The Technology Transfer Office (TTO) was formed in 1998 as a part of the Research Foundation in response to several disclosures made from faculty in the College of Sciences. The original Director, Stuart Gordon, Ph.D. was hired to develop the office and began the quest for driving disclosures of new inventions and creative works to the TTO. Under the Senate policy on intellectual policy, the TTO manages not only patentable inventions, but also creative works (copyrights) developed under institutional support and grant support performed by our faculty. Although technology transfer primarily occurs from Engineering and Sciences at other universities, SDSU has a long history of looking to other areas to find commercially viable projects. One example is our e-CHUG program; our student services professionals developed an online tool that helps prepare students for education focused on reduction of binge drinking behavior on campus. Studies showed that those drinking cessation programs did not have success alone, but using our e-CHUG program before such training greatly increased the likelihood of success in taming alcohol abuse on campus. We worked with Student Services to offer this software to other universities; since 2001, over 500 different universities across the country have licensed the software from SDSU. Additionally, the license income has been used to augment our Student Services operating budget to redesign and build more effective programs that impact campus health here at SDSU. We are proud of this technology transfer and see it as the guiding direction for serving SDSU: to transfer our creations for the benefit of our communities. E-CHUG has been able to fund continued services to our campus, as it has generated in excess of $1 million in royalties while also saving thousands of lives per year.

As the Director of the TTO, I take the mission of the university as a critical component to our efforts to transfer technologies. The first priority of the TTO is to serve the needs of campus. This is comprised of handling all disclosures and filing the appropriate protection to secure these intellectual properties. As such, we are dedicated to working with and educating our faculty in regards to the intellectual property they develop. There are many intricacies involved in this process; we take pride in having transparent processes and ensuring that our faculty is represented professionally.

We focus our commercialization to reach faculties’ needs. This can mean licensing to a company or helping a faculty member start her/his own spin-out company. Fundamentally, it means listening to the faculty inventors to learn how technology transfer helps their research and teaching goals. If a faculty inventor’s focus is on research and the technology is not readily transferrable into a product, we are willing and excited to help the faculty develop strategies to leverage the IP for additional research projects, especially sponsored research projects with industry. If the faculty or their graduate students are excited to take the technology and build spin-out companies, we listen to the faculty inventor’s needs and help build those companies.

When I took over the lead of the office, I sought consol with licensees, the venture community, granting agencies, and other interested parties to determine what we could do to meet our mission without exceeding our budgetary constraints. This has developed into a very successful paradigm of TTO management, as this office is well renowned in the region for being easy to work with. This reputation was built by making fair and equitable deals that have been negotiated in a timely fashion. At face value, this may not seem like an important consideration; however, we consistently outperform revenue projections for a University of our size and exceed comparables for an office of our size.
The TTO looks forward serving the campus as it transforms into a top tier research institution. SDSU has had a profound effect on our community and has only begun to tap into its potential, as such; the TTO is committed to effectuating SDSU's intellectual assets in order to distinguish SDSU as a center for leadership.

Go Aztecs!
For fiscal year 2011-2012:

# of Disclosures: 50

# of Licenses: 27

# of Patent Disclosures: 25

# of Copyright Disclosures: 23

# of Trademark Disclosures: 2

# of FTEs: 2.5

Compared to other universities of similar research size, we are far smaller for the number of FTEs and far larger for number of transactions. Because we have been an underfunded office since its founding, the TTO outperforms its peers through leveraging local community contacts (CONNECT, Biocom, Tech Coast Angels, etc.) and by utilizing a licensing process that is far faster and easier to complete transactions compared to the industry.