



Department of Engineering

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January 25, 2012

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

Dear Director Kappos:

On behalf of the Department of Engineering at East Carolina University, I am writing to encourage you to consider North Carolina as a candidate for the location of a USPTO satellite office. North Carolina has all of the qualities indicated in your requirements including distributed law schools, a set of strong engineering programs, a salary structure that is attractive to locating operations in the state, and a well-educated workforce with the capacity to meet the needs of USPTO in recruiting patent examiners and attorneys.

With regard to engineering programs, North Carolina has a long history of strong engineering programs in both public and private universities. The Department of Engineering at ECU was started in 2003, taking the first students in 2004, producing the first graduates in 2008, and receiving accreditation in 2009. The department has continued to grow and currently has over 400 undergraduate students. We have, for the last several years, had guests from USPTO come to talk to our engineering students, with good attendance. Our program is what I would describe as a regional program, with most of the students having origins in Eastern North Carolina and preferring to work in North Carolina after graduation. Our General Engineering degree produces an engineer who is a generalist and who would make an excellent patent examiner because of the breadth of their engineering knowledge. Due to the demographics of the population in Eastern North Carolina, our student population includes approximately twice the percentage of minority students (African American and Hispanic) as the national average. The ECU campus in Greenville is approximately a 75-minute drive from RTP, and Wake County, in which much of RTP lies, is where many of our students call home, and where a number of our graduates currently work. Our graduates have been well received by local industry and government organizations, with an employment (or graduate school) rate of at least 90%, even in the current economy. Companies who have hired them have found them easy to retain because most of them are staying near their roots.

In addition to law schools and engineering programs, North Carolina is home to an array of small and large companies, with particularly strong showings in aerospace (e.g. Honda Jet and Spirit AeroSystems) and pharmaceuticals (e.g. Pfizer and Novartis), where new intellectual properties in hardware and substances are created on a daily basis.

In summary, having a USPTO satellite location in North Carolina would provide a welcoming location which is already a training ground for potential employees of all types, a lower cost of living and salary structure than many areas, and companies creating new knowledge and devices.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "O. Hayden Griffin, Jr." in a cursive style.

O. Hayden Griffin, Jr., Ph.D., P.E.
Professor and Chair