OFFICE OF TECHNOLOGY MANAGEMENT

ANNUAL REPORT



Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2025

WHERE WE ARE





A LETTER FROM THE

DIRECTOR

As the Director of the Office of Technology Management (OTM), it is my pleasure to welcome you to our FY2025 Annual Report, an overview of our team's achievements and the growing innovation ecosystem we're proud to support at Mississippi State University. Over the past year, OTM has continued to expand its services and deepen its impact across campus and beyond, ensuring that MSU remains a leader in transforming ideas into real-world impact.



We are proud to report continued growth in invention disclosures, driven by sustained engagement with faculty and researchers, with a 33% increase in disclosures from FY24. This year we also introduced new avenues for disclosing innovations in software and datasets, resulting in 23 and 3 disclosures respectively. These efforts reflect our ongoing commitment to support the full spectrum of scholarly output, particularly as open-source and digital scholarship become increasingly central to the research enterprise. OTM now serves as Mississippi State University's Open-Source Program Office (OSPO) as part of this initiative.

FY2025 also saw exciting milestones in our support of entrepreneurship. Our Dawg Tank Pitch Competition, held in June at MCITy, was a resounding success, drawing record participation and showcasing some of the most promising startup concepts from across the state. The competition underscored the university's strong pipeline of innovators and the growing momentum behind our commercialization initiatives.

We also reached a major milestone in national collaboration: MSU was officially welcomed as a full partner in the Southwest Hub for NSF I-Corps, significantly expanding access to customer discovery training and innovation mentorship for our researchers. In addition, OTM successfully supported the submission of two NSF Pathways to Enable Open-Source Ecosystems (POSE) Phase I proposals, one for the Loci platform and another for MAVS, both representing exemplary models of open-source innovations born at MSU.

Thank you for your trust, your partnership, and your shared commitment to excellence in research and technology transfer. We are excited about what lies ahead and remain steadfast in our mission to support innovation, promote entrepreneurship, and amplify the impact of Mississippi State University.

gr v. whs

John Walters

Director, Office of Technology Management

OTM FY25 Event Accomplishments

In a landmark year for innovation, OTM processed a record 48 invention disclosures. This success was driven in part by a significant revamp of the Inventor's Portal, which now features distinct and streamlined submission forms for inventions, software, copyright works, and datasets, making it easier than ever for the MSU community to protect their intellectual property.

The team also managed a significant volume of agreements to facilitate research and commercialization. Over the fiscal year, OTM executed or began negotiations on 61 agreements. This included 22 Material Transfer Agreements and 21 Non-Disclosure Agreements, which are crucial for fostering collaboration. The team also handled a diverse range of licensing agreements, including exclusive licenses, option agreements, and amended licenses, alongside inter-institutional agreements and other contracts vital to moving MSU technology forward.

Professional Development

OTM is committed to the professional development of the team, and in FY25, Sophia Barnett, Andre Kemp, Nate Vernarske, and John Walters received their Certified Licensing Professional – Associate (CLP-A) designations.

Recurring Events IP and Donuts

Throughout the year, the Office of Technology Management continued its successful "IP and Donuts" series. Hosted by Nate Venarske, these recurring events were held at various departments across the MSU campus, bringing the conversation about intellectual property directly to faculty, staff, and students. These informal sessions provided a relaxed and accessible environment for researchers to ask questions, learn about the patent process, and understand how OTM can support their innovative work.

MCITy Startup Showcases

The MCITy Startup Showcase served as a vital platform for emerging university startups to present their progress and milestones. Held monthly, these events provided a forum for founders to gain valuable feedback, connect with mentors, and engage with the broader entrepreneurial ecosystem. Throughout FY25, the showcases featured a diverse range of technologies and business models, growing the total number of participating teams to 51, demonstrating the program's significant impact on nurturing the next generation of MSU entrepreneurs.

August 2024

OTM Represents MSU at AUTM Central Conference

In August, OTM team members Austin Check, Andre Kemp, and John Walters attended the AUTM Central Region Meeting, a premier gathering for technology transfer professionals. The event provided a valuable opportunity for professional development and networking with peers from other research institutions. Highlighting MSU's leadership in the field, John Walters was a featured speaker on a panel, where he shared his expertise and insights with the regional tech transfer community.

Vicksburg Chamber of Commerce Ribbon Cutting

Demonstrating a commitment to expanding MSU's innovation footprint, OTM participated in a ribbon-cutting ceremony with the Vicksburg Chamber of Commerce. The event, attended by 17 community leaders and stakeholders, marked a new phase of partnership and economic development, strengthening the university's connection to the Vicksburg region and creating new opportunities for collaboration and technology commercialization.

September 2024

Fourth Annual OTM Pig Pickin'

OTM hosted its 4th Annual Pig Pickin', a signature event celebrating the spirit of innovation and community at Mississippi State. Led by Assistant Director Austin Check, the gathering brought together MSU inventors, entrepreneurs, ecosystem partners, and staff for an afternoon of networking and appreciation. This tradition serves to strengthen the bonds within the university's research and startup community, recognizing the hard work and collaborative successes of the past year in a fun, informal setting, with a perfect centerpiece: a whole roast hog, smoked to perfection by the OTM team.

OTM Engages Industry at Turf Grass Field Day

OTM participated in the annual Turf Grass Field Day, connecting with leaders and stakeholders in the agricultural industry. The event was a key opportunity to showcase MSU's cutting-edge research and intellectual property in turfgrass management and related ag-tech fields. By engaging directly with industry professionals, OTM's Jim Mitchell helped foster relationships aimed at translating university discoveries into real-world applications and licensing opportunities.

October 2024

I-Corps Information Session Drives Commercialization

To empower faculty and student innovators, OTM hosted an information session for the National Science Foundation's Innovation Corps program. Held at the 301 Research Boulevard facility as well as virtually, the event introduced researchers to the principles of customer discovery and market validation, which are critical for successfully translating lab-based technologies into market-ready products. The session aimed to build a strong pipeline of MSU teams for this program.

OTM Provides Critical SBIR Grant Support

The OTM team provided dedicated support to Kimberly Butler for a Phase I Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) application to the Administration for Community Living (ACL). This hands-on assistance, from proposal review to budget planning, underscores OTM's commitment to helping MSU innovators secure vital, non-dilutive federal funding to advance their research and commercialization goals.

November 2024

Starkville SBIR/STTR Pitch Competition Awards Top Innovator

OTM hosted a dynamic SBIR/STTR Pitch Competition in Starkville, featuring seven teams presenting their innovative technologies. The event provided a platform for entrepreneurs to hone their pitches and compete for funding to advance their ventures. A prize of \$3,000 was awarded to the top team, providing crucial seed capital and recognition for their promising work.

OTM Sponsors Accelerate MS Conference

OTM proudly sponsored the Accelerate MS conference in Jackson, reinforcing its commitment to fostering a vibrant statewide entrepreneurial ecosystem. At the event's showcase, OTM's own Nate Venarske was recognized as a finalist and won a prize for his work and dedication through the Cobuilders program for his innovative Mosquito Trap technology. This achievement highlights the inventive talent within the OTM team and the commercial potential of MSU-developed solutions.

December 2024

MSU Technologies Showcased at Defense Tech Connect In a significant effort to connect with national defense partners, OTM attended the Defense Tech Connect conference in Austin, TX. Alongside the Raspet Flight Research Laboratory, our team showcased a portfolio of MSU's cutting-edge technologies and research center capabilities relevant to the defense industry. The goal was to establish strategic partnerships, identify licensing opportunities, and secure research collaborations to support national security objectives.

January 2025

Techstars Startup Weekend Fosters Deep Tech Innovation

OTM played a key role in the Techstars Startup Weekend for DeepTech in Mississippi. The intensive event brought together 16 attendees to explore 20 different university technologies, forming three teams to develop commercialization concepts over the course of the weekend. OTM's involvement as a mentor and resource provider was instrumental in helping bridge the gap between complex university research and viable startup ventures.

February 2025

OTM Helps Redevelop Entrepreneur Bootcamp Program

Leveraging its expertise in commercialization, OTM's Tasha Bibb assisted with the strategic redevelopment of the Entrepreneur Bootcamp Program. The team provided critical insights and support to refine the curriculum and structure, ensuring the program effectively equips aspiring entrepreneurs with the essential skills and knowledge needed to launch and grow successful businesses based on innovative ideas.

Team Presents on Efficiency at Business Development Conference

OTM shared its expertise on operational excellence at the MSU Business Development Conference. Andre Kemp presented on workplace efficiencies and process streamlining, demonstrating how the principles used to manage complex technology portfolios can be applied to benefit the broader community. This engagement allowed OTM to provide value and build connections with other campus offices.

March 2025

OTM Supports Clarus Labs with SBIR Application

Continuing its mission to support local startups, OTM provided expert guidance to Clarus Labs on their SBIR Phase I application. This collaborative effort involved strategic advising and proposal review to help the company craft a competitive application for federal funding.

OTM Attends AUTM National Conference

The OTM team attended the AUTM National Meeting, the largest gathering of technology transfer professionals in the world. This flagship event provided an invaluable opportunity to connect with industry partners and investors. The conference allowed the team to increase its knowledge of industry best practices while networking with peers from top research universities to build strategic relationships that advance the university's commercialization mission.

April 2025

SBIR/STTR Launchpad Summit Empowers Innovators

OTM hosted the SBIR/STTR Launchpad Summit, an intensive event designed to guide researchers and entrepreneurs through the complexities of the federal grant application process. With 18 people in attendance, the summit provided expert instruction and practical resources, empowering MSU innovators to increase their success rate in securing this critical source of non-dilutive funding.

Project Pitch Support for NSF Funding

The OTM team provided crucial assistance to researcher Eric Anderson for a Project Pitch submission to the National Science Foundation (NSF). This initial pitch is a critical first step in the NSF funding process, and OTM's guidance helped shape the proposal to align with the foundation's objectives, increasing the potential for success.

June 2025

DAWG Tank Competition Showcases Top MSU Ventures

OTM successfully executed its premier pitch competition, DAWG Tank, which attracted 29 teams competing across two distinct categories. Led by OTM's Tasha Bibb, the event celebrated the breadth of innovation across campus, from undergraduate student ideas to advanced faculty research. A panel of expert judges awarded five winning teams with prizes, providing them with the capital and recognition needed to take their ventures to the next level.

Spreading the Good News of Tech Transfer

OTM has expanded its outreach with a strong social media presence, showcasing MSU's innovation. Weekly Tech Tuesday, Tech Tip Thursday, Featured Friday, and Patent Spotlights highlight MSU researchers and discoveries, connecting the research community with partners. Led by Andre Kemp and Ashlynn Ledford, OTM surpassed 1,000 followers, reflecting growing interest in MSU's research impact.

Master Research Agreements

To accelerate partnerships and simplify ongoing collaborations, OTM began to better utilize Master Research Agreements. An MRA is a single, overarching contract that establishes the foundational legal, intellectual property, and royalty terms upfront. With this comprehensive agreement in place, subsequent research projects don't require a full new negotiation. Instead, they can be initiated rapidly through simple task orders that fall under the pre-approved MRA framework.

last year's

NUMBERS & STATISTICS

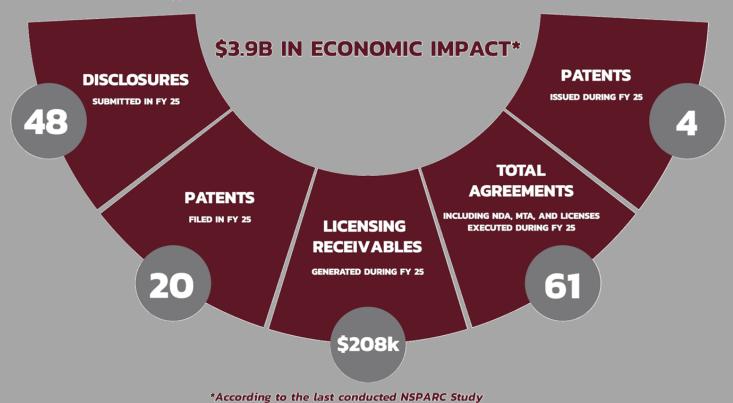
In a landmark year for innovation, OTM processed a record 48 technology disclosures, the highest number in office history. This success was driven in part by a significant revamp of the Inventor's Portal, which now features distinct and streamlined submission forms for inventions, software, copyright works, and datasets. Complementing this record influx of new ideas, the office also filed 20 new patents and saw 4 patents issued, reflecting continued momentum in protecting and advancing MSU's intellectual property.

In addition, as a partner in research support our office responded to 418 requests to review intellectual property matters from the Office of Sponsored Programs during FY 2025.

Please do not hesitate to contact us at office@otm.msstate.edu with any questions

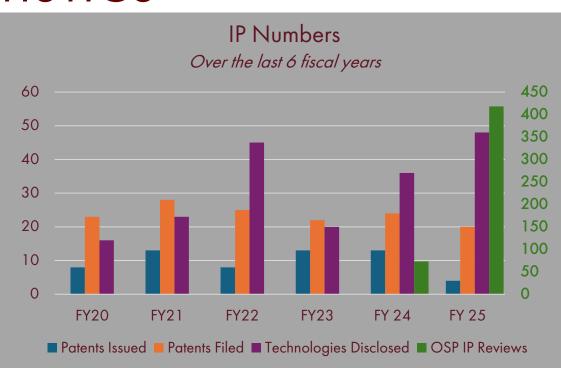


\$320M IN RESEARCH



Last 6 year's

NUMBERS & STATISTICS





* Including Amended & Restated, Research, Exclusive, Non-exclusive, Sublicense, Research Option, Option - RTA – Nonexclusive Licenses executed during the fiscal year