within the office. I also would like to join the AUTM Board to explore new ways technology transfer offices might be even more beneficial to society as a whole, whether through programs that address societal needs, such as what the St. Louis region is facing right now or other initiatives.

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

Yes, I have served as a Director on the Board at the Missouri Venture Forum (MVF) since 2014. MVF is an organization in St. Louis, Mo., that creates opportunities, provides networking and offers education for entrepreneurs.

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

From corporate communications and serving as editor of the St. Louis Business Journal's monthly entrepreneurship magazine to working with a huge contingent of volunteers to help develop the St. Louis region's thriving entrepreneurship ecosystem and establishing and directing for 13 years (to date) a small technology transfer office at a metropolitan public research university, my experience provides a wide range of experience from which I can draw insights into several key AUTM stakeholders and strategic issues. Also, my experience currently working at UMSL to develop new initiatives to increase entrepreneurship education and activity that ties into solving some of the societal issues facing the St. Louis region (e.g., race relations, barriers for minorities, policing, etc.) could help me facilitate discussions on new ways TTOs might be even more beneficial to society as a whole.

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

1. Politicians not educated on the benefits of technology transfer, particularly at the state level where funding for public research universities continues to be slashed across the nation and often little support is given to support technology transfer and related economic development activities despite the obvious benefits of doing so;
2. An increasingly homogenous background required for technology transfer professional (science and law) when there is an ever-growing need for including individuals with marketing and people skills who can not only translate science to business development people in industry, but can help grow industry relations and collaborations for technology transfer offices; and
3. Ever-decreasing federal funding for research, which highlights again the importance for industry relations and collaborations. These may not be new issues, but they are increasingly important as technology transfer offices have to expand their roles into facilitating applied research funding, entrepreneurship and economic development.

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.)

I would like the AUTM Board to focus on ways the organization can help better educate politicians on the benefits of technology transfer, at all levels of politics; ways the organization can better engage new technology transfer professionals in AUTM; ways we can better engage industry in the organization and better facilitate the increasingly needed industry sponsored research and applied research collaborations; how to encourage innovative thinking around the types of professionals who can best get technologies to the market-place; how to support the expansion of the roles of technology transfer into initiatives that can affect societal change for the better through social entrepreneurship and other means; and possibly ways to support professional development of young tech transfer professionals (via collocation or other initiatives) and the betterment of small technology transfer offices (exploring collaborations or initiatives to provide resources that small offices don't have).

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

While it is difficult for anyone in technology transfer, particularly in a small office, to ever have enough time, I can commit to both the responsibilities and time necessary to care out the position of Director.

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

Better engaging both new tech transfer professionals and industry in AUTM.

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

I have often called upon colleagues I've met through AUTM and my education gained through AUTM conferences for assistance with important decisions on how to approach and agreement negotiation or other situation. One included an important decision on what might be our biggest deal and included whether we should consider assigning patent rights in this particular situation; the feedback was critical and helped me make what seems so far to be the correct decision.

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

I am excited and energetic about the possibility of bringing a slightly different perspective to the AUTM Board of Directors and very much appreciate your vote if you chose to do so.

--- ### ---