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## Technology Transfer and the Demand for S&T Talent



In my June CEO Corner I mentioned that one way to accelerate the process of building a new “back to the future” economy in Michigan and the surrounding Great Lakes Region is to find ways to increase technology transfer within the region. The process of “technology transfer” (in my mind at least) begins with research and development and concludes with the commercialization of products or process applications resulting

from the R&D.

The volume of research and development (as measured by annual R&D expenditures) in Michigan and the Great Lakes Region is very significant, and the quantity of protected intellectual property produced in both companies and universities in the region is also substantial. A fair portion of the IP generated in companies is not core-business IP. That IP and the IP produced in universities should not sit on the shelf. It should be commercialized.

So, if you are a corporate leader you should strive to maximize commercialization of non-core business IP by creating spin-out companies, licensing it, or donating it to a university that is committed to technology transfer. If you are a university leader you should cultivate within your institution (through policies, incentives and rewards) a culture that more strongly links the research and outreach missions of your institution for the purposes of technology transfer; and we should all seek out opportunities to collaborate for this purpose. I believe collectively we are falling short of our real potential in technology transfer in this region and that reaching for that full potential is one key to building a new regional economy.

My July CEO Corner focused on the challenges facing us on the supply side of the science and technology talent equation. The popular consensus is that demand for such talent is going to exceed supply. Media reports from the recent Management Briefings Seminar in Traverse City spoke to a significant shortfall in engineering talent resulting from too few engineering students in the pipeline and weakness in science education across the country.



**President Stan Liberty**



But here's some real evidence. Kettering University imbeds a unique co-operative education experience in all programs. One aspect that makes Kettering's co-op program the most advanced in the country is that students can (and usually do) begin their co-op experience with one of our 600+ corporate partners in their freshman year. Many of these corporations recruit students even before they begin their university studies. As a service to admitted students and our corporate partners, Kettering hosts a two-day co-op job fair to facilitate matching students with co-op employment and offer our corporate partners first choice on the top talent of the new generation. This year, for the first time ever, we ran out of space for the 100+ companies wanting access to these Kettering bound S&T students! Yes, the demand for S&T talent is there.

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