

# License to Invent

Even in the midst of a nationwide economic slowdown, the Office of Technology Licensing (OTL) has enjoyed one of its most productive years ever. Last year saw robust growth and this year our license deals and income have increased significantly. License agreements with industry tally nine, up from five last year. We've received close to thirty invention disclosures from a pool of faculty, post-docs, graduate students, senior research scientists, and staff.



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Moreover, revenue from our existing license agreements is up nearly 50 percent over last year. Naturally, people like to focus on the money, but there are many other equally valuable benefits of tech transfer at Brandeis, including attracting and retaining top-notch faculty; fostering corporate investment in basic research, industry collaborations, and consulting relationships; and cultivating job opportunities for grads and post-docs. All of these opportunities fuel our primary mission in OTL: to bring Brandeis inventions and discoveries to market for public benefit.

We're also bringing tech transfer to business students. In the spring semester, Professor Preeta Banerjee at the International Business School (IBS) used inventions from my office as case studies in a highly popular course on developing technology strategy. Business and science students met with faculty inventors and developed strategic business plans for Brandeis inventions. This class provided real-world experience for the students and created good chemistry between the scientists and the business students.

Our growing presence in the world of tech transfer was nicely recognized earlier this year when Brandeis won kudos for two contributions to human health from the Association of University Technology Managers. In its annual *Better World Report*, the association selected one hundred university technologies globally that are making a difference in the world, including Larry Wangh's DNA assay using LATE-PCR to test for deadly microbes in the field; and KC Hayes and Dan Perlman's cholesterol-lowering Smart Balance buttery spreads. Check out the report at [www.autm.net/about/dsp.Detail.cfm?pid=219](http://www.autm.net/about/dsp.Detail.cfm?pid=219).

The main tool we use to ensure Brandeis inventions reach the public is to patent our discoveries and license them to companies that will commercialize them. Here's a sampling of this year's new license agreements:

- Link Medicine, Cambridge, Massachusetts, licensed a new discovery from biochemists Greg Petsko and Dagmar Ringe. The license covers their novel method of stabilizing a protein implicated in Parkinson's as well as other neurodegenerative diseases. Link Medicine, founded with the goal of curing Parkinson's disease, will use this discovery to develop new therapies for this incurable condition.

- Chemist Judy Herzfeld and graduate student Jianping Hu developed several improved nuclear magnetic resonance probes and licensed them to Revolution NMR in Fort Collins, Colorado. The company plans to commercialize the probes, which have unique qualities for work at the high magnetic fields increasingly used in studies of protein structure.

- Chemist Jeff Agar discovered and patented a novel class of compounds as well as an application for a class of drugs already thought to be useful in the treatment of metabolic disorders. The hope is that some of these compounds can be developed into treatments for neurodegenerative disorders, including Lou Gehrig's disease, his area of specialty. Brandeis licensed Agar's discovery to ExSAR, a pharmaceutical company in Monmouth Junction, New Jersey. ExSAR is commercializing Agar's discovery as well as funding further research in his lab.

- We licensed a patent covering our phytosterol technology developed by Hayes and Perlman to Los Angeles-based Corazonas Foods for a number of new products—heart-healthy cookies, potato chips, and crackers. Corazonas has an existing license to sell heart-healthy tortilla chips made with this Brandeis technology (which were featured on the "O List" in the July issue of *The Oprah Magazine*). Look for the potato chips soon!

- We licensed three new patents from chemist Li Deng to Daiso Co., Ltd., in Osaka, Japan. Deng's discoveries make it easier and cheaper to manufacture pharmaceuticals, while also reducing toxic byproducts. Daiso has licensed a number of Deng's other patents and supports research in his lab.

—Irene Abrams, executive director,  
Office of Technology Licensing