

NC STATE UNIVERSITY

Office of the Vice Chancellor
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January 27, 2012

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

Dear Under Secretary Kappos:

On behalf of North Carolina State University, I am writing to urge you to strongly consider establishing a United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) satellite location in Raleigh or the Research Triangle region of North Carolina. We believe that creating satellite offices across the nation to facilitate the patent application process for the innovators and researchers residing within our borders will drive the pace of innovation and improve the service that our region receives from the USPTO. We are certain that locating an office in RTP - one of the most dynamic innovation and economic development regions in the country - will benefit the interests of our region's rich ecosystem of inventors and innovators as well as the interests of USPTO.

As outlined in HR 1429, the 'Leahy-Smith America Invents Act,' the criteria for such an office include the number of patent attorneys and agents currently located in the region, patent applications by state, and access to universities with strong engineering programs, as well as the ability to share facilities with other established governmental operations and support Departmental objectives, including CommerceConnect and increased collaborations among Commerce bureaus and offices. We would like to comment primarily from the perspective of a university with a strong engineering program, our role as a host location of other federal agencies at NC State University, and our partnerships with other federal agencies who have facilities within our region. Based on the criteria above, we believe that Raleigh, North Carolina and the Research Triangle region is an ideal location for a USPTO satellite office.

NC State is a comprehensive land-grant institution founded in 1887 with a strong emphasis on research and scholarship in physical and biological sciences, engineering, math and textiles. Currently, NC State is home to over 34,000 students, including more than 9,000 graduate students, students from every state and 117 foreign countries. It is the largest university in the three state region (Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina) and is responsible for over \$1.7 billion in annual state economic impact. NC State had \$380 million in total research expenditures in 2010 and ranks 7th nationally in Industry Research Funding among universities without medical schools. In addition, more than 70% of our faculty are engaged in sponsored research, facilitated by 57 multidisciplinary centers and institutes.

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NC State's focus on research and extension efforts have helped create new technologies that impact individuals across the nation each day. With over 150 products available to consumers and holding 750 U.S. patents, NC State is a national leader in technological innovation and bringing real world solutions to market. The University is ranked 3rd in commercialization of micro- and nanotechnology inventions and has helped create 80 start up companies representing more than \$1.5 billion in venture capital investment and over 6,000 jobs.

As highlighted in the Leahy-Smith America Invents Act, the establishment of a USPTO satellite location will be based on access to universities with strong engineering programs. NC State is home to a national leader among United States engineering colleges. The NC State College of Engineering is ranked 4th nationally in undergraduate enrollment, 7th in the number of BS degrees awarded and is the largest college at NC State with more than 8,500 students, including 2,400 graduate students. The university is also ranked 15th amongst the nation's engineering schools by recruiters in a Wall Street Journal report. In terms of engineering research, NC State is ranked 18th among public research colleges of engineering and the University's annual research expenditures exceeded \$128 million in 2009, which was 14th nationally. With over 20 centers, institutes and labs conducting research in a broad range of engineering and computer science areas, the College of Engineering has been able to secure 262 tenured/tenure-track faculty members. Amongst the engineering faculty are 10 members of the National Academy of Engineering and nearly 90 members have received Presidential and National Science Foundation recognitions for achievement.

Because of our strengths in science, technology, engineering and math disciplines as outlined above and the region's desirable living and working amenities, NC State University's Centennial Campus is currently the home to the USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) Southeast Regional Center, the Department of Interior's Southeast Regional Climate Center, NOAA's Sea Grant Program, and the Department of Commerce's National Weather Service Raleigh Office as well as a cluster of over seventy private, non-profit, and state government tenants that are engaged in research, technology development and economic development in partnership with NC State University. In addition to being the prime location for the College of Engineering, Centennial Campus is also the home of the College of Textiles (ranked #1 in the world), the College of Veterinary Medicine (ranked 3rd in the U.S.), and many of NC State's newest research laboratories and facilities – all of which are rich sources of innovation and commercially valuable intellectual property. In addition, Centennial Campus is home to the James B. Hunt Library, an iconic, world-class new library that will house the engineering, textiles, and parts of the sciences collections when it opens in June 2012 and embodies the spirit of NC State's competitive advantage in science and technology.

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The Research Triangle region of North Carolina is already host to a more than 2,000 Environmental Protection Agency staff, the U.S. Army Research Office, and the entire National Institute of Health's Institute for Environmental Health Sciences campus as well as offices for the US Forest Service and US Geological Survey. One of the things that makes our region unique, attracting many federal agencies to the region, is the impact that the combined efforts of NC State University, UNC-Chapel Hill and Duke University - three of the nation's top research universities - have on the discovery and innovation ecosystem of the area.

For these reasons and many others (including easy access to Washington DC and two of the nation's strongest clusters in Biotechnology/Life Sciences and Defense), we believe that Raleigh, North Carolina and the Research Triangle region would be an ideal location for a USPTO satellite office. Location of the USPTO office here will give our region, our universities, and our research partners better access to the important resources of the United States Patent and Trademark Office. Please do not hesitate to contact me if we can be of assistance with more detailed information on the strengths and resources of our area.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Terri L. Lomax". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the beginning.

Terri L. Lomax, Ph.D.
Vice Chancellor for Research, Innovation and Economic Development

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