



MEMORANDUM FOR: Dr. Rita R. Colwell
Chair, Visiting Committee on Advanced Technology

FROM: Walter G. Copan 
Under Secretary of Commerce for Standards and Technology and
Director, National Institute of Standards and Technology

SUBJECT: Charge to the Visiting Committee on Advanced Technology (VCAT) for the
Establishment of a Subcommittee of the VCAT

This year the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) will be leading a government-wide effort to improve transfer of federally funded technologies from Lab-to-Market as part of the President's Management Agenda. As we lead the effort on a national scale, it is important for us to look critically at how we perform these tasks within our own organization. The Visiting Committee on Advanced Technology (VCAT or Committee) can help shape and define NIST's approach.

To address this issue, I am charging the VCAT to establish a subcommittee to develop recommendations focused on NIST's delivery of advanced technology to enhance national security and improve our Nation's competitiveness and the quality of life of our citizens. This subcommittee, the VCAT Subcommittee on Technology Transfer (Subcommittee), will be comprised of a subset of the Committee's members, and is to meet and to conduct information-gathering from external experts in between various Committee meetings.

It is my understanding that the VCAT Subcommittee on Technology Transfer is to be chaired by Katherine Ku, a member of the VCAT.

The transfer of NIST technology and knowledge is key to accomplishing this part of the overall mission. The American taxpayers invest in our science programs through the Congress, and recognizing the need to provide a significant return on their investment helps NIST serve the Nation. The President's Management Agenda contains a Cross Agency Priority Goal to improve transfer of federally funded technologies from Lab-to-Market. NIST has a leadership role in implementing this policy, but equally important is a thorough review of how we implement technology transfer right here in our own NIST programs and reflect it in our policies.

It is my understanding that as a critical component of this review, the VCAT Subcommittee on Technology Transfer will ask visiting technical experts to assess NIST technology transfer policies and practices and if necessary provide findings on how they can be improved.

To assist the VCAT Subcommittee on Technology Transfer in this review, the Subcommittee will ask each visiting technical expert to provide feedback on the ability of NIST to transfer work products and work collaboratively with domestic industry to maximize economic benefit.

Accordingly, the Subcommittee on Technology Transfer will ask each visiting technical expert to report to the Subcommittee as follows:

1. Review NIST's current technology transfer policies and practices, and provide their individual technical assessments on the principles that should drive these policies and practices for effectively engaging the business community and communicating with stakeholders;
2. Assess NIST's performance in the development and dissemination of work products and knowledge, and recommend improvements. Specific areas that the visiting technical experts should address include the development and use of intellectual property and collaborative research.

The visiting technical experts will deliver their individual assessments and findings to the VCAT Subcommittee on Technology Transfer for their consideration in the development of a final report to the VCAT and any subsequent recommendations given to NIST.

Accordingly, the Subcommittee on Technology Transfer should be charged to report to the Committee as follows:

1. Review NIST's current technology transfer policies and practices, and provide the Subcommittee's recommendations on the principles that should drive these policies and practices for effectively engaging the business community and communicating with stakeholders;
2. Assess NIST's performance in the development and dissemination of work products and knowledge, and recommend improvements. Specific areas that the Subcommittee should address include the development and use of intellectual property and collaborative research.

I look forward to receiving the Committee's recommendations for how NIST can best respond to this national priority. The Subcommittee's efforts, and its eventual report and recommendations to the Committee, will expand on the concepts brought before the VCAT at the February 7, 2018, meeting. Additional information and discussion about the Subcommittee was provided at the June 4-5, 2018, VCAT meeting. Thank you in advance for contributing your valuable time and expertise to participate in this critical task.