

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

May 24, 2010

To: Campus Community

From: J. Ian Gray, Vice President for Research and Graduate Studies

Subject: Advancing corporate partnerships

Reorganization in my office this spring is designed to help us increase and strengthen our ties with business and industry.

MSU Business-CONNECT is helping MSU build more productive, mutually beneficial relationships with corporations. Executive Director Charles Hasemann is organizing the unit as MSU's "front door" to help businesses, regional entrepreneurs, and economic development organizations link to what they need from MSU. The Business-CONNECT team will partner with MSU Technologies on patent mapping strategies that indicate where MSU's intellectual products overlap with corporate research interests.

MSU Business-CONNECT also manages privately funded research agreements—from initial company contact through negotiation to contract execution. Under the direction of Randy Sheets, a former employee of Contract and Grant Administration, they expect to handle these agreements quickly and, when necessary, to find creative and flexible ways to make contracts happen. All corporate-sponsored research, corporate-sponsored testing, and clinical trial agreements should now be directed to Business-CONNECT.



Other organizational changes in the Office of the Vice President for Research and Graduate Studies are designed to enhance cross-disciplinary research specifically in areas that support the bioeconomy and to coordinate bioeconomy activities at MSU.

Steve Pueppke has been named associate vice president for research and graduate studies charged to work with deans, associate deans, and chairs to advance research in plant science, water science, and climate change. With that support, he will look for ways to take advantage of funding opportunities, influence state and national decision makers, and develop international partnerships. He remains director of the Michigan Agricultural Experiment Station, using its strengths to build university-wide programs.

Doug Gage has been named director of the MSU BioEconomy Network (BEN), a new umbrella organization that incorporates and replaces activities of the Office of Biobased Technologies. It is charged with coordinating MSU's efforts to promote Michigan's bioeconomy, including research, policy and economic analysis, education, corporate and government collaborations, and commercialization. In partnership with MSU Technologies and MSU Business-CONNECT and working with related units like MBI and the Michigan Bioeconomy Institute in Holland, BEN will provide a bridge between faculty and external collaborators to support MSU's role in expanding the bioeconomy. Doug remains the OVPRGS contact for the DOE Great Lakes Bioenergy Research Center and will work with faculty to develop multidisciplinary research proposals related to the bioeconomy.

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