



WiLAN University Tech Transfer Program

At WiLAN, we got our start over 20 years ago as a wireless communications equipment company, breaking new ground and developing patented technology which is still used today. For more than a decade we have concentrated on licensing technology – our original technology, acquired technology, and technology developed internally. Over the course of our corporate history, we have had substantial experience evaluating, marketing, and licensing technology in a continuum of forms from physical equipment through pure patent licensing.

Many universities develop outstanding technology on a continuous basis, but it can be difficult to move that technology from a university's research labs into industry and a commercial product. WiLAN can help. Whether your university has a tech transfer function internally or has a separate entity responsible for technology licensing, you can leverage our experience to expand your reach. WiLAN's University Tech Transfer Program leverages our network of connections to assist universities in commercializing university developed technology.

What We Offer to Universities

Understanding the market is key to successful commercialization of technology. WiLAN has deep experience evaluating technology markets and can assist the university with identifying and evaluating markets for their technology. This can include identification and evaluation of both primary and alternative markets. For instance, a medical device technology may have applicability to both human and veterinary markets.

WiLAN can aid in identifying key players in the market. We can use our licensing experience to identify companies in related product spaces that would be potential licensees. We can also identify competing technologies and advise in the creation of marketing material that shows how the university's technology allows differentiated products. WiLAN can market the technology to potential licensees on behalf of the university, adding our manpower to that of the university's tech transfer office. While licenses are between the licensee and the university, we can assist the university in drafting term sheets and negotiating licenses.

Technology can also be assessed for startup spinout potential. WiLAN's Tech Transfer team has real world experience creating and advising startups. One key to success is identifying a minimum viable product (MVP) that allows the startup to have the focus necessary to get a desirable product to market on a reasonable timeline. Equally important is evaluating or identifying the core team for the startup. Who are the potential key players – faculty, students involved with the technology, business school students, outsiders? What are their interests and capabilities? Without a strong team and well thought out MVP, a startup can be exceedingly difficult to fund. We can advise on technology licensing structures that allow the university to participate in the startup's success while not being burdensome to the startup.

Enforcement of intellectual property is not a standard part of WiLAN's University Tech Transfer Program. Unfortunately, infringement may be detected. If the university desires, assistance with enforcement may be arranged under a separate agreement.



How the University Tech Transfer Program Works

If you have technology that you'd like assistance in marketing, contact our CTO, Ken Stanwood, at kstanwood@wilan.com.

After getting a mutual NDA in place we'll have an initial meeting to discuss the technology or technologies you have in mind, synergy with WiLAN's strengths, and the technology ownership or assignment situation. We prefer to work with a single entity that has the exclusive rights to enter into license agreements for the technology. That entity can be the university directly or an entity affiliated with the university that has licensing the technology as a mandate. We expect that entity to have an arrangement with the inventors that gives it either ownership through assignment, or a contractual exclusive right to license the technology on the inventor's behalf.

While licenses will be between the licensee and the university, WiLAN can aid in development on the initial terms. To that extent, we'll need to discuss what the university is expecting and whether there are any limitations. For instance, some universities may be barred from accepting a convertible note since it represents debt which the university may not be allowed to hold. Similarly, the university's philosophy regarding startups versus licensing to pre-existing companies would be useful to understand as would the philosophy towards upfront license fees versus backend royalties.

WiLAN, with the assistance of the university, will perform a deeper analysis of the specific technology. This includes the current patents and applications, prototypes, test results, and availability of other know-how and assets such as software. We will look at the differentiators from current solutions and discuss whether an MVP for a startup can be defined or whether improvement of a third party's existing product makes more sense.

This feeds into a market analysis, identifying the potential markets and which players in those markets are appropriate (e.g. end product manufacturer versus component manufacturer). Any previous marketing by the university must be identified. Exclusions such as specific companies, markets, or geographic regions must be known.

Information on the inventors will be collected. Are they professors, students, or third parties? Are they still with the university? Do they have any desire and the ability to form a startup? What additional encumbrances exist, for instance, partial ownership by another university?

These efforts will help both WiLAN and the university understand the potential of the invention. If the likelihood of a viable licensing campaign exists, the next step is to execute a statement of work (SOW) for the specific technology giving WiLAN exclusive marketing rights. These marketing rights may be constrained to specific markets.

As the university hosts the expertise for the technology, we will jointly develop marketing material. This should be based on existing university materials, but targeted to highlight the benefits for specific markets. Then WiLAN uses their extensive licensing experience to market the technology and bring potential licensees to the university.