

Access the Innovators Handbook electronically here:



INNOVATOR'S HANDBOOK

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The University of Alaska Fairbanks is Alaska’s preeminent research university. The mission of UAF’s Office of Intellectual Property and Commercialization (OIPC) is to encourage broad practical application of UAF research for public benefit to support UAF’s research, education, and outreach mission through the following activities:

- Supporting the education and research mission of UAF by fostering creativity and innovation
- Encouraging and assisting individuals associated with UAF in the protection, licensing, and commercialization of their discoveries
- Initiating and sustaining cooperation and collaboration between UAF and businesses and industry, especially those based in Alaska
- Ensuring the equitable distribution of royalties and other monetary benefits derived from commercial application of intellectual property
- Advancing economic development objectives for Alaska and the nation



What is “technology transfer”?

Technology transfer allows for the transfer of knowledge and discoveries from the university to the public. The role of technology transfer at UAF is to assist innovators and inventors through the process of transference and commercialization. It is a process requiring multiple skill sets related to science, law, and business, all of which tech transfer associates are poised to provide. The Office of Intellectual Property and Commercialization (OIPC) can provide university innovators with the resources, know-how, and in many cases, legal help to protect, license, and commercialize your discoveries. Technology may be transferred out of the university by licensing to existing third-party companies, licensing to start-ups that come out of the university, or via direct sales from the university in accordance with university policy. In essence, OIPC exists to facilitate and support the commercialization and impact of university innovations through our services.

At UAF and UAS, technology transfer is handled at OIPC.

We support research and innovators through education of rights and intellectual property basics, relationship building between UAF and businesses and industry, and equitable distribution of royalties derived from commercial application of your intellectual property. The OIPC team is composed of legal, business, and research professionals skilled in university technology transfer.

Typically, intellectual property protection is needed for successful tech transfer.

The goal is to transfer knowledge for community benefit. This means UAF typically transfers the intellectual property rights of its inventions to third parties via licensing agreements. The licensee may be an established company or, alternatively, a start-up. After a successful transfer, payments are then distributed between the inventor and the university - which means innovators can get direct financial compensation as the result of the successful licensing of their innovation.

At OIPC we can:

- **Evaluate** the intellectual property and market potential of your idea.
- **Recommend and support** innovators with recommendations on industry problems and unforeseen research funding opportunities.
- **Protect** intellectual property in the form of patents, copyrights, trademarks, and trade secrets.
- **Market and find** potential 3rd party licensees on behalf of the inventors.
- **Negotiate** licensing agreements on behalf of the inventors.

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SCHEDULE A MEETING

Who owns what I create?

Within the university, ownership of intellectual property follows the Bayh-Dole Act, collective bargaining agreements, and Board of Regents university policy. The university generally owns intellectual property created by university personnel or by anyone using university resources through federal grants. This means that when you invent something using university services, facilities, equipment, or other resources, the university holds the rights to that invention. This framework helps us protect your innovations, facilitate their development, and ensure they can benefit the public. We encourage you to disclose your inventions as soon as they're conceived or reduced to practice. This allows OIPC to work with you, providing support and guidance through the patenting and commercialization process, ultimately helping bring your innovative ideas to life.

Your intellectual property rights are not a secret!

There are 3 resources that outline intellectual property rights and procedures for UAF faculty, staff, and students. These policies along with information on how and why OIPC and UAF encourage and support innovation and creativity by employees and students can be found in your respective *Collective Bargaining Agreements*, *The Board of Regents' Policy and University Regulation*, and, if applicable, your *Faculty Blue Book*; current policies can be found online at:

- UA's Labor and Employee Relations webpage: www.alaska.edu/hr/labor/labor-relations/index
- Board of Regents Policies and Regulations Chapter 10.07.050. "Inventions, Patents, Copyrights, Trademarks and Other Intellectual Properties": www.alaska.edu/bor/policy-regulations/index.php
- University Policies and Procedure Faculty Blue Book. "Inventions and other creative works": www.uaf.edu/provost/resources/faculty.php

Disclosing your innovation benefits you because...

even though the university generally holds ownership of intellectual property developed here, it's absolutely in your best interest to disclose your invention and collaborate with us. We're committed to supporting your innovative spirit by offering generous financial support for patenting commercializable technologies. In fact, our office covers costs associated with a patent over its lifetime, which can amount to well over \$40,000. What's more, as an innovator, you're guaranteed to receive the first \$10,000 in net proceeds from royalties before a 50/50 funding split is applied. We'll dive into the specifics of this funding scheme in more detail further on.

Indigenous Intellectual Property rights...

OIPC deeply respects Indigenous Intellectual Property (IIP) and Traditional Knowledge (TK). We evaluate the use of IIP on a case-by-case basis, always ensuring we uphold principles of equity, respect, and benefit-sharing.

When researchers disclose IIP, we require documentation of their engagement with Indigenous communities and knowledge holders. This documentation should demonstrate best practices like seeking Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) for any research or commercialization involving their knowledge. Our ultimate goal is to honor and support partnerships that promote Indigenous self-determination and protect cultural heritage, ensuring any benefits from IIP are shared equitably with the originating communities when applicable.

Role of the innovator in technology transfer

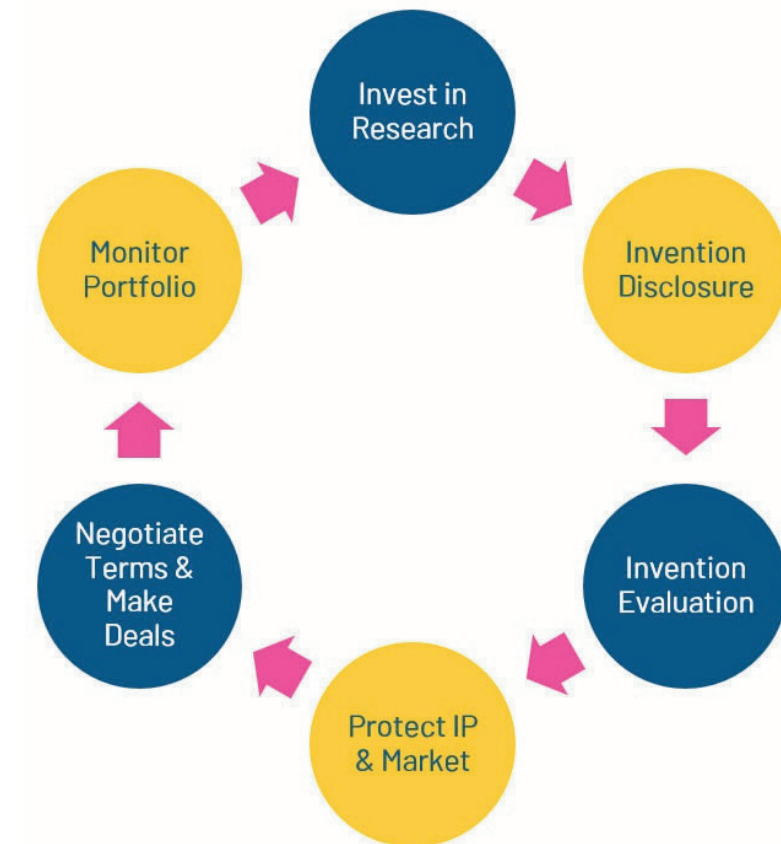
In the university context, an innovator is any faculty member, staff member, researcher, graduate student, or undergraduate who discloses an invention and/ or other protectable intellectual property. Their role is, foremost, to conduct research and disclose their innovation to the technology transfer team, especially in compliance with federal funding requirements. That is not all, however. After invention and disclosure, an innovator's role may expand to one or more of the following:

- Disclose inventions to OIPC prior to publishing.
- Work with the technology transfer team on developing potential licensees, developing sales materials, and discussing commercialization strategies.
- Respond to questions from internal OIPC team members as well as potential licensees.
- Collaborate with licensees to plan for your product's distribution and manufacturing needs.

How long does the tech transfer process take?

The technology transfer process can take months or even years to complete. The amount of time will depend on the development stage of the technology, the market for the technology, competing technologies, the amount of work needed for the technology to be market ready, and the resources and willingness of all parties involved.

The university innovation lifecycle



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What is intellectual property?

Intellectual property (IP) may be broadly defined as “creations of the mind.” It is the property right to an idea, an improvement, a creative work, know-how, or a business’ brand. Think of it as an asset — just like a home, car, or bank account. And, like a car, home, cash, etc., different intellectual property has different characteristics. For our purposes, IP may be broadly grouped into four categories: patents, copyrights, trade secrets, and trademarks.

Patents

A patent gives an inventor the exclusive rights to exclude others from making, using, selling, offering to sell, or importing their invention. An invention can include a useful system, apparatus, method, or article of manufacture. For more information about patents, please refer to our extended FAQ Handbook.

Copyrights

The United States government grants a copyright to authors or creators of original works of authorship such as poems, movies, video games, videos, plays, paintings, sheet music, recorded dances, novels, software code, sculptures, photographs, choreography and architectural designs. An individual’s work is under copyright protection the moment it is created and fixed in a tangible form. For works published after 1977, the copyright lasts for the life of the author plus 70 years. However, if the work is a work for hire or is published anonymously or under a pseudonym, the copyright lasts between 95 and 120 years, depending on the date the work is published.

Trade secrets

Any confidential business information that provides an enterprise a competitive edge may be considered a trade secret. For example, the formula for Coca-Cola is a trade secret. The subject matter of trade secrets is usually defined in broad terms and can include sales methods, distribution methods, consumer profiles, advertising strategies, lists of suppliers and clients, and manufacturing processes. The unauthorized use of such information by persons other than the holder is an unfair practice and a violation of the trade secret.

Trademarks

A trademark is a given word, design, symbol, or uniquely identifiable combination of those things that identifies or differentiates a good or service. The value and essence of a trademark is that it provides a way of recognizing and distinguishing one good/service from another. From the United States Patent and Trademark Office website, a trademark:

- Identifies the source of your goods or services
- Provides legal protection for your brand
- Helps you guard against counterfeiting and fraud

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The first step to commercialization is disclosure

The first step for an innovation to begin the process of commercialization is to submit a [Disclosure Form](#) which serves as a starting point for our technology transfer team to begin the process of analyzing your innovation. Once submitted, the team will begin the process of intellectual property and commercial analysis, followed by possibly marketing and licensing your idea.

When you should disclose an invention and why it's crucial to disclose early

You should complete a disclosure whenever you've discovered something unique with potential commercial value, ideally before or in conjunction with any public dissemination like journal publications, poster sessions, or conferences. This is crucial because protecting intellectual property operates on a strict timeline governed by legal rules. Publicly disclosing an idea before it's protected can jeopardize its patentability; for instance, a one-year grace period begins upon publication, after which the idea may no longer be patentable. By disclosing your innovation to our office, we can take the necessary steps to protect your idea. We understand that publication timelines don't always align perfectly, and we never want to hinder your research. Remember, patents and other commercialization avenues can significantly further your research's impact and increase pathways to social good, not create barriers.

How to disclose an idea

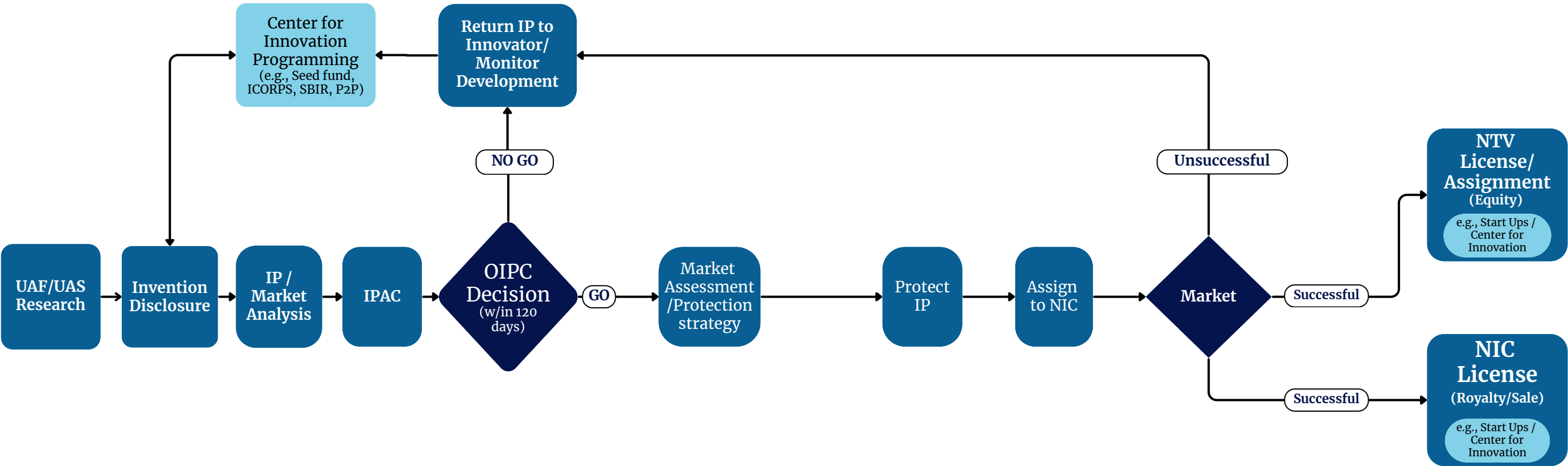
Among the many methods of contacting the OIPC Team there are two ways to disclose an innovation:

1. Fill out an innovation disclosure form via our website (most complete way to disclose)
2. Schedule a meeting via email to <<uaf-oipc@alaska.edu>> to explain your idea in person or via Zoom (less typing involved)

As always, if you have any questions please contact our office.



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How OIPC will market your idea

Generally the end goal of innovation commercialization is to license an idea to an existing company or start-up. Licensing is defined as providing the rights to use an idea given some set of negotiated terms between the licensor and licensee. This end state is how the idea can make a broad impact and how university faculty, staff, and students ultimately financially benefit from their ideas.

Licensees must first be identified and developed. This often takes time, market research, and industry outreach. To do so, OIPC uses many sources and strategies to identify potential licensees and markets innovations. This process, however, depends on the innovation itself. The strategy that is optimal for a particular innovation often depends largely on the innovation and the market for which the innovation is created.

Studies have shown that 70% of licensees were known to the innovators. In other words, it is likely that relationships with potential licensees already exist and we can manage and grow those relationships through contacts from the innovators. We can also obtain contacts from personal networking, website inquiries, market research, industry events, and the cultivation of existing licensing relationships.

The licensing process explained

Once a licensee is identified, OIPC will implement its licensing process. The steps involved include:

- 1. Execute a non-disclosure agreement with interested parties ensuring that confidentiality is maintained
- 2. Schedule an initial meeting with the potential licensee to identify their needs
- 3. Align technology with business needs and understand licensing needs while conducting due diligence on company solvency and business model
- 4. Innovators may meet with company scientific staff to outline the technical details of their innovation
- 5. Present a “term sheet” that outlines terms of a license agreement
- 6. Conduct negotiation rounds as needed to reach a viable license agreement
- 7. Finalize license agreement, sign documents, and execute license



Photo by Molly Simons
Dr. Tom Marsik successfully licensed his Arctic Dual Hood to a local business in Fairbanks, AK

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[SCHEDULE A MEETING](#)

Revenue sharing explained

UAF invests resources in their researchers, staff, faculty and students alike, to conduct research. As a partial incentive, the university aims to financially benefit researchers directly for their licensed innovation. The primary method of doing this is licensing, and in the case that an innovation is ultimately licensed, inventors can expect to share some of this revenue with the university. The immediate and logical question is how much money goes to the university and how much goes to the innovator? UAF has among the most generous revenue sharing programs among all university tech transfer offices.

Policies and percentages

As defined in Board of Regents policy and/or the applicable collective bargaining agreement, the innovator is entitled to a portion of the net proceeds derived from the commercialization of their technology. In general, and subject to the terms of employment, the innovator is entitled to the first \$10,000 plus 50% thereafter of net proceeds derived from commercialization of the innovation.

Revenue distribution basics

With the policy established, what happens next? If an innovation is taken all the way through commercialization, how will the inventor actually benefit and in what order? Though varied, there are a number of methods for the innovator to actually receive money for their innovations.

Some typical examples of licensing structures are:

- Payment made as development milestones are achieved
- Software license per use royalty (like Adobe)
- Equity stake in a company (typical of start-ups)
- Annual royalties

OIPC will take part in negotiating terms of a license and can work with the innovator to find optimal terms that mutually benefit all parties.

\$0 TO \$10K	Greater than \$10K
100% Funds to Inventor	50% of Funds to Inventor (s)
	50% of Funds to University





Expert Collaboration in Tech Transfer

OIPC leverages internal staff expertise through the Intellectual Property Advisory Committee (IPAC) to evaluate and advance university innovations.

The Role of IPAC

Composed of faculty experts from diverse colleges, IPAC ensures that every disclosure is reviewed by leaders familiar with its specific industry. The committee meets quarterly during the academic year to:

- Evaluate Disclosures: Review research and documentation provided by OIPC staff.
- Recommend Action: Advise on protecting and commercializing IP, requesting further research, or returning ownership to the innovator.
- Strategic Guidance: Serve as an advisory body to enhance the university's overall technology commercialization enterprise.

By maintaining a committee that reflects the university's full research portfolio, OIPC ensures that every innovation receives a rigorous, expert-led path to market.

First, there was NIC

Nanook Innovation Corporation (NIC) is organized as a non-profit corporation supporting UAF licensing and ensuring that all monies received are used for the benefit of UAF. NIC also limits liability to the University of Alaska, manages taxation issues, and protects the charitable status of the university.

NIC works with UAF/OIPC through a master agreement. The agreement ensures that NIC’s management of IP is consistent with BOR Policies & Regulations for revenue distribution. The agreement ensures that all monies received into NIC must be used for the ultimate benefit of UAF and to compensate inventors. It allows OIPC to provide support to NIC and permits NIC to hold title to UAF IP.

Then from NIC came NTV...

Start-up companies may not have cash on hand and may prefer to trade equity for royalties. NIC may see a start-up as the best chance to commercialize IP. NTV is organized as a for-profit company and licenses a technology to a startup in exchange for equity. NTV limits liability to NIC and UAF by having a separate Board of Directors and is the fiduciary for issues that could occur due to equity. Nanook Tech Ventures’ board is filled with seasoned business professionals interested in helping small companies successfully bring technology to the marketplace.

For the current list of board members from IPAC, NIC, or NTV please email OIPC.

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UAF's Center for Innovation

UAF's Center for Innovation (CFI) is the University's hub for innovation. CFI supports innovation at the university by assisting with its development to launch and scale the idea as a real world solution.

The Center for Innovation provides an extensive range of programs that provide funding, training, and expertise designed to meet the needs of our students, faculty, and staff.

To support innovators at every stage of their journey, CFI provides:

- Early-Stage Funding: Financial support and seed grants designed to kickstart projects, gather preliminary data, and position innovations for larger extramural funding opportunities.
- Training & Mentorship: Guidance on customer discovery, market validation, and navigating the transition from the lab to the community.
- Experiential Learning: Internships and fellowships that pair students and faculty with the startup ecosystem, offering hands-on experience in business development and portfolio management.
- Graduate & Research Support: Specialized tracks for graduate students and postdocs looking to build long-lasting initiatives or commercial products based on their research.
- Academic Integration: Curriculum and courses focused on innovation case studies and impactful problem-solving.
- Collaborative Networks: Access to university facilities, "testbed" environments, and regional partnerships to help companies and researchers collaborate on joint opportunities.
- Small Business & Grant Assistance: Dedicated support to help Alaskans—including women and underrepresented entrepreneurs—access federal and state seed funding (SBIR/STTR).

For the current list of programs through Center for Innovation please visit their website at: www.uaf.edu/innovation



The OIPC team travels...

If you would like to schedule us to attend a team, lab, or departmental meeting, we'd be happy to present and answer any questions about this information or specific questions regarding your research and innovations.

Other Resources

For more information concerning U.S. Patent, Trademark, and Copyright Resources, please see the uspto.gov website. Search internally for:

1. [USPTO Inventor and Entrepreneur Resources](#)
2. [Search for Patent Agents/Attorneys](#)
3. [Patent Pro Bono Program](#) within the USPTO
4. Patent Basics, provisional patent info, and utility patent application guides
5. Basic Facts about Trademarks
6. IP Identifier tool

On campus there is a patent and trademark resource center (PTRC) located in the Mather Library of the Geophysical Institute Akasofu building, phone number 907-474-2636