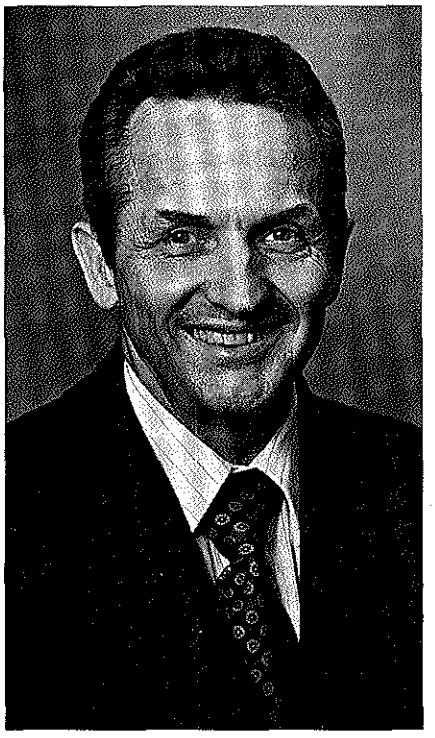
VIEW POINT



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University Inventions

Historically, the attention given to patenting and practical application of inventions growing out of university-sponsored activities has been, at best, isolated and limited. While no one at a university is employed merely to invent, innovations are an inevitable result of university research, and their importance is rapidly being recognized.

More and more, university faculty and staff members are able to recognize new technology which might be subject to patenting and development. Recently at the University of Georgia a new protein assay reagent and method were patented and licensed by the University because one of the inventors recognized instantly a use for the new procedure.

University people also are more cognizant of the basic qualifications necessary for patenting an innovation, and they are more aware of legal bars to patenting. A two-year Patent Awareness Program conducted on eight university campuses, including Georgia, has resulted in a sharp rise in invention cases presented for consideration.

Today universities are developing, either directly or through patent management organizations, the capability of matching innovations with developmental, manufacturing, and marketing firms which are geared to bring these ideas into use. In the past such ideas have fallen by the wayside because they were not spectacular or because their worth was not immediately recognized.

A prime example of this is a unique device to mind automobile headlights — turning them on at the first drop of rain and turning them off again — was turned down when it was first considered. However, the staff inventor was encouraged to offer the invention for licensing at the Second and Third World Fairs for Technology Exchange, and now, the new accessory will be made available through a leading U.S. auto components manufacturer.

Technology exchange exhibitions, which have been initiated in the United States, Europe, and Japan, are excellent showcases for university ideas and inventions. Also, universities are developing one-on-one relationships with firms that have active programs to acquire and exchange new technology.

Probably the most important reason university inventions are receiving more attention is the fact that they bring recognition and support to the institutions. A new electrostatic spray nozzle developed in the University's Agricultural Engineering Department has focused attention on the institution. A poultry vaccine developed in the College of Veterinary Medicine and the protein assay reagent by a biochemist are examples of inventions which are beginning to produce royalty income to the University. These and other inventions bring royalties which can be used to support research programs. Also, successful inventions supplement salaries of their inventors.

It is more apparent now that patenting and development of university-related innovations are not in conflict with the basic obligation to publish new knowledge. A patent, in itself, is publication. It supplements scientific journal articles.

It is highly significant that deserved attention is being given to this by-product of research, a primary university mission. Basic research is being left increasingly to universities as private firms continue a trend to divert research funds to product development.

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MEAT STUDY NEEDED

faster because oxygen is there.

Research into chemical changes in meat may aid in understanding human biochemistry and diseases, Greene added.

"There are disease states in humans which produce chemical reactions in the body identical to those observed in meat," she said. "For instance, the hemoglobin in our blood can turn brown. When it does, it doesn't carry oxygen. People can die from this.

"So what we learn about these reactions in meat, especially at the basic research level, may also help to prevent or cure certain pathological conditions in humans."