

KATHLEEN BRAGDON
SENIOR ADVISOR, OFFICE OF PATENT QUALITY

Kathleen Kerr Bragdon holds a B.A. degree from Connecticut College and a Ph.D. degree from Brandeis University, both in biochemistry. Following a postdoctoral position in the Laboratory of Cell Biology at the National Cancer Institute, NIH, Ms. Bragdon joined the USPTO, specifically in Technology Center 1600 for Biotechnology & Organic Chemistry, in 1999 and examined patent applications in classes 435 and 514 concerning recombinant enzymes and their applications. Ms. Bragdon was recognized as examining Master's level art in 2003, became a primary examiner in 2004, and received the Department of Commerce Bronze Medal Award in 2005. Further in 2005, she became the supervisory patent examiner of Art Unit 1656 examining enzymology and protein crystallography patent applications. In 2008, Ms. Bragdon accepted a position as a Quality Assurance Specialist for Technology Center 1600. Her roles in training and quality assurance prepared her to accept a detail in 2013 that focused on AIA First Inventor to File implementation and training for both examiners and the public. Ms. Bragdon recently received a Department of Commerce Gold Medal award for her work on the AIA First Inventor to File implementation. Ms. Bragdon accepted a new position as Senior Advisor to Deputy Commissioner for Patent Quality Valencia Martin Wallace where she focuses on the development and implementation of the USPTO's Enhanced Patent Quality Initiative.



ANTHONY CAPUTA
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF PATENT QUALITY ASSURANCE

Anthony (Tony) Caputa is the Director of the Office of Patent Quality Assurance (OPQA). As the Director of OPQA, Mr. Caputa is responsible for assessment and measurement of patent examination quality at the USPTO as well as providing support to the patent examining Corps in developing and implementing data-driven quality improvement initiatives.

Mr. Caputa received his Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Wisconsin in Bacteriology and a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree from the University of Minnesota in Veterinary Microbiology.



JANET GONGOLA

SENIOR ADVISOR, OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY AND DIRECTOR

Janet Gongola is the Senior Advisor in the Office of the Under Secretary of Commerce and Director of the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO). In this capacity, she advises on all agency matters, focusing in particular on law and policy.

Previously, Ms. Gongola held several other positions at the USPTO. She served as the Associate Commissioner for Patent Examination Policy and was responsible for developing patent policy for the agency. She also was selected as the Patent Reform Coordinator charged with implementing the America Invents Act and was an Associate Solicitor in the Office of the Solicitor defending the agency in the federal courts.

Before joining the USPTO, Ms. Gongola was a law clerk for Chief Judge Paul R. Michel at the Federal Circuit and for Chief Judge Sue L. Robinson in the U.S. District Court for the District of Delaware. In addition, Ms. Gongola worked as a patent attorney and research chemist at Eli Lilly and Company.

TARIQ HAFIZ
GROUP DIRECTOR, TECHNOLOGY CENTER 2600

Tariq Hafiz joined the USPTO in 1992 as a patent examiner and in 2012 became a Group Director for Technology Center 2600 specializing in Communications. Mr. Hafiz led efforts to revamp the initial After Final Consideration Pilot (AFCP) to create AFCP 2.0, which includes increased collaboration between the examiner and applicant. He is also a lead for examiner Interview Practice and recently helped launch an Interview Specialist position to assist both internal and external stakeholders. Prior to USPTO, he worked in software development at Computer Sciences Corporation for over three years. Mr. Hafiz earned a bachelor's degree in physics from the College of William and Mary with graduate work in electrical engineering at Virginia Tech.

MARIA T. HOLTSMANN

DIRECTOR OF INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS, OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL PATENT COOPERATION

Maria Holtmann is the Director of International Programs in the Office of International Patent Cooperation coordinating numerous, cross-cutting activities including work sharing, information technology (IT), and general policy formulation. She is a key liaison among the international stakeholder and IP office communities in both diplomatic and outreach contexts. Prior to joining the USPTO in 2008, she led technical staff at the National Coordination Office for the Office of Science and Technology Policy at the White House.

Ms. Holtmann received a Master of Science in Human-Computer Interaction from Stevens Institute of Technology and a Bachelor of Science from the State University of New York, Cortland. She began her career at AT&T as a human factors and usability engineer and spent over 10 years in the telecommunications industry focusing on the design of internal business applications and consumer products.

Ms. Holtmann has over 20 years of experience in IT, telecommunications, and management consulting industries leading large-scale projects. She has held executive leadership positions at Ernst & Young and the American Institutes for Research. While at Ernst & Young and AT&T, she supported several multi-million dollar international merger and acquisition teams in both senior management and technical roles.

TOM HUGHES

SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER, OFFICE OF PATENT QUALITY

Tom Hughes joined the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) as a patent examiner after receiving a Bachelor of Science degree in Mechanical Engineering from the University of Maryland. He has over 26 years of experience in Intellectual Property at the USPTO examining and supervising in technologies such as mechanical manufacturing, electronic gaming and surgical instruments. Mr. Hughes has held several positions within the USPTO including Primary Examiner, Supervisory Patent Examiner (SPE) and Quality Assurance Specialist and was awarded the Department of Commerce Bronze Medal, Exceptional Career Award and Distinguished Career Award for exceptional performance and service. Currently, as a SPE in Technology Center (TC) 3700, he is responsible for managing and training a group of 18 patent examiners in the area of surgical cutting instruments, sutures and stents. Mr. Hughes is currently the lead point of contact in TCs 3600 and 3700 (mechanical disciplines) for the First Inventor to File (FITF) provisions of the America Invents Act (AIA), responsible for developing and delivering training materials to all examiners and SPEs and also for implementing AIA/FITF protocol in both TCs. In addition, Mr. Hughes is an instructor at the Patent Training Academy on topics including 35 USC 101 Patent Eligibility and Double Patenting and is also the TC 3700 coordinator on issues and training concerning 35 USC 101 examination guidelines in addition to providing support on several other special projects throughout the USPTO. He is also a Technical Training and Medical Device Customer Partnership coordinator in TC 3700. After completing a detail as Senior Advisor to the Deputy Commissioner of Patent Quality, Mr. Hughes accepted a position as Supervisor in the Office of Patent Quality Assurance.

DANIEL HUNTER
ACTING DIRECTOR FOR INTERNATIONAL WORK SHARING, PLANNING,
AND IMPLEMENTATION IN THE OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL PATENT
COOPERATION

Daniel Hunter graduated from Penn State in 1982 with a Bachelor's of Science in Engineering Science. Following graduation, he was commissioned in the US Navy and taught at the Naval Nuclear Power School. Following a tour on the aircraft carrier USS America, he attended graduate school at the Naval Postgraduate School and received his Masters of Science in Electrical Engineering (Space Systems Engineering) in 1990. He later joined the USPTO as a patent examiner in 1993 in the telephony art, becoming a Supervisory Patent Examiner in wireless communications in 1999. He has subsequently been designated as a subject matter expert on patent operations and patent data and served as a senior advisor in the Office for the Commissioner of Patents focusing on issues associated with patent prosecution and on improving the patent examination processes. He developed the business architecture for the Patent's organization and is responsible for developing and maintaining the activities of the Patent's ABI cost model. He is currently the Acting Director for International Work Sharing, Planning, and Implementation in the Office of International Patent Cooperation.

MARTIN RATER

CHIEF STATISTICIAN, OFFICE OF PATENT QUALITY ASSURANCE

Martin (Marty) Rater joined the USPTO in 2000 as part of the Office of Quality Management and Training where he led efforts related to customer and employee surveys and provided statistical consultation for both the Patents and Trademarks quality review programs. In 2004, Mr. Rater transferred to the Office of Patent Quality Assurance (OPQA) and today oversees several aspects of the quality review program such as sample design, review methodology, and reporting of quality metrics. Mr. Rater also oversees OPQA's ISO 9001-certified quality management system and serves on several teams tasked with evaluating program effectiveness, primarily focusing on impacts to quality and production. Prior to joining the USPTO, Mr. Rater worked as a consultant designing program evaluations and providing data analysis and survey expertise to Federal agencies and Fortune 500 companies. Upon graduation from the University of Georgia in 1990, Mr. Rater began his career working for USDA, conducting surveys and data analyses related to the estimation of crop and livestock production.

JESSICA PATTERSON
PROGRAM MANAGER, OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL PATENT COOPERATION

Jessica Patterson currently serves as a Program Manager in the Office of International Patent Cooperation, overseeing the implementation of key initiatives in support of the organization. In addition, Ms. Patterson is the manager of the Global Dossier program, a complex, strategic initiative modernizing the international patent system by providing cutting-edge services for all stakeholders.

Ms. Patterson began working at the USPTO in 2006 and has served in many leadership roles throughout her career. She has been involved with the Global Dossier project since 2012. In 2014, Ms. Patterson also served as President of the USPTO's Asian Pacific American Network, a voluntary employee organization comprised of more than 800 members.

Ms. Patterson holds a Bachelor of Arts in Government & Politics and Criminal Justice & Criminology from the University of Maryland, and a Master's in Public Policy, with a focus on International Governance, from George Mason University.

DANIEL RYMAN
SUPERVISORY PATENT REEXAMINATION SPECIALIST, OFFICE OF PATENT
QUALITY

Daniel Ryman holds a B.S. degree in Electrical Engineering from the Colorado School of Mines. In 2002, Mr. Ryman joined the USPTO as a patent examiner in an art unit focusing on multiplex communications, and he was recognized as examining Master's level art in 2006. In 2007, Mr. Ryman became a primary examiner. In the following year, he received a J.D. from the George Washington University Law School and accepted a position as a Supervisory Patent Examiner in the multiplex communications area in Technology Center 2600. In 2011, Mr. Ryman joined the Central Reexamination Unit as a Supervisory Patent Reexamination Specialist in the electrical area. Mr. Ryman received the Department of Commerce Bronze Medal Award in 2009 and the Exceptional Career Award in 2015. In 2014, Mr. Ryman accepted a year-long detail at the non-profit organization Partnership for Public Service. Upon his return to the USPTO in 2015, he began a detail in the Office of Patent Quality where he focuses on the development and implementation of projects associated with the USPTO's Enhanced Patent Quality Initiative.

CASSANDRA SPYROU
SENIOR ADVISOR, OFFICE OF PATENT QUALITY

Cassandra (Sandie) Spyrou holds a B.S. degree in Electrical Engineering from Widener University. Ms. Spyrou joined the USPTO in 1989 and examined patent applications in both the technological arts of cameras and musical instruments becoming a primary examiner in 1995. While a Primary Examiner, she received a Department of Commerce Bronze Medal for her contributions to the development of an innovative training program for new hires and the 1997 Office of Civil Rights Director's award for her support of the equal employment opportunity program. Ms. Spyrou was selected as a Supervisory Patent Examiner in the technology of Optical Elements in 1998 and stepped into a newly developed position as the first Training Quality Assurance Specialist for Technology Center 2800 in 2002. In 2008, she took on the leadership role for the quality program in TC 2800 first as a Workgroup Coordinator and then in 2011 as the Quality Subject Matter Expert. Ms. Spyrou has served as acting Group Director both in 2008 and 2013 and earned for her individual performance the Department of Commerce Bronze medal in 2009, the USPTO Exceptional Career award in 2010 and the Distinguished Career award in 2013. Her roles in training and quality assurance prepared her to accept a detail in 2013 that focused on AIA First Inventor to File implementation and training for both examiners and the public. Ms. Spyrou recently received a Department of Commerce Gold Medal award for her work on the AIA First Inventor to File implementation. Ms. Spyrou recently accepted a new position as Senior Advisor to Deputy Commissioner for Patent Quality Valencia Martin Wallace where she focuses on the development and implementation of the USPTO's Enhanced Patent Quality Initiative.

DEBORAH STEPHENS

ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER, OFFICE OF PATENT INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

Deborah Stephens holds a B.A. degree from George Mason University and a Masters degree from The George Washington University in Human Resource Management. Ms. Stephens is currently the Associate Commissioner for the Office of Patent Information Management, and is serving as the Acting Deputy Commissioner for Patent Administration. Ms. Stephens joined the USPTO in 1991 and has provided leadership in multiple areas within the Patents organization for over 20 years. Ms. Stephens has been recognized by the Department of Commerce with numerous Bronze and Silver Medal Awards throughout her career for leading efforts to identify and deploy numerous processes and tools that increased quality, efficiency, and promoted leadership in these areas in the international Intellectual Property community. Ms. Stephens recently collaborated with the Office of the Chief Information Officer to launch the first of a series of next generation information technology tools that will provide modern, integrated tools and processes for the entire Patent Examination Corps that will impact the quality and efficiency of the entire patent process.



VALENCIA MARTIN WALLACE
DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FOR PATENT QUALITY

Valencia Martin Wallace is Deputy Commissioner for Patent Quality. She was appointed to this newly-created position in January 2015. In her role as Deputy Commissioner for Patent Quality, Ms. Martin Wallace manages and leads the Patent Organization's quality initiatives. She is responsible for improving the high quality of the USPTO's patent examination processes and products by implementing and maintaining a comprehensive quality management system. As part of her twenty-two year career at the USPTO, she recently served as Assistant Deputy Commissioner (ADC) for Patent Operations from 2011-2015. In the position, Ms. Martin Wallace oversaw operations in the software technology centers, served as executive co-lead on the implementation of the AIA First-Inventor-to-File statutory framework, and led the development and implementation of the Office of Patent Examination Support Services, which centralized the Technical Support Staff in a manner that allowed for greater efficiency and effectiveness.

Ms. Martin Wallace is a graduate of Howard University, where she earned a Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering, and The George Washington University School of Law, where she earned a Juris Doctorate. She has also received a certificate in Advanced Public Administration from Syracuse University's Maxwell School of Public Administration.

ANDREA WELLINGTON
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER, OFFICE OF PATENT QUALITY

Andrea Wellington attended the University of Michigan and Lawrence Technological University where she received her B.S. degree in Mechanical Engineering in June, 1988 and later graduated with a J.D. from George Washington University Law School in May, 1993. She joined the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office in August, 1988 as a Patent Examiner in Group 350 (now Technology Center 3600) examining applications in the Clutch and Transmission technologies and was hired as a Supervisory Patent Examiner in the USPTO in June, 1997 managing a manufacturing technology art unit in Technology Center 3700. She has served in various detailed positions within the agency since joining the USPTO, including the Office of Petitions, the Office of Patent Cooperation Treaty, the Office of Patent Information Management, the Patent Trial and Appeal Board, and the Office of Patent Training. In 2005, she was responsible for the creation and development of the Patent Hiring Center and served as its first Operations Manager in support of Patents' expansive hiring operations. She also served as the Deputy General for Patents for the 2008 and 2009 CFC campaigns. Ms. Wellington was assigned in 2006 as a SPE in Technology Center 2600 over the Dynamic Memory devices and later served as an Acting Technology Center Director in that TC. She recently served on an Intergovernmental Personnel Act detail to the Partnership for Public Service where she led many projects serving the federal government as a whole. Ms. Wellington is a recipient of many awards including a National Performance Review, Department of Commerce Bronze Medal and Exceptional Career Awards.