



# Former UGA Researcher Launches Online Resource to Educate Faculty Inventors About Tech-Transfer Procedures

May 27, 2009

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**Newsletter:** [Biotech Transfer Week](#)

[Biotech Transfer Week - May 27, 2009](#)

*This story was originally published on May 21.*

**ATLANTA** — A former University of Georgia researcher who claims that the university grossly undersold the rights to a dry-eye medication that she invented launched this week an online resource designed to help other academic inventors and their institutions avoid such discrepancies.

The site, [IPAdvocate.org](#), was launched this week at the BIO 2009 conference here as a non-profit company by Renee Kaswan, a former professor at the University of Georgia College of Veterinary Medicine.

Kaswan told *BTW* this week that she is in the process of visiting top US academic institutions to seek best practices in technology transfer and identify individuals to serve on an advisory panel for the website.

IPAdvocate is "dedicated to bringing integrity and transparency to university technology transfer and intellectual property policies, processes, and procedures," and will "inform and equip academic inventors to face the challenges of technology transfer and the commercialization of their life's work," according to the website.

Thus far, Kaswan has visited the California Institute of Technology tech-transfer office to discuss the site, and is planning to visit several other schools with leading tech-transfer programs in northern California in the coming weeks.

"We are seeking and incorporating their advice," Kaswan said. "And we want to see where there are some common agreements where a change of policy might be more effective."

Kaswan said that discussing her plan with the CalTech tech-transfer office "was like preaching to the choir," and that she expected that other universities such as Stanford and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology would also have tech-transfer policies in place to protect and serve their faculty.

"I think that a lot of universities have gotten this right," Kaswan said. "They recognize the importance of supporting their faculty inventors. Without them, there is no tech transfer. That's an important part of the equation that can't be forgotten.

"Most of the larger research universities that have been doing this for a long time, their methods should be transferred to some of the smaller state schools," she added. "We want to see best-practice guidelines put in place that will institutionalize all of the rhetorical promises often made by tech-transfer offices."

Kaswan, who has resigned her faculty position at UGA and currently runs a private veterinary practice in Atlanta, launched IPAdvocate following what she perceived as a mishandling of her life's work, research that served as the basis for Restasis, a topical treatment sold by healthcare company Allergan to remedy chronic dry-eye disorder.

Last year, Kaswan went public with claims that the University of Georgia negotiated a licensing deal with Allergan for her work that may have cost the university and Kaswan hundreds of millions of dollars in lost revenue.

Specifically, according to a case study provided on the new site, Kaswan originally developed the medication in conjunction with the University of Georgia Research Foundation as Optimmune for treating dry-eye disorder in dogs.

The case study alleges that under the university's original contracts with Allergan, it would have realized an estimated \$300 million in royalties from the drug's licensed sales. However, the study claims that "in secret meetings with the pharmaceutical firm [that] excluded the inventor," UGA agreed to a "buy-down deal at a small fraction of that price."

The study further alleges that although the innovation behind Restasis dates back to the mid-1980s, inventor's equity ownership rights at UGA didn't become public knowledge until 1996 when UGA published its IP policy. Kaswan claims that the policy required the UGA Research Foundation to reassign her patents to her — despite the fact that Bayh-Dole provisions would typically stipulate that such IP be assigned to the university — and that it had agreed to do so until Restasis won regulatory approval on Dec. 24, 2002.

#### Genomeweb system

These settings are generally managed by the web site so you rarely need to consider them.

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