



UNC CHARLOTTE

The WILLIAM STATES LEE COLLEGE of ENGINEERING

Office of the Dean

9201 University City Boulevard, Charlotte, NC 28223-0001
t/ 704.687.8244 f/ 704.687.8267 www.coe.uncc.edu

January 10, 2012

Mr. David Kappos, Director
United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO)
600 Dulany Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

Dear Director Kappos:

I would like to recommend North Carolina as an excellent location to establish a satellite branch of the United States Patent and Trademark Office. As dean of The William States Lee College of Engineering at UNC Charlotte, the presence of a satellite office will enhance the ability of engineering and technology workers and students to pursue their innovations. North Carolina and the Charlotte region are home to many high technology companies, both large and small, and the Lee College has a focus on applied research and reduction-to-practice. The ability to connect inventors with the USPTO is a critical element in transitioning ideas into reality.

The region has a particularly strong presence in the energy sector where the phrase "Energy Capitol" is often used to refer to Charlotte's national role in the energy industry. Affordable, safe, and reliable energy is dependent on innovation and our ability to capture ideas. The Lee College is home to the Energy Production and Infrastructure Center (EPIC) which is a resource for applied energy research and a provider of the nation's energy work force. A new \$76M facility funded by the state to support North Carolina's central role in energy technology is opening on campus this spring. EPIC collaborates with numerous energy companies including Duke Energy, Shaw, Siemens, Westinghouse, URS, Areva, EPRI, to name a few. The college is also a close partner with NC State and NC A&T on the North Carolina Ocean Energy program looking at pioneering ways to extract power from this valuable resource.

There are several other research centers housed in the college that focus on innovation and applied research: the Center for Precision Metrology (CPM), the North Carolina Motorsports and Automotive Research Center (NCMARC), the Center for Biomedical Engineering Systems (CBES), and the IDEaS center (Infrastructure, Design, Environment and Sustainability). A core value of the college is applied research, and the college is a major source of engineering and technology talent in the state. The college awards approximately 500 engineering degrees each year at BS, MS, and Ph.D. levels. Among the approximately 350 engineering schools reviewed nationwide in 2010, the Mechanical Engineering program was 48th largest in the number of BS graduates¹ and the Electrical Engineering program was 60th largest². In addition, the Engineering Technology program had the 11th largest enrollment in the country¹.



Mr. David Kappos
Page 2
January 10, 2012

The college's Industrial Solutions Lab also engages 35-40 multi-disciplinary student teams on industry-funded projects each year often leading to novel solutions to industry problems. This close industry-university partnership enables students to use their creativity to tackle real-world problems that can lead to new products and processes.

Thank you for the role that you play in making the United States a leader in technology innovation and idea creation. I highly recommend North Carolina as a vital partner in those efforts and as a suitable home for the USPTO. If you have any questions, please contact me at 704-687-8242 or robejohn@uncc.edu.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert E. Johnson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Robert E. Johnson
Professor and Dean

/rej

¹ Profiles of Engineering & Engineering Technology Colleges, 2010 Edition, ASEE, 2011.

² Engineering and Technology Degrees 2010, EWC of the American Assoc. of Engineering Societies, 2010.