invention: DOES GENDER MATTER?

a conversation on the gender disparity in who is receiving and commercializing patents

Michelle K. Lee

Under Secretary of Commerce for Intellectual Property and Director of the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO)

As Under Secretary of Commerce for Intellectual Property and Director of the United States Patent and Trademark Office, Michelle K. Lee provides leadership and oversight to one of the largest intellectual property offices in the world.

Ms. Lee serves as a principal advisor to the President, through the Secretary of Commerce, on both domestic and international intellectual property matters, and provides leadership and oversight of the day-to-day management of the policy, budget, and operations for an agency of over 12,000 employees. Through intellectual property, and its protection, she also promotes innovation domestically and drives international harmonization efforts, in support of the administration's top economic priorities to increase economic growth.

Ms. Lee is the first woman to serve as Director of the USPTO. Prior to her current role, she served as Deputy Director, and before that as the first Director of the USPTO's Silicon Valley office.

Ms. Lee has spent most of her professional career advising some of the country's most innovative companies on technical, legal, and business matters. Prior to joining the USPTO, she was Deputy General Counsel for Google and the company's first Head of Patents and Patent Strategy. She also served as a partner at the Silicon Valley-based law firm of Fenwick and West, where she specialized in advising a wide range of high-technology clients from start-ups to Fortune 100 companies on patent law, intellectual property, litigation and corporate matters.

Prior to her career as a legal advisor to technology companies, Ms. Lee worked in the federal judiciary, serving as a law clerk for the Honorable Vaughn R. Walker on the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California where she worked on the precedent-setting Apple v. Microsoft copyright infringement case. As a law clerk for the Honorable Paul R. Michel on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit, she assisted with many patent and trademark appeals. Before building her legal career, Ms. Lee worked as a computer scientist at Hewlett-Packard Research Laboratories, as well as at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (M.I.T.) Artificial Intelligence Laboratory. She holds a B.S. and an M.S. in electrical engineering and computer science from M.I.T., as well as a J.D. from Stanford Law School.

Ms. Lee was featured by Politico Magazine as one of the Politico 50 for 2015, named a 2015 Washingtonian Tech Titan by Washingtonian Magazine and listed as one of D.C.'s Top 50 Women in Tech in 2015 by Fedscoop. The San Francisco Business Times and San Jose Business Journal recognized Ms. Lee as Best Bay Area IP Lawyer in 2012 and one of the top 100 most influential women in the Silicon Valley in 2013.

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Dr. Lisa D. Cook

Associate Professor in the Department of Economics
and in International Relations
Michigan State

Dr. Lisa D. Cook is an Associate Professor in the Department of Economics and in International Relations (James Madison College) at Michigan State University. She was the first Marshall Scholar from Spelman College and received a second B.A. in Philosophy, Politics, and Economics from Oxford University. She earned a Ph.D. in economics from the University of California, Berkeley. Prior to this appointment and while on faculty at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government, she was Deputy Director for Africa Research at the Center for International Development, Managing Editor of the Harvard University-World Economic Forum Africa Competitiveness Report, and contributed to the Making Markets Work program at Harvard Business School. She was also a National Fellow at Stanford University. Among her current research interests are economic growth and development, economic history, innovation, and financial institutions and markets. Dr. Cook is the author of a number of published articles, book chapters, and working papers, and her research has been supported by the National Science Foundation, the National Bureau of Economic Research, Harvard Business School, the Economic History Association, and the National Poverty Center at the University of Michigan, among others. Based on her research, she was appointed in 2013 to the Advisory Boards of the Smithsonian Institution's Lemelson Center for the Study of Invention and Innovation and of the Washington Center for Equitable Growth. With former colleague and co-author Jeffrey Sachs, she advised the governments of Nigeria and Rwanda, and, as a Council on Foreign Relations International Affairs Fellow, she was Senior Adviser on Finance and Development at the Treasury Department from 2000 to 2001 and is currently a member of the Council on Foreign Relations. During the 2011-2012 academic year, she was on leave at the President's Council of Economic Advisers and worked on the euro zone, financial instruments, entrepreneurship, and innovation. In February 2015, she began serving as the president of the National Economic Association and is the Co-Director of the American Economic Association Summer Training Program. She is a guest columnist for the Detroit Free Press and a regular contributor on MSNBC. She speaks English, French, Russian, Spanish, and Wolof.

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Dr. Catherine Ashcraft

Senior Research Scientist

National Center for Women & Information Technology

Catherine Ashcraft is a Senior Research Scientist with the National Center for Women & Information Technology (NCWIT) at the University of Colorado Boulder. Her research focuses on issues related to gender, diversity, and technology; organizational change and curriculum reform; and popular culture, media representations, and youth identity (especially as relates to race-ethnicity, gender, class, sexuality). She also has taught and presented at national and international venues on these topics for the past 15 years and has worked with a variety of government entities, advocating for CS/IT/ICT education and workplace policy.

In her role at NCWIT, she employs a unique blend of research and practice, overseeing primary research projects and translating that research into practical resources that organizations can use for diversifying their technology workforce and for creating more inclusive technology workplaces. She also directs reform initiatives for NCWIT's Workforce Alliance, a consortium of leading, global technology companies and departments, and works with senior executives to implement these initiatives.

Dr. Ashcraft has published widely in top education and interdisciplinary journals, nationally and internationally, including the American Educational Research Journal, the International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education, Men & Masculinities, Curriculum Inquiry, Teachers College Record, Anthropology & Education Journal, Youth & Society, among others. Her most recent NCWIT publications include Girls in IT: The Facts and Male Advocates and Allies: Promoting Gender Diversity in Technology Workplaces. She also is responsible for securing funding for CS/IT/ICT research initiatives and has served as a Principal Investigator on several research grants.

Before coming to NCWIT Catherine was an Assistant Professor of Multicultural Education and Director of Diversity Learning at Western Washington University. She also has worked as a middle/high school public school teacher and as the Community Education Director for a battered women's shelter, where she implemented programs to address a variety of gender inequities, including workplace and dating violence. She obtained her M.A. in Organizational Communication and her Ph.D. in Education from the University of Colorado.

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Meg Boulware

Owner of Boulware & Valoir law firm

Houston, TX

In 2010, Ms. Boulware started a woman-owned boutique firm building on her years of experience in international and domestic IP work. She tried the first validity and infringement arbitration of a U.S. patent, which case was tried before the International Chamber of Commerce. She has represented clients in trademark infringement cases including over 100 cases before federal courts and the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. In addition to litigation experience, Ms. Boulware has prosecuted patents in chemical, mechanical and biotech areas. She procured pioneer patents on cattle cloning in the U.S. Ms. Boulware supervises international trademark portfolios and advises on international market strategies for clients including Fortune 500 companies. Meg was the first woman president of the American Intellectual Property Law Association and is active in national IP associations.

In 2012 Ms. Boulware received the first ever Americas Women in Business Law Award for Best in Patent (www.expertguides.com). Since 2005, Ms. Boulware has been recognized in Chambers USA – Leaders in their Field. She also has been included in The Best Lawyers in America for Intellectual Property in IP Law & Business since 2006, and has been selected to The International Who's Who of Business Lawyers and Best Lawyers in America for the past 15 years along with numerous other recognitions both international and U.S. In addition, she is active in community activities and is a Trustee of the Houston Grand Opera and served on the Board of the Clemson University Foundation.

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Dr. Inga H. Musselman

Acting Provost

The University of Texas at Dallas

Dr. Inga Musselman serves as the Acting Provost for The University of Texas at Dallas. Since 2008, Dr. Musselman has overseen the process of faculty review, promotion, and tenure, first as Associate Provost and then as Senior Vice Provost when her role expanded to assume additional responsibilities in the areas of personnel, facilities, and finance.

A B.A. graduate in chemistry from Gettysburg College, Inga Musselman earned her Ph.D. degree in analytical chemistry from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill while performing doctoral research at the National Institute of Standards and Technology. Dr. Musselman conducted postdoctoral research in the Department of Materials Science and Engineering at North Carolina State University where she was also associated with the Precision Engineering Center.

Professor Musselman joined the UT Dallas faculty as an Assistant Professor of Chemistry in 1992. Early in her career, Musselman studied the mechanisms and limits of contrast in scanning tunneling microscopy (STM) images of molecular adsorbates, with the goal of advancing STM as a chemically sensitive microscopy technique. More recently, Dr. Musselman's research interests have focused on the development and application of microscopy methods for the study of materials structure in the areas of gas separations, fuel cells, and bionanotechnology. Dr. Musselman has been awarded 4 patents and has published more than 80 peer-reviewed journal articles and conference papers, 2 chapters in edited books and 1 edited proceedings. She has been the primary research supervisor of numerous doctoral, masters, and bachelors degree students as well as high school summer students.

Inga Musselman has been an active member of the American Chemical Society, the North American Membrane Society, and the Microanalysis Society for which she also served as President, Director, and Secretary of the Executive Council, as well as a tour speaker, program co-chair, symposium co-chair, newsletter editor, and currently as Chair of the Education Committee. The Microanalysis Society presented Dr. Musselman with the Presidential Service Award in 2003. Dr. Musselman has served as a member of the editorial board for Experimental Biology and Medicine.

Dr. Inga Musselman steps into the role of Acting Provost following Dr. Hobson Wildenthal who currently serves as President ad interim of the University.

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Evelyn Chen

Senior Counsel, Ericsson's IP Rights & Licensing group

Dallas, TX

Evelyn Chen is a Senior Counsel in Ericsson's IP Rights & Licensing group. In her role, Evelyn supports Ericsson's patent licensing policies and practices. Prior to joining Ericsson, Evelyn was a patent litigator at Sidley Austin LLP, representing both national and international clients. Evelyn also clerked for the Honorable David Folsom in the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Texas. She has an electrical engineering degree and a law degree from the University of Texas at Austin. Prior to attending law school, Evelyn worked as a registered patent agent, prosecuting patents in a wide-range of technologies.

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Jennifer Maynard, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor, Chemical Engineering
University of Texas

Dr. Maynard received her undergraduate degree in Human Biology from Stanford University, followed by a Ph.D. in Chemical Engineering from the University of Texas at Austin, and post-doctoral studies as an NIH NRSA fellow in Microbiology and Immunology at Stanford University. She returned to the University of Texas at Austin as a faculty member in the Department of Chemical Engineering in 2007.

Her research group aims to develop therapeutics to treat and vaccines to prevent infectious diseases, using biological and engineering principles. One therapeutic antibody she developed, which neutralizes anthrax toxin, has successfully completed Phase III clinical trials, under the guidance of its licensee, Elusys. The FDA recently accepted a biological license agreement for this molecule under the name Anthim (Obiltoxaximab). A second pair of antibodies, which synergistically neutralize pertussis toxin are being developed to treat whooping cough in conjunction with Synthetic Biologics. These have shown efficacy in a baboon model of disease. Current experiments, funded by the Gates Foundation, aim to assess the potential to use these antibodies as a neonatal prophylaxis to prevent disease in infants worldwide. In more fundamental work, she crystallized the first structure of an autoimmune T cell receptor-peptide-major histocompatibility complex, revealing the molecular details of this inappropriate interaction which initiates autoimmunity in the mouse model of multiple sclerosis. This structure is being used to understand the basis of autoimmunity and to design new therapeutic approaches to treat MS.

In recognition of her work, she has received prestigious grants from the Camille and Henry Dreyfus, the Gates and the Packard Foundations, in additional to numerous federal grants and invitations to participate in national and international symposia. She has received the Student Engineering Council Teaching Excellence Award for Chemical Engineering (2009) and the Texas Exes Teaching Award for the Cockrell School of Engineering (2012).