

November 10, 2012

Mr. David Kappos
Under Secretary for Intellectual Property
Director for the United States Patent and Trade Office
Department of Commerce
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Under Secretary Kappos:

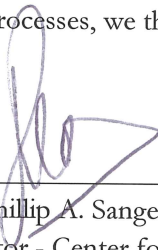
As one of the 17 institutions of the University of North Carolina, Western Carolina University (WCU) is located in the rural western mountain region of North Carolina with Asheville being 50 miles to the northeast. With several initiatives underway to stimulate regional economic development and business startup, WCU's Department of Engineering and Technology and the Center for Rapid Product Realization (Rapid Center) are excited about the potential of your office locating a USPTO satellite in North Carolina, as greater accessibility to services and increased timeliness would facilitate our efforts.

As an EDA CENTER, WCU's Rapid Center, in collaboration with the Small Business and Technology Development Center (SBTDC), the Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation (CEI), and the Department of Engineering and Technology's faculty and students have focused efforts on providing assistance to entrepreneurs and regional firms for the development and launch of innovative new products and services. The primary mission of the collaboration is to accelerate job creation and retention in existing enterprises as well as emerging entrepreneurs through the commercialization of new products through technical and business services. These services include technical engineering services, reverse engineering, rapid prototyping, quality testing and manufacturing as well as the critical marketing and business counseling needed for a successful product launch. We believe that innovation and new product development and launching are at the core of the economic future of western North Carolina. Improved access to resources of the USPTO would reinforce the resources supporting this direction.

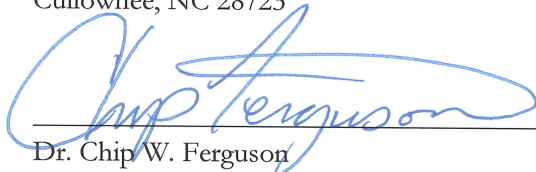
The western region of North Carolina has a strong entrepreneurial spirit and business friendly culture. Western North Carolina is well-represented in *Forbes* magazine's 11th annual Best Places for Business & Careers ranking. Of the 200 largest metropolitan areas in the U.S., the Asheville metro ranked No. 2 based on the cost of doing business with the Hickory metro ranked No. 4. Despite this business

friendly location, startups and small businesses have notably poor survival and success rates. One of the most important long-term solutions for the region was “support for entrepreneurs and small businesses”. The Council of Competitiveness, in a recent report, notes that a major national challenge to innovation and competitiveness is providing adequate support for entrepreneurs. The Five Year Vision plan, prepared by AdvantageWest for the western North Carolina region, set growth in clusters of innovation as essential for success, where at the core is an energetic fountain of new products and services on which to support this growth.

Because of the collaborative efforts of several institutional centers and organizations in western North Carolina, paralleled with similar efforts across our great state, which are dedicated to the creation and sustainment of businesses and entrepreneurs through the creation of innovative new products, services and processes, we think North Carolina is a model location for a USPTO satellite office.



Dr. Phillip A. Sanger
Director - Center for Rapid Product Realization
Kimmel School - Western Carolina University
Cullowhee, NC 28723



Dr. Chip W. Ferguson
Interim Department Head - Engineering and Technology
Kimmel School - Western Carolina University
Cullowhee, NC 28723