

Emory Patent Group

The Office of Technology Transfer (OTT) is responsible for determining which form of intellectual property protection is most appropriate (and feasible) for inventions arising out of research, and other activities, at Emory. In some cases the OTT will file and pursue patent rights in the US and abroad. This work is typically handled by outside law firms and, unfortunately, costs associated with this work have become a significant burden on the OTT budget.

In 2009, as part of University wide cost cutting initiatives, the OTT received approval from senior leadership to bring a portion of the patent work in-house. The office is now pleased to announce the creation of the Emory Patent Group (EPG). The group currently includes two attorneys and a paralegal who are tasked with administering patent services for certain Emory technology. This group will allow us to reduce costs without sacrificing patent protection.

Bringing patent work in-house is very uncommon for university tech transfer offices. It is likely that the two most common reasons that more universities do not create in-house patent counsel are: 1) uncertainty around cash savings, and 2) concern that a few in-house patent attorneys will not be able to cover the variability in technology. OTT has carefully evaluated the implications of bringing our patent work in-house and we have heavily vetted the potential cost savings. Further, unlike many universities Emory's focus in biomedical research makes it more practical to cover all relevant technical areas compared to many of our peers. We look forward to continuing to implement the EPG as both a cost savings and value creation mechanism.