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Top Stories

From laboratory to market

JAY PATEAKOS , Herald News Staff Reporter

07/18/2004

BOSTON -- In a move that will strengthen the technological communication between itself and outside companies, the University of Massachusetts has appointed Abigail A. Barrow to lead the UMass-based Massachusetts Technology Transfer Center.

The MTTC helps facilitate the efforts of public and private colleges and universities in Massachusetts as they move faculty inventions from the laboratory to the Bay State marketplace.

"Dr. Barrow's skills and experience will help universities put their discoveries to work in ways that create and sustain jobs in every region of Massachusetts," said UMass President Jack M. Wilson. "We are pleased to welcome another outstanding innovator to our community."

The recently created MTTC is a key component of a statewide science and technology initiative to strengthen the commonwealth's competitive position in national and global innovation markets. The new center is part of the UMass Office of Commercial Ventures and Intellectual Property, which currently generates more than \$25 million in licensing revenue from inventions developed at the UMass campuses, including the Advanced Technology and Manufacturing Center in Fall River.

"The center is proactive in linking scientists with private industries who have ideas that seem to have commercial value, and they work with the creator to bring that idea to the private industry sector," said UMass spokesman John Hoey. "At the UMass Lowell Medical School, professors and scientists have collaborated to create the latest version of the drug Clarinex. UMass has played a role in the pharmaceutical aspect, and UMass will benefit financially from it."

UMass will reinvest the \$25 million in licensing revenue from different areas including bio-technology, life sciences, pharmaceuticals, engineering and computer science back into research and science-related teaching. UMass is now one of the top 20 colleges in technological licensing revenue in the



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country.

For UMass Dartmouth's Advanced Technology & Manufacturing Center, news of the hiring is just another example of the influence the emerging biotech industries will have on the state's economy. Coupled with virtually unlimited technology support and assistance from UMass Dartmouth, the ATMC offers various solutions for today's manufacturing and technological businesses. The ATMC not only works with larger, more established companies, but also works hand-in-hand with start-up businesses, helping to get them off the ground.

"Hiring Dr. Barrow will go a long way toward helping out the Advanced Technology Center in Fall River, as well as all of southeastern Massachusetts, which is just beginning to get itself organized," said Hoey. "The first stage is the scientist and professors working in the private sector. The next step would be producing a product that is community-viable and, lastly, developing a way so that everyone can benefit from it."

Thomas Curry, president of the UMass Advanced Technology and Manufacturing Center, sees Barrow's hiring as a further sign of the increasing connection between the university and the business sector.

"The transfer center not only helps colleges in the UMass system, but also other campuses that don't have this kind of expertise available to them," said Curry. "In the end, this work will help the economic development of whole communities and the state by eventually creating and retaining more jobs in the area."

Barrow is the former director of programs at USD Connect, which developed programs to support early-stage company formation and technology commercialization. More recently, Barrow served as managing director of the William J. von Liebig Center at the University of California San Diego. The center was created in 2001 to support commercialization of research being performed in the School of Engineering.

Curry met with Barrow Tuesday.


"The Technology Transfer Center is a very important activity for the university and she is a very capable woman," said Curry. "Working with the transfer center is not only an opportunity to create more jobs, but also to improve the area's economic stability and contribute to our graduate students staying in this area due to the technological work and research they will be involved in."

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