

## Dr. Belinda L. Collins

Technology Services Laboratory, National Institute of Standards and Technology

20

### Beginning in 2006, Dr. Belinda Collins, TS Lab Director, has

led an effort to revitalize NIST's commitment to technology transfer and commercialization. Dr. Collins began by organizing a working group whose members were drawn from laboratories across NIST to examine and refine NIST policy concerning intellectual property, encouraging/recognizing invention and innovation, and technology transfer and commercialization. With the help of this working group, Dr. Collins has supported key changes in NIST's approach to technology transfer in the key areas of intellectual property management, marketing and licensing, small business research, and external collaboration and partnerships.

Specific internal activities directed or supported by Dr. Collins have included Redesigning NIST's patent policy and the patent review process for evaluating NIST inventions including the establishment of a NIST Patent Review Committee (PRC). This action has resulted in an increase in invention disclosure of 400% and an increase in patent filings of 900% between levels in 2006 and 2008. She has also developed a multi-level "in-reach" initiative and training program to engage the NIST scientific and technical staff,

Dr. Collins was a leader and in developing a re-engineered NIST's patent review process. Specific work accomplished has included:

- Establishment of standards of conduct for PRC members.
- Development and institutionalization of standards for inventors to follow in presenting their inventions to the committee for review and evaluation for patenting suitability.

- Development and institutionalization of deliberation standards for the PRC in evaluating invention disclosures.
- Training and "dry runs" for inventors making invention presentations to the PRC.
- Integrating the "best practices" of invention disclosure, review and evaluation from other Federal laboratories into the operating policies and procedures of the NIST PRC.
- Internally promoting both the PRC and TS as cooperating advocates for NIST staff technology innovation, invention and technology transfer/commercialization.
- Working with NIST inventors to understand the importance of invention disclosure and the role of patents in technology transfer and commercialization.
- Development of a Charter and Administrative Manual procedures

Patent applications have seen an increase of 900% between 2006 and 2008 under Dr. Collins' watch, a trend that continues in 2009. Invention disclosures have likewise seen a 400% increase over the same period.

Dr. Collins implemented Institute-level seminars by noted experts in all aspects of innovative technology and invention. Institute-level seminars are intended to promote intellectual curiosity about the broader impacts of invention and innovation on society and culture and to provide a historical context through which NIST researchers can appreciate the importance of their own innovative contributions.

**Contact:**  
Mr. J. Terry Lynch, Sr. Licensing Officer  
Office of Technology Partnerships,  
Technology Services National  
Institute of Standards and Technology  
100 Bureau Drive, Stop 2000,  
Gaithersburg, MD 20899-2000  
301-975-2691  
Fax: 301-975-2183  
jtlynch@nist.gov

# Laboratory Director of the Year

In addition to internal improvements in NIST's approach to technology transfer, Dr. Collins has supported a broad and innovative program to reach external partners. These activities include:

- A novel approach to NIST's SBIR program to have a focus on technology transfer and commercialization.
- Developing and staffing a marketing activity to support NIST technology transfer including participation with outside organizations in technology transfer activities, such as state and regional economic development agencies, the FLC, and others. This effort has focused on partnerships and collaboration with NIST as well as licensing NIST IP.
- Supporting a complete remake of the system to allow collaborative research on-site at NIST for guest researchers.
- Supporting a 2009 joint venture collaboration with the Smithsonian Institution's Lemelson Center for the Study of Invention and Innovation in studying NIST as a "Place of Invention."

Dr. Collins has created an environment within TS that has led to innovative approaches to technology transfer. An interesting and innovative approach has been the use of NIST's SBIR program not only an instrument to augment the Institute's research mission with external participants, but also to promote direct technology transfer and commercialization.

Dr. Collins provided resources and direction to begin an active marketing and outreach effort for NIST technologies. This work has resulted in a Memorandum of Agreement with Maryland TEDCO and joint showcase events with State, local, and other FLC laboratories and regions.

In December 2008, the Smithsonian Institution Lemelson Center for the Study of Invention and Innovation of the Museum of American History expressed an interest in working with TS in its multi-year study of laboratory environments that favor the emergence of invention and innovation along with technology transfer activities. Dr. Collins is actively encouraging this cooperative effort, which promises to enhance the visibility and vitality of all Federal technology transfer operations.

Dr. Collins' aggressive initiative to refine NIST's technology transfer apparatus combined with her insights into the nature of technology transfer as it relates to NIST's mission to support the U.S. economy has led not only to greater technology efficiency and dramatically increased NIST research participation, but also to a motivation to study the "theory" of technology transfer itself.



Laboratory Director of the Year