

TECH TRANSFER IP EPISODE #51

Speaker 1: Welcome to Technology Transfer IP. Technology Transfer is the process by which valuable research, skills, knowledge, and technology develop by educational institutions. It's transferred to industry for development, and to products and services that will benefit society. From basic patent licensing to promoting start-ups, entrepreneurship and industry collaborations while also investing [00:00:30] in and managing technology developments. We bring you conversations with the leaders in Technology Transfer, who will share their stories including their successes, challenges, and expectations for the future.

Here's your host, Lisa Mueller.

Lisa Mueller: Hello, and welcome to a very special episode of Technology Transfer IP. In this episode, we are going to talk about equity, diversity, and inclusion, also referred to [00:01:00] as EDI, in the technology transfer sector. To help guide our discussion, we have assembled an esteemed panel of guests who have graciously agreed to share their knowledge and insights on this topic. Our panel today includes Tom Hockaday, Anji Miller, Natalie Cozier, Almesha Campbell, and Megan Aanstoots.

Tom Hockaday, he, him, his, is an author and leading expert in university technology transfer leadership, management, and operations. Tom led the technology transfer activities [00:01:30] at the University of Oxford for 10 years from 2006 to 2016, having started at Oxford in 2000. Tom has over 30 years experience in this field. He is now an independent private consultant working with a number of clients in the university business collaboration and technology transfer sectors around the world. His book, *University Technology Transfer, What It Is, and How To Do It*, was published by Johns Hopkins University press in 2020.

[00:02:00] Dr. Anji Miller, she, her, hers, is a senior business manager at LifeArc, where she leads the AUTM technology transfer training fellowship program. Dr. Miller has expertise in technology evaluation, exploitation, and translational funding, as well as strong commercial awareness and proven track record of contract negotiation, technology commercialization, and development of translational technologies.

Dr. Natalie Cozier, she, her, hers, is a head of regional engagement [00:02:30] for the engineering and physical sciences research council, which is part of UK research and innovation. Dr. Cozier is an experienced leader in organizational development, partnerships building, and IPR asset management, with a demonstrated history of working in the private and public sectors within the research and innovation industry.

Dr. Almesha Campbell, she, her, hers, currently serves as the assistant vice president for research and economic development and the director for [00:03:00] technology transfer and commercialization at Jackson State University (JSU). Dr. Campbell provides support for the overall direction of the division of research and economic development and manages the intellectual

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property process from [inaudible 00:03:13] invention disclosures to commercialization. Dr. Campbell provides strategic direction and vision for defining partnerships and research, commercialization, entrepreneurship, and innovation initiatives between JSU and other institutions, funding agencies, and industry stakeholders.

[00:03:30] Dr. Megan Aanstoos, she, her, hers, is a licensing and new ventures manager for Kentucky Commercialization Ventures. In this role, Dr. Aanstoos is responsible for outreach and education on matters related to commercialization, along with assessing, managing, and licensing intellectual property developed at KCV partner institutions. Dr. Aanstoos' work allows her to pursue a lifelong passion, connecting people together to make it easier to obtain the technology [00:04:00] needed to live the life they want.

In addition to her work in Kentucky, Dr. Aanstoos also serves as the chair of the AUTM EDI committee to help enhance inclusion within the technology transfer community. In fact, Dr. Aanstoos received the 2021 AUTM volunteer of the year award for her work on AUTM CDI committee. Dr. Aanstoos also represents the EDI committee on AUTM's cabinet and serves as a co-program chair for AUTM Central Regional meeting.

And with those very impressive [00:04:30] backgrounds, let's go ahead and get started talking about EDI and tech transfer.

So when beginning any conversation on EDI, the first question is how and where to start the conversation. So Tom, today I wanted to start by asking you about the article you wrote entitled "The White Board" that you posted on your website, Tech Transfer Innovation, in February of this year. Can you tell us what this article was about?

Tom Hockaday:

Yes in, indeed. And, and hello, Lisa, and, and hello to everyone [00:05:00] else on, on the podcast and hello to, to all of the, the listeners. So, the, the article is about racial diversity in the composition of boards and senior teams in tech transfer, university science research funding groups in the UK. And, and, what I did was I, I looked at 48 groups, [00:05:30] totaling 603 people, and noted that a small proportion of those, a surprisingly small proportion of those, it struck me, were people of color.

So of those 603 people, 40 people of color, that's 6.6 percent. And one compares that against, uh, UK national population where, uh, from the 2011 Census, [00:06:00] so 10 years out of date, but 2011 Census, approximately 13 percent of the UK population of people of color.

So, you know I, I've, I've looked at this and, and, you know, the obvious conclusion is that this is not good. And, so in the article, I talk about, the data in quite a bit more detail in technology transfer and government agencies in science research funding groups et cetera, and there's a mixed [00:06:30]

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pattern, but overall, it adds up to being not very good. And another point about the 48 groups is that in 21 of them, there are no people of color.

And so, you know, what the article does, it describes this, it describes the data. And then it talks quite a bit about, existing initiatives, existing groups, who are looking into this. But primarily, in the business world [00:07:00] rather than the sort of research, and certainly not with tech transfer worlds, but it does make reference to some of the initiatives in tech transfer and some of the activities that research funding groups in, in the UK are doing.

And it, you know, concludes with a few areas to focus on. It'll help to talk about what we mean by technology transfer. And, you know, for the purposes of, of this conversation's [00:07:30] a very broad, inclusive, approach. I mean, the purpose of university technology transfer is to transfer university research results from the university out to businesses where the results are developed into new products and services that benefit society. So you know that's what we're talking about, but here, we're taking a broad view, certainly inclusive of knowledge transfer, inclusive of knowledge exchange, and really, the whole field of university [00:08:00] business collaborations.

And these words and phrases are used different ways by different people, but, when we are talking about technology transfer today, we're talking about it in a very broad sense.

Lisa Mueller: So Tom, what motivated you to write this article now?

Tom Hockaday: So, the motivation, starts back in mid-2020 really, when I was asked to give a talk on measurements of tech transfer offices to [00:08:30] a European group. And, you know, this is a topic that as tech transfer people, we're, we're thinking about and talking about a lot.

So I, began to think what is it that I want to say to this group? And, you know there was the usual stuff about the story so far in terms of the AUTM licensing survey from the 1980s onwards, the HEBCI survey in the UK, the developments in the UK around Impact [00:09:00] and Research Excellence Framework and now, in the UK the Knowledge Exchange Concordat, the Knowledge Exchange Framework et cetera.

So, I talked about what we measure and how we try to tell stories, but I wanted to, you know, I found myself thinking beyond that, which is that when you measure something, you want to measure it against what you care about. So what do we care about? Thinking in terms of how our, you know, audiences of researchers, [00:09:30] governments, industry investors, society.

But then I was thinking well hang on. What do we really, really care about? And that led me around to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). And I think the work that Times Higher Education are doing, looking at the Impact,

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assessing the Impact of universities against those UN SDG's is really interesting. But I thought, you know, looking at those United Nations [00:10:00] Sustainable Development Goals, they're a pretty good representation of what we care about as a society.

So, let's think about Climate Action. Well, what is technology transfer, if we're talking about measuring tech transfer, what is tech transfer doing in the domain of climate action? What effect are our technologies having on reducing climate change? Reducing, carbon emissions. For [00:10:30] example, and we don't really talk about that.

And then you take gender equality. Well, what are we doing as a tech transfer community in, in any of our activities to improve gender equality? Both within our offices, where we probably are doing some things, but in terms of what we're doing outside, in terms of tech transfer.

And then I thought about racial inequality. And the UN SDG number 10 of reduced inequalities, [00:11:00] which is where racial inequality fits in, in their framework. And, you know, this is something I, I care about. And I thought, what are we doing about this? We really care about it. We want to measure the effects of tech transfer. Or what are we doing about something we really care about?

And that's what led me to look into this area. And then a few months later, I was giving a talk to a group on sort of similar themes. I looked at the composition of the, [00:11:30] you know, governance groups and senior teams of this organization. And, you know, I was genuinely surprised by the lack of people of color involved in that organization. So that's where I began then to look further and, further afield and found myself summing the data from these 48 groups and, you know, overall, 21 out of 48 having no people of color is not good. And 6.6 percent against, [00:12:00] a national picture of 13 percent is, is just not good. That's sort of one in 15 against one in eight roughly.

And, you know, these, these issues really matter. And different people have different perspectives on why it matters, but, you know, it matters because it's wrong, but it also matters because, of the whole theme of diversity improving performance. Diversity and inclusion improve performance [00:12:30] of organizations. And that's why I think we, well, I found myself writing the article, and that's why I think we're finding ourselves talking about it today.

Lisa Mueller:

I think that's a good segue to ask Natalie about a recent article in *The Observer* which stated that in 2018 and '19, 19.2 percent of science, technology, engineering, and math academic staff, age 34 and under were Asian while only 1.8 percent were black. [00:13:00] Natalie, as a PhD chemist in your opinion, why are there still so few black scientists in the UK?

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- Natalie Cozier: I think it's down to a number of factors. I think it could be and likely is to be down to opportunity and awareness. Opportunity in terms of being in the right position at the right time, being able to understand the scientific subject areas, and being in the position to progress your career. I think there's a situation where there is a progression [00:13:30] gateway in regards to going from undergraduate studies to post-graduate studies. And I think this is the primary factor which is limiting the involvement and the inclusion of, people of color, whether they're black or Asian or other groups.
- Lisa Mueller: So is there something specific about academia and/or tech transfer in the UK that you think makes it difficult for minorities to succeed?
- Natalie Cozier: I think partly it's down to, it's a number's game. When you move from, being an undergraduate and progress your career [00:14:00] into post-graduate and research and academia, the opportunities to be, to progress your career is generally smaller and slimmer. And with that being said, the decisions that are made in the funding that's available, largely, organizations tend to recruit to type and one of the things that I know in terms of my previous experience was I was lucky enough to be supported and to work within a group that was actually quite diverse. But that doesn't actually represent [00:14:30] the entire, portfolio and the diversity of the sector and the opportunities that those of color are provided.
- Lisa Mueller: So Natalie, can you tell us what the tech transfer sector is doing in the UK to address issues of equity, diversity, and inclusion?
- Natalie Cozier: I think this is a challenge for tech transfer, as a sector, as a, as a community, I think it's a challenge that the sector should be looking at within itself. And I think that was what inspired me and really [00:15:00] made me feel quite proud to be part of this group and this discussion today is the fact that actually internally we're thinking about it ourselves. And it's an opportunity to, to really push forward in, and drive inclusion and diversity and, and, look at what we have to know, we do have people of color within the community. We do have a wide growth in terms of STEM and non-STEM-based people working in the sector. It's just an opportunity to try and progress that further.
- Lisa Mueller: Can you tell [00:15:30] us are there any initiatives by the UK government to help address EDI in research and/or tech transfer?
- Natalie Cozier: So this is a big problem that the UK government has recognized. There are a number of select committees that have looked and, addressing this. There is a number of reports that look at race and, and racial inclusion amongst different sectors whether that's the police or science-based subjects. So there's a number of discussions and select committee, and initiatives that are happening right now.

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In my own council itself, so I work for the national engineering [00:16:00] and physical sciences and research council which is part of UK research and innovation. There were a number of town hall meetings that happened last year in 2020 that talked about people's experiences in relation to some of the protests that happened last year, in relation to Black Lives Matter that's ongoing. There have been a number of surveys and activities that have gone out to vice chancellors and presidents as well as research groups and learned societies. I myself was part [00:16:30] of Research with the Royal Society of Chemistry looking at this exact same question. You know, in terms of your question, are there initiatives to get more people in color in terms of research and/or tech transfer, are there any specific initiatives in tech transfer? I'm not aware of them.

But equality diversity inclusion is a big effort and activity that's going on right now, and there's a lot of work under, and on the ground, looking at trying to really fix this societal [00:17:00] problem.

Lisa Mueller: Now, Anji, I wanted to ask you, you've had a long career in tech transfer in the UK. What has it been like for you being one of the only few people of color working in this sector?

Anji Miller: Yeah, it's been almost over 15 years since I left the lab as a molecular scientist to- to start my technology transfer career. It's- it's- it's not been easy. It's been long, lonely and at times, very difficult. But, I persevered [00:17:30] and I think because of my particular nature, I think it- it's one of the things that I just kept driving on. It was very obvious that I stood out. I stood out in the lab as being like very few, one of the very few studying at that level and working at that level in the gene therapy space. But the thing is also entering technology transfer, nothing had changed. If anything, it was- I stood out even more.

I found that basically [00:18:00] because it's a constant struggle, you just carried on and you just accepted that that was the way it was. And this is the reason why Tom's article, when I saw that, it resonated so much. Because the thing is, it really highlighted something that I constantly had seen. But also I realized hadn't changed in- in well over a decade. You know, the numbers, the stats reflected, and I was surprised that the stats were so... [00:18:30] really, the numbers were so high in what Tom had found actually, because it just... Nothing had changed. And it wasn't really seen as a problem.

Lisa Mueller: Anji, what have you learned about EDI and tech transfer in the UK?

Anji Miller: You know, there are, as Natalie has mentioned, and Tom has highlighted, there are initiatives addressing EDI in other areas within the UK. EDI in technology transfer itself is not really being addressed. [00:19:00] And it's not an open discussion, and I think this is the issue. You have to recognize that there is a- an issue, but also have a look at the causes and then address it. So try to, you know, fix what is what is wrong. Why are the stats that way? Why are people of Black, Asian or other ethnicities not entering the sector, or even staying long

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within the sector? And until that happens, it's, you [00:19:30] know, it- we're going to be constantly in the same situation and it's going to be the status quo as it is.

Lisa Mueller: What would you say some of the differences are in terms of how EDI is handled by the tech transfer sector in the UK compared to the US?

Anji Miller: Working closely with a lot of initiatives in the US and also the academic sector there, in the US, definitely the movement to address the issue is- [00:20:00] is well ahead. It's an open discussion, you know, where steps are being taken. It's been celebrated. It's raised it, it's open there on a platform for others to see. There are solutions being made. And I think that is the difference where in the UK, it needs to be an open discussion.

Lisa Mueller: So Megan, hearing this discussion to this point, what would you say are some [00:20:30] of the differences in terms of how EDI is handled by the tech transfer sector in the US compared to other countries? And also, do you think that the US tech transfer sector is doing a better job on EDI compared to other countries? And if so, why?

Megan Aanstoos: So Lisa, I'll start by echoing what Anji said, which is I think that their level of awareness in the United States is a bit higher right now. And certainly some of that is especially with race and gender. But [00:21:00] expanding beyond race and gender, we've had conversations at the Federal level, when we look at something like the Success Act that says that, which calls out veterans and which calls out people with different socio-economic statuses as well. So I would say that at least the discussion is being had at a different level in the United States compared to other countries.

And that we acknowledge that the discussion needs to be had, and we acknowledge that that disparity that we see [00:21:30] that Tom mentioned in his article and that Anji and Natalie said, actually is a fact of our lives. I think that in terms of how it's being handled, however, is still nascent. And it's still something that we're trying to find the best way. One of the things that I've seen us doing in more and more tech transfer offices across the country is just bringing awareness to our hiring practices and to our engagement strategies [00:22:00] with our innovators.

One of those, for example, is that we see more and more boot camps that are being created for just women entrepreneurs. Or for just people who are Black. Or for just students who have coming from community colleges or other socio-economic or disenfranchised areas. So I think by acknowledging these opportunities, it gives us a chance to have the conversation. I also think [00:22:30] that while I wouldn't say that the US is doing a better job, I think that we are trying to do a more deep dive and trying to raise that awareness.

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And one of those things that we're doing is starting to have the conversation on blogs and on websites and really making it a part of everybody's lives. So for example, women in BIO which is a great group that really encourages women who are both in the research [00:23:00] sector and as well as in the tech transfer and entrepreneurial sectors, to have the conversations and to create those mentorship opportunities since we know that mentorship, that see me, be me type of attitude, is absolutely critical to success.

Lisa Mueller: So Megan, what is the tech transfer sector doing in the US to address these issues of diversity, equity and inclusion?

Megan Aanstoos: So, I think that there are a few different things, as I mentioned. So one of them is at the Federal [00:23:30] level with law. The Success Act was passed, and we see the IDEA Act also being discussed right now. And what these do is that they really enable the federal government down to have these conversations, to pull these demographics, and to make sure that people are held accountable to keeping more equity within what they're doing when it comes to filing patents, or when it comes to giving grants to groups. So having that accountability and awareness is one [00:24:00] of the ways that the US is really focusing.

And then in the tech transfer specifically, one of the things that we've started doing is through the AUTM group, which is the Association of University Technology Managers, formerly known, is to account for women innovators. Looking at how many have disclosed and how many are on patents that we're filing. And bringing that number and awareness to the population to have that conversation, and ask people, if you're not accounting for [00:24:30] this, why not? What can we do to help you get through the barriers so that you are better able to and look at the issues and address the issues.

Another thing that we're doing is having open discussions on how we can reduce some of these other barriers that we see innovators facing. So when we all went to virtual working over the last year, that's a barrier, but in some ways it's also been an opportunity for women who can't get child care. Maybe they can at least [00:25:00] listen in on a call. Or for someone who's not able to drive to a new location, they can virtually come in and participate in a boot camp with new people. So one of the ways that we're trying to do this is by taking advantage of the technology.

Another thing that we're doing is we're starting to have conversations within our offices. So for example, at the industry level, companies are starting to focus on ways that they can [00:25:30] bring in new teams, and to have multi-disciplinary approaches that allow for new voices to be heard. And in the academic sector, we're looking at ways that we can broaden our outreach into populations that have historically not been included in the conversation. So I would say the main thing that we're doing is just bringing more people to the table and having an opportunity for more voices to be heard.

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Lisa Mueller: So Megan, what do you think the tech transfer sector [00:26:00] in the US is doing well in terms of EDI, and where do you think it's struggling?

Megan Aanstoos: As I mentioned, I think the best thing that it's doing is having that conversation and bringing that awareness. However, I think that we struggle with what to do next. We know there's a problem, we've acknowledged that there's a problem, but we're just not quite sure how to fix the problem. And a lot of times, people feel the guilt but they don't really quite see the solution, [00:26:30] and so they bury it because they're not sure how to best address it. So, I would say that the best thing that we can really do to reduce this struggle is to bring in more education. Bring in more resources. Bring in more connectivity. And within not just our own offices, but creating networks across all of the globe, really, to give that opportunity to have those conversations.

As an example, I work with Kentucky Commercialization Ventures, and we have partnerships [00:27:00] with all of the tech transfer offices in the state. And we're also having conversations that will affect not just the way that we work, but the way that the entire Commonwealth of Kentucky would be affected so that we aren't just working in a vacuum. And instead, we are trying to address these issues and find ways to make it easier for people to engage through having a network of opportunities.

Lisa Mueller: Natalie, did you have something you wanted to add to what Megan just said?

Natalie Cozier: [00:27:30] Yes, please. So Megan's point in regards to the different initiatives in the US to address the issue of equality, diversity and inclusion really resonated with me. And that it makes me recall some of the activities in the UK in relation to different universities who have a number of programs looking to champion particular groups. For example, I know that the University College of London have a- a specific scheme that looks at racial inclusion in relation to research. [00:28:00] There's a number of funding programs and activities, the work of the Runnymede Trust in looking at racial inclusion and equity.

I think the difference between the US and the UK in terms of my personal experience is the openness of the conversation about racial, uh, inclusion specifically. I think in America, it tends to be more acknowledged that there is an issue or a conversation to be had. In the UK, it's taken more of a broad sector [00:28:30] approach, or a broad societal approach. The conversations tend to be smaller, I think, amongst individual organizations or amongst particular groups.

Lisa Mueller: I'd like to turn to Almesha now, and- and ask you, Almesha, you're a tech transfer office of one person. How have you handled EDI issues?

Almesha Campbell: Thanks for that question, Lisa. It's a very good question. I'll be very transparent. Having been in tech transfer for over 10 years as a one [00:29:00] person office, I didn't consider EDI issues especially since that I work at a Historically Black College and University at what one would call a minority serving institution. So

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of course we have diverse population and so I didn't even consider it. But after engaging with AUTM and having those type of conversations, I realized that it may be in the practices, it may be things that we are doing.

For example, one of the conversations that came up [00:29:30] in one of the women inventor's group is that, are we having students a part of the discussion when they are co-inventors on a patent? Typically, we would have the faculty lead in those discussions and have them talk to the students. But as I began to get more immersed in equity, diversity and inclusion, and understanding some of the barriers, I realized that we were having barriers because we were excluding some people who should be at the table. Not deliberately, but because [00:30:00] we were not conscious that these are things that we should be doing.

So that awareness came in you know quite some time later. But the other part of that is that we always try to make sure from the very beginning, make sure that women are included. Because we realize the disparity in I mean, patenting, the disparity in start-ups and entrepreneurship and seeing a lack of women in some of these spaces when you look in comparison with their male counterparts. So we started doing [00:30:30] that especially when it comes to recruitment of them in commercialization programs to make sure that they were knowledgeable about the process, to make sure that we were available if they had questions about anything when it comes to tech transfer and commercialization.

We also looked in our community. We're here at Jackson State University, the Historically Black College and University in Jackson, Mississippi, where we also look at how we collaborate with our counterparts at the other universities. [00:31:00] So we have a strong relationship there with the other tech transfer directors in the other three major research universities in Mississippi. And that's how we also started having more conversations around EDI, more conversations around what are we doing in our practices, and what are some of the best practices that we can adopt?

Megan mentioned what the University of Kentucky is doing. We have a partnership with the University of Kentucky as well, and [00:31:30] so we were able to create a program called ENRICH, which is engaging researchers and innovators in commercialization at HBCUs. And this has allowed us to provide technology transfer and commercialization programming and workshops and conversations with HBCUs across country. And so, they're now a part of the dialogue. They're now learning this process. Because many HBCUs do not have technology transfer offices. Jackson State is fortunate to have one [00:32:00] for over 10, 11 years now. But very few have.

And so that's one of the things that we started in order to ensure that we are having EDI issues addressed, not just as my university, but as universities that are similar to me in its makeup and its demographics. Another thing that I think we do in terms of handling EDI issues is making sure that our policy is adopted

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[00:32:30] and used the way it should be done so that we're not giving preferences to particular faculty, right? And so we don't want to hear conversations about faculty X received X amount in royalties versus, you know in terms of percentage, versus another faculty using the same technologies, whether it's female, whether it's a male or a student.

We want to make sure that we are consistent in our practices. So, there's still a lot of work to be done. And [00:33:00] I think having conversation and being a part of groups like AUTM, EDI and Women Inventors SIG and a part of this illustrious group will help us move the needle in that direction.

Lisa Mueller: Almesha, how did you even figure out where to even start?

Almesha Campbell: A good start for us, I remember when the JSU Advance program funded by the National Science Foundation was considering EDI. And they were looking at EDI in the fact of [00:33:30] female faculty not making the ranks of full professorship, or even into administration. And so, they want to have an implicit bias think tank, and I happened to be a part of that process. But then I start looking at the conversation from a tech transfer perspective then and looking at, how can we do some things differently? Or how can we make faculty, especially the women faculty at that time, feel that they are a part of the process, and that we are open to them and welcome in our practices and in the things that we do? [00:34:00] The other part was that joining the EDI over a year ago for AUTM was really a huge eye opener for me. Working under the leadership of Megan, we were able to do a number of things to move the needle, in terms of EDI. And having the access to people from different backgrounds that I would not see there today here on the campus, has always has opened that up. And I think the big [00:34:30] thing is that, as Natalie mentioned, is the openness. Is the willingness to have those conversations, and without any type of judgment, any type of judgment whatsoever, when it comes to those type of dialogues.

But yes, that's something great that I got started with. I think the Women Inventors Toolkit was a great place for me to look at some of the things that we can do better here, and how we can incorporate some of that into our practices.

Lisa Mueller: [00:35:00] So, Megan, do you have something you wanted to add to what Almesha just said?

Megan Aanstoos: Yes, thanks, Lisa. I just wanted to say a little bit more about this EDI committee that Almesha mentioned, and I'll talk a little bit more about some of the resources that AUTM has over the last year, but I think it's important to note that the creation of a Diversity and Inclusion Committee or an Equity Diversity Inclusion Committee, is a really important step forward that we've seen a lot more in the United States. And that's [00:35:30] a big key to having the conversation, is welcoming conversation in the first place. So, giving people that safe place that they can talk about and they can learn from each other.

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And I think that that's a key component of working with EDI issues within the tech transfer profession and elsewhere, is having opportunities for people to have conversation and to learn from others about what they don't know so that they can help to [00:36:00] promote their practices elsewhere. And whether it be with AUTM's EDI Committee or with the Diversity and Inclusion Employee Resource Group, or with any of the myriad of other opportunities, I want to just encourage all of our listeners, get engaged. And to start having those network conversations that Almesha and I mentioned, because that's really key to learning and to growing your own perspective so that you can continue to help other people.

Lisa Mueller: Now, turning back to you, [00:36:30] Almesha, I wanted to ask, what resources have you relied on?

Almesha Campbell: I think one of the biggest resources I would say that I've relied on is network of the people. And having those frequent dialogues about EDI and being open minded. When we go into EDI sometimes, we- I always ask people, how do you define diversity? What does it mean to you? Because it may not mean the same thing to everyone else. I remember reviewing a proposal, and when they talk about [00:37:00] diversity, they really wasn't talking about the diversity in terms of how I would, talking about inclusion, making sure that we have a diverse population, make sure that we have people from different backgrounds, sex, race, color, everything that I think of it as, they thought of it in one very aspect.

So once you understand where- what people how they define diversity, how they define inclusion, I think equity should be understood as to [00:37:30] what it is. But having those dialogues and being open minded. So you may not always be around the same type of people that you're accustomed to, but be open minded enough to cross the aisle, or cross the room and talk to someone else. A big thing that I realized when I first came to AUTM was that I would go to the conferences and immediately if you find that one person of color that you identify with, you gravitate towards that person, you sit next to them.

But you are missing out on the diversity [00:38:00] of AUTM. You're missing out from having conversation with people from different backgrounds. And so you realize, no longer can you just sit at the table with someone that you know, or someone that looks like you. But you move across to other tables and get to know other people. Without us doing that and without us having conversations and being honest about what we know, and what we don't know and to correct any misunderstanding in what we don't know, we are going to still have a problem. So that's the [00:38:30] starting ground dialogue. Often, open and honest.

Lisa Mueller: Natalie, did you have something you wanted to add to what Almesha just said?

Natalie Cozier: Yes, thank you. So, I think Almesha makes a really, really good point in regards to dialogue and being important. And resources that I found particularly useful, and something that kind of opened my eyes this year in terms of 2021, is the

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use of social media in helping my own understanding and also encouraging others [00:39:00] to open their mind. So, Tom's article that was on LinkedIn, and on his web pages, you know, really opened a lot of people's eyes and I think it was really important in terms of understanding representation on boards, and the decision bodies that, in the end, make the decisions about who gets funded and when, and the growth and the development of companies. And our activities and what we do in the terms of our bread and butter, which is technology transfer and developing those research, technology opportunities [00:39:30] and products.

I think but we shouldn't underestimate the- the impact of that in terms of social media. And one of the key things that I've actually picked up this year was the use of the terminology over-representation. So when we look at diversity, equality, equity and inclusion issues, you know, perhaps we should be looking at the over-representation of particular groups in an area, rather than the under-representation. That sort of change in language kind of [00:40:00] just changed my mindset somewhat. And I think maybe it's something we should look at in terms of technology transfer as a sector and a community.

Lisa Mueller: Great point. Thank you. And given that, I wanted to turn back to Tom for a second and circle back again to your article and ask you, what was the reaction to it?

Tom Hockaday: Yeah, sure. I'm really enjoying this conversation by the way and I think one of the- the themes coming out from the comparisons [00:40:30] with the US and the UK, and what we know elsewhere around the world, I think is this point about the openness of the conversation. And you know, in the UK, there are conversations. There are conversations about this issue, but they're fairly muted. They're fairly unconnected. I think sometimes possibly a little embarrassed. And I hear things about usually unconscious bias training being spread [00:41:00] across an organization, or data and reports being collected. But the conversation in the UK hasn't opened up.

And I know in other European countries it certainly hasn't opened up. And in a way, that leads into your question, what was the reaction to the- to the article on- on LinkedIn. And I'd make three comments. One was the (laugh) the reaction was small. [00:41:30] So not many comments. And not many, you know you get likes and you get post views and all of this sort of thing. And there quite simply weren't that many. And I think this touches to the discomfort. And the fact, the conversation isn't open yet. The second thing I'd say is that, you know some of the comments, you know, all of which were very welcome.

[00:42:00] But some sort of hinted at a slight defensiveness. And I think that's also a big part of the conversation here in the UK. And that defensiveness can come across in- in different ways. But it, you know, to sort of, to summarize it some, it's in the too difficult pile. You know, this is huge, it's broad, it's challenging, it's not for us, it's a bigger societal issue, there's lots of different types, et cetera, et cetera. So in other [00:42:30] words, you know, we're sort

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of, - we're on it, but we're not really because it's too difficult. So a sort of defensiveness.

But then the third comment I'd make is all together far more positive and encouraging, which is that there was some very good supportive comments. And you know, I think gratitude and thanks for having done it. And for starting to, you know, in a very small way, but just starting to open some of those issues up, in the context [00:43:00] of technology transfer, which of course sort of spills over into universities, science and research funding.

Lisa Mueller: Well given that reaction Tom, what did you do next?

Tom Hockaday: So, one of the really (laughs) supportive comments was from Anji. So I contacted Anji and you know we had a conversation. And that led to other conversations. I was, you know, out in touch with colleagues in the US, I was [00:43:30] put in touch with Almesha, I was put in touch with you, Lisa, as you know. Put in touch with Megan. And you know, back over here through a great conversation with a colleague, put in touch with Natalie. And you know, we've- we've started having these conversations you know, amongst ourselves, and amongst this group. And this has led to something which I think is [00:44:00] really exciting.

One of the conversations we had, one of the calls we were talking about ourselves as a group of people and we sort of wondered (laughs) what are we? Who are we? What are we? And we worked out that- that we've become something that we've labeled GEDITT, as in global equality, diversity [00:44:30] and inclusion in technology transfer. So GEDITT. Global, equality, diversity and inclusion in technology transfer. And, you know, we're a group of people who are trying to work out ways that- that we can help.

And you know, well I've come on to talk about this in a few minutes. But you know, [00:45:00] that's where we've got to so far, is- is a recognition of the need to open up the conversation, creating GEDITT, and initially focusing on issues of- of race and gender. Because of course, as we know, you know, equality, diversity and inclusion are very broad issues in sort of every dimension you can think of. But our [00:45:30] initial focus is on race and gender.

Lisa Mueller: So Anji, do you want to talk a little bit about who GEDITT actually is?

Anji Miller: Yeah. I mean, I'm- I'm really enjoying this discussion as well. But basically, we are a global community of individuals from the technology transfer, that's a mix of university, government, law firms, charities. And we are collectively working to promote equality, diversity and [00:46:00] inclusion in technology transfer. And that's across the globe. One thing that we would like to also stress is GEDITT is that we are not an exclusive club, and we are open to anyone who wishes to address any issues, wants to have dialogue, wants to understand

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resources or apply resources, because there are quite a few from other sectors that can be applied to this technology transfer space.

To be [00:46:30] ensured that there is equality, diversity and inclusion within their institutions, or actually within their activities. But we want to also be open to anyone at all levels within technology transfer. So this isn't a conversation for those who are advanced in their careers. It could be someone who's just entering the sector. But it's really where, basically we're open to everyone. We will help everyone. [00:47:00] And we will also try and direct them to whatever they need to have. But let's have open conversation, transparency, and address the issue.

Lisa Mueller: So Megan, would you like to add to what Anji just said?

Megan Aanstoos: Yes, thank you, Lisa. And Anji, I think that was a beautiful way to describe it. And one of the things I just want to emphasize is that this is not an expense either. This is not something that you have to ask your supervisor to pay for. This is something that is a variable, [00:47:30] at the time that you can do it, for free. We're not asking you to have some kind of a membership fee, or for your entire company to have to join for you to engage. This is just a personal conversation everybody can be part of.

Lisa Mueller: Almesha, do you want to talk a little bit about the purpose of GEDITT?

Almesha Campbell: Absolutely Lisa. Like someone before said this is very exciting because we were having these conversations within our- and didn't even [00:48:00] think beyond just having that dialogue and being open and learning from each other and all of us in our different capacities have different experiences and we bring different things to the table. But GEDITT is really poised to be a leader in facilitating tech transfer offices, patent offices, law firms, corporations. And it can be individuals who want to understand how to learn, and collaborate and try [00:48:30] and find solutions to EDI issues globally.

Because as we know, that different places experience EDI differently and the openness about the discussion is also at different levels in- in different places across the globe. So, of course right now, we don't want to just focus on the US and UK. I know we're represented here. But we want the focus to expand beyond these two regions, and go globally, [00:49:00] so that we can have the intended impact of GEDITT. I believe that we can achieve that as we have more people participating in the dialogue, as we share more resources, as we have these type of conversations that we are having right now. And that we are open, as Anji said earlier, we're not exclusive group. We're open for all sorts of people who want to impact EDI issues.

Lisa Mueller: Tom, do you want to tell us a little bit about some [00:49:30] of the goals and next steps for GEDITT?

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Tom Hockaday: Yes, sure. And you know, the theme of calls to action. And I think a single word to use would be engage. And Megan used that word earlier. I think it's, you know, we invite everybody to engage with GEDITT, and GEDITT will [00:50:00] develop a range of resources and links and access to tool kits, you know, references from role models and, you know, podcasts like this, and as much material as we can bring to access through the GEDITT website as possible. And you know, recognize that GEDITT is many things.

I mean, I think it's a forum, [00:50:30] it's a network, it's a community. And it is open and freely available. And I think, you know, engage with GEDITT, but also engage with the issues yourselves and GEDITT will help you, we hope, will help you engage with the issues and so far as you need help or want help. And what are we talking about? We're talking about, you know, helping improve, [00:51:00] equality, diversity and inclusion in technology transfer. And, you know, a broad, as broad a definition of technology transfer as, you can imagine. And I think that, you know, there are ways one can look at this in terms of, yeah, providing lots of connections and, and access to resources, providing thoughts on sources of data that may help approaches to data collection that may help, [00:51:30] but also thinking about it in terms of, of sort of, inputs for, you know, your people, whoever you are listening to this.

You know, what's going on in your organization with your people. And, GEDITT can hopefully help improve, uh, EDI and, and your area. But also let's think about, about outputs and, you know, one of the wonderful things about technology transfer is le-, we're transferring knowledge, [00:52:00] knowledge and technologies from universities and research institutes out, uh, into society.

And let's think about as technology transfer professionals. What are we doing to improve diversity and inclusion, uh, as I said with this initial [inaudible 00:52:20] some on re- [inaudible 00:52:21] race and gender, what are we actually doing to improve this out there? And do we have stories of how technologies [00:52:30] and knowledge that we've transferred and exchanged have benefited groups, uh, underrepresented groups, uh, groups where levels of, uh, diversity and inclusion are low.

You know, let's think not just what, sort of, tech transfer can do f-, with, within the community, do for ourselves, but what, you know, let's remember why we exist. We exist to transfer this stuff out to benefit society. So, so let's [00:53:00] think about racial diversity and inclusion, gender diversity and inclusion and, and think how can as tech transfer people, how can we benefit the world out there as well?

And I think that's, you know, that's where it begins to get really exciting. So "GEDITT" will provide many resources but hopefully will, as we've all been saying open the conversation. But also help conversation expand [00:53:30] to how tech transfer can really help. And so the, the call to action in a single word is engage in the ways that I've described.

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Lisa Mueller: Well, I think “GEDITT” is an amazing opportunity to connect those in the tech transfer sector to those who want to collaborate and try and find solutions to these EDI issues that we've been talking about. Megan, for those of our listeners who are AUTM members, where can they go to obtain more information about AUTM's efforts [00:54:00] on EDI?

Megan Aanstoos: Lisa, that's a great question. And the first place they can go is in AUTM mission statement. And specifically, AUTM's EDI statement. We also recommend that all AUTM members get involved. So, the great starting point, as you've heard from Almesha throughout this podcast the Women's Inventor SIG, and these group of people have been around fighting for woman's rights in tech transfer [inaudible 00:54:27] for more than 10 years now. Another [00:54:30] area that you can go if you are interested in going beyond just gender, is the diversity and inclusion SIG. And a SIG is a special interest group. People who are like minded and have a passion to move forward within that area.

I'm also happy to have conversations with anybody who is interested in EDI and how to bring that across to other groups. Within the EDI committee one of our goals is to develop a tool kit to help people; to guide them within these [00:55:00] conversations no matter what area of interest they are in. And finally, I would say, get involved. Put together panels and pitch them at the meetings, bring up these conversations in whatever group you want to engage with, let the board of directors know what your thoughts are. Talk to your groups about how you can sponsor things. The University of New Hampshire, for example Past Chair, Marc Sedam, like to say is sponsoring [00:55:30] a nursing room, in the annual meeting in 2022. So think about ways that you can include and make a more inclusive environment for the people around you. Have these conversations and as Tom said, get engaged not just with the AUTM level, but with everybody in and out the tech transfer profession.

Lisa Mueller: Almesha, for those of our listeners who may be part of a single office, a small office or a minority serving institution [00:56:00] where do you recommend they go to obtain more information and/or assistance on EDI?

Almesha Campbell: I would do some of the same things that Megan mentioned, which is the same resources I use, as a small office SIG. First of all, I joined AUTM, I joined the small office SIG, there's a lot of resources there, but also the AUTM EDI SIG is also available for folks to join and to learn about some of the things we are doing with, the group is called working [00:56:30] on a tool kit on EDI, so that would be a resource that would be available. I mentioned the Women Inventor SIG, and Megan did as well. But a lot of information in there that not only for the large offices but things that the small offices can also adopt. I've been privy, and very privileged to be able to be using some of these resources here on my own campus and that's what I would recommend to others, of course you can always reach out to any one of us and even here in my university [00:57:00] I get call sometimes from different people about some of the practices that we are doing here in on our campus, how can they do some of these things, adopt some of these things on their campuses and I always say to them, I got most of

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information from AUTM, but I'm willing to share, I'm willing to provide them access.

But definitely that is one of the places that they can go to. One of the things that the AUTM EDI committee, in collaboration with the AUTM Board, has done is create, an emerging [00:57:30] program for HBCU's, so that folks from HBCU's, I think we did about 25, and Megan can correct me, because she's uniquely involved in that as well. But we invited these HBCU's to be a part of the program, so that they can have access to the resources and AUTM for at least two years, for three members of their institutions. So this is something that we started rolling to and we see a lot of HBCU's [00:58:00] putting their hands up, to get this access, because this is something that they really needed. And I think this will impact the institution greatly especially from an EDI perspective.

Lisa Mueller: Megan do you have some additional thoughts on this point that you wanted to share?

Megan Aanstoos: Thank you Almesha, for bringing up our Emerging Members Program. It's something we were so excited about, and I want to just clarify that it's not just HBCU's or even MSI's but we were looking at working with emerging institutions across the United States as a starting [00:58:30] point. To help those that are more interested in engaging with commercialization and technology transfer. And so we are starting out pilot program, this year, but we were also open to having that continued conversation. So if your part of an institution that doesn't yet have a Tech transfer office, and you want to find out how you can start one, or your part of an institution that's more established, for example, Jackson State University with Almesha, but you want to find out where you can grow your network, and increase [00:59:00] the opportunities. We invite you from any spectrum to come and talk with us; see how AUTM can provide you those opportunities to engage and increase your network.

Lisa Mueller: Now Anji, and Natalie, for those of our listeners that may be from the UK or perhaps one of our other global participants, where can they go to obtain more information on EDI?

Anji Miller: I echo everything that has been said before because all those resources can be accessed. In the UK I think the important [00:59:30] thing is, within your institution or wherever you are, don't be afraid to ask the questions. I think, you know, we can access other resources and bring them in but also, it's important that you raise the flag, you ask the questions, you open the conversation. To bring other resources, GEDITT we are trying to really make it easier to actually access all of these and bring it together, so that you can, when you do get the resources externally you can [01:00:00] implement them, and modifying them so they fit within your establishment.

There are also other initiatives, For Example EDIS, which is EDI in Science and health, that is another network that has resources available. The power of active departments that have some resources for researchers, but I would say

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that, ask the question, if you can't find and it is overwhelming sometimes particularly when we're talking about understanding [01:00:30] the space, and the really trying to find out how you can fix it, ask the question and there's a lot of help out there.

Natalie Cozier: Thanks Anji, for raising that, I think it's really important for people to be part of the conversation, if you don't ask the question, how will anybody know. So there are number of initiatives happening across the UK national funding body for UK Research and Innovation. Where I'm based and where I work, with the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council and other funding councils. [01:01:00] Research England, in itself has a funding opportunity that looks specifically at increasing diversity and inclusion of under-represented groups with post graduate research. We have the Office for Students, the government itself and the Runnymede Trust that could be looked at, and I just want to encourage anyone to be part of the conversation. Now is time to talk.

Lisa Mueller: Tom, did you have some comments you'd like to add to what Natalie just said?

Tom Hockaday: Thank [01:01:30] you Lisa, yes, I mean just to reference a couple of other initiatives in the UK. So, there's a higher education group called Advanced HE. And they have developed an Athena Swan charter for looking at, female, male, diversity in higher education. And they also have race equality charter, which is a standard that universities can [01:02:00] seek to obtain. Cancer Research UK, I know they've done a lot of good stuff in terms of looking at data so have Royal Society. I suppose the point to make, two points really; one is that GEDITT hopes to bring together all of these links and resources so that people can, quite quickly get an overview of what is happening. But also the second point, to recognize that [01:02:30] known of these are specifically active in the technology transfer field, and you know that's where all of us here, and hopefully all of the listeners, that's why GEDITT is exciting because its focused on tech transfer. And we know as a community we can do great things, and we wanted to do great things in this area as well.

Lisa Mueller: Megan did you have something to add to, what Tom, and Natalie just said?

Megan Aanstoos: [01:03:00] Yes, Lisa. One of the things that we've talked about throughout this podcast, is a little bit of focus on, race and gender, as Tom said. But I want to encourage anybody that's interested in learning more to come to the table. Because if you don't see yourself represented that's why we're here, to help you to have that conversation, and to help you to find that support that you need to get the representation that you deserve. Diversity is among other things that make us unique, it's the not a measure of things that divided us. [01:03:30] So we want to be here to bring that opportunity to anyone, anyway.

Lisa Mueller: Well this has been an incredible conversation today. Tom, Anji, Natalie, Almesha, Megan, I can thank you enough for all your insights and time on this extremely important topic, it's been an absolute pleasure. If any of our listeners want to reach out and get involved. Tom, can you tell us where they can go?

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Tom Hockaday: Yes, please visit the GEDITT website, at [01:04:00] GEDITT.com. That G-E-D-I-T-T dot com. And also email us at, [GETTIT](mailto:info@GEDITT.com). That's info@GEDITT.com, so [info@G-E-D-I-T-T dot com](mailto:info@GEDITT.com). And we really look forward to hearing from you.

Lisa Mueller: Well, thank you all so much again, it's been really fantastic to have this opportunity to talk to each of you.

Speaker 1: Thank you for listening to Technology Transfer IP. [01:04:30] Please visit us online for more resources at techtransferipforum.com.