



THE UNIVERSITY of NORTH CAROLINA  
**GREENSBORO**

Office of Innovation  
Commercialization

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January 17, 2012

Mr. David Kappos, Director  
United States Patent and Trademark Office  
600 Dulany Street  
Alexandria, VA 22314

Dear Director Kappos:

With the support of the Chancellor and the Vice Chancellor for Research and Economic Development at [The University of North Carolina at Greensboro](#), I write to encourage you to consider North Carolina as a candidate for the establishment of a satellite office of the USPTO, as outlined in HR 1429, the 'Leahy-Smith America Invents Act,' in order to better connect patent filers and innovators with the office, enhance examiner retention, improve quality of patent examination and decrease the number of patents waiting for examination.

The University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNCG) is a public, coeducational, doctoral-granting, residential university chartered in 1891, located in Greensboro NC, midway between Atlanta and Washington DC, and about an hour east of the Research Triangle Park area. Greensboro is the third-largest city in the state, with a population of about 260,000. Student enrollment at UNCG is 18,000 and growing. Students come from 48 states and 82 countries, with a 27% minority enrollment rate. UNCG is one of the 17 campuses in the University of North Carolina System, which as a whole can provide a broad base of expertise to a USPTO satellite office, including life sciences, biotechnology, nanotechnology, engineering, education, and law, among others. I believe this broad range of expertise across the state would be beneficial to a satellite office in being able to attract and retain subject matter expertise in its examiners. Our institution has strong research activity in life sciences, education, health and human performance, chemistry and biochemistry to list a few, and continues to grow in these and other areas, all of which could benefit from a regional USPTO office, as well as provide support for the examination process.

As the research enterprise continues to grow at our institution, UNCG has engaged in many opportunities and partnerships within our region and state, working with the [NC Biotechnology Center](#), [Piedmont Triad Partnership](#), the [Council for Entrepreneurial Development](#), the [Small Business Technology Development Center](#), our Chambers of Commerce in the region, and other regional

economic development and entrepreneurial groups. Our own [Gateway University Research Park](#), created in conjunction with the [North Carolina Agricultural and Technical University \(NCA&T\)](#), a Historically Black College/University (HBCU), provides opportunities for research partnerships as well as space for small businesses spun out of our academic environments. Located on the Gateway Campus, the partnership that UNCG has with NCA&T in the creation of the newly formed [Joint School of NanoSciences and NanoEngineering](#), supported by more than \$60 million in funding from the NC General Assembly, has attracted a significant number of highly qualified academic researchers as well as stimulating several partnerships with industry, creating significant opportunities for the creation of innovation and intellectual property as well as industry collaboration.

In recognition of the increasing innovative capacity developing at UNCG, our institution created an Office of Technology Transfer in 2002, renamed as the Office of Innovation Commercialization in 2010. Since its opening, the office has seen an increase in intellectual property creation across our campus as a direct result of the research being conducted as well as other innovative activities our faculty staff and students have been engaged in. Patent application submissions have increased, as have copyright and trademark registrations and licenses as the campus community continues to engage in promoting the applied use of the knowledge developed within the institution. Since the office opened just under ten years ago, we have submitted 65 patent applications, 8 of which have been issued. We currently have several applications that have been in the examination process between 4-5 years. I truly believe that having a regional office will provide significant opportunities to speed up that process, as the patent examiners, the inventors, and legal counsel will have greater accessibility to each other, increasing the potential throughput of the examination process, bringing additional value added to our industry partners as we work to help the innovations developed across our campus realize their applied outcomes.

In sum, I believe that the establishment of a satellite office of the USPTO in the state of North Carolina would enhance our local and regional economies by facilitating the protection of the innovative capacity and results of the research conducted across the state. This in turn would have the potential to generate significant economic development impact by attracting and retaining industries as well as stimulating the creation of new spinouts from the academic environment. I strongly encourage you to consider the state of North Carolina as a potential location for a regional USPTO satellite office.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lisa Noble".

Director,  
Office of Innovation Commercialization,  
University of North Carolina at Greensboro