



September 29, 2017

Dear Members –

Our profession is changing. To maintain a strong position as a leader and advocate for you, AUTM is changing, too. That's why today we have important news to share with you about a significant, proposed change for our Association.

Technology transfer has changed dramatically since our organization was founded in 1974. Today, the scope of the technology transfer profession has expanded beyond core patent licensing and technology management activities to include copyright and trademark licensing, start-up business formation, corporate engagement, and entrepreneurial growth and education. More than a third of our 3,000-plus members hail from outside universities, yet all of our members represent positions crucial for developing and advancing academic innovation. More than ever before, our Association is supporting and advocating for members with broader job duties and pursuing new alliances and initiatives to achieve that goal.

After nearly a year of research, member focus groups and a careful analysis, we (the Board of Directors) are recommending changing our Association's name to support the strategic changes we've made and are continuing to make to meet the growing needs of our members and reflect the evolved scope of our profession. We are delighted to share the proposed new name and tagline with you:

Association for Research and Innovation Advancement (ARIA)

Transforming Ideas into Opportunities

Flexibility is important in a changing landscape. That's why we're taking major steps to keep our Association strong, today and tomorrow. What does this mean for you? A lot. Over the next year, we're working hard on the launch of new and expanded initiatives to:

- **Empower Membership** with a broader scope of professional development programs intended to reinforce your role, and position you for changes in the profession
- **Grow and Diversify** by expanding partnering opportunities for corporate engagement
- **Lead the Charge** in support of academic innovation advancement on Capitol Hill, and
- **Increase our Influence** by expanding our partnerships with vital stakeholders in the innovation ecosystem.

And of course we will continue to deliver our core programs in research commercialization.

Experts from our branding agency spoke with new and veteran AUTM members about our Association's brand legacy, our mission and vision for the future. What we heard was a desire for a name refresh. Participants were eager for us to pursue a new identity that is more inclusive for all of our members.

We on the Board hold dear the name AUTM, along with its history and its value. However, it is time to consider a name that reflects the breadth of our jobs and members. The profession has evolved, particularly as we work to engage and partner with industry, investors, foundations, and regional and state governments to develop opportunities that contribute to the innovation ecosystem.

The Board agreed that a rebrand from AUTM to ARIA is vital to the continued health and longevity of our organization, and is a shift that positions us well for the future as our profession continues to evolve. ARIA represents our community of diverse members and diverse roles.

Some of you may recall that AUTM was known 30 years ago as SUPA, the Society of University Patent Administrators, before the membership voted to recognize that the profession encompassed more. While some disagreed at the time, it was, in hindsight, the right decision then, and we feel it is the right one now.

This is an important time for our organization. We're asking you now to consider this change and to reach out to us to ask questions or share your thoughts. To that end, we will be hosting two town hall style webinars, on [Oct. 2](#) and [Oct. 12](#) (follow the hyperlinks to register and participate). These webinars will be recorded and posted online. If you can't attend one of these sessions, please consider submitting your questions in advance by following either webinar link. Comments about the proposal can be submitted [here](#). Additional information about the name change proposal can be found in this [FAQ](#).

On Oct. 16 you will receive an electronic ballot to decide both the election of new Board members and to vote on this name change, the latter of which requires a two-thirds majority by voting members to pass. As your elected Board, we're recommending this change. We hope you support it at the ballot box.

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