
Stanford earns record \$6.05 million from research patents

Stanford University received \$6,051,125 from patents by university researchers in 1986-87, a record for Stanford and probably among American universities.

In a report to the Board of Trustees, Niels J. Reimers, director of technology licensing, said the Stanford-University of California patent on recombinant DNA earned \$1.7 million, 28.7 percent of the total. A patent on the FM synthesizer chip, held by music Prof. John Chowning, was the second highest income gainer.

Reimers said that the most important event was the amicable settlement of a lawsuit against Coulter Corp., which enforced the DNA patent. Stanford already has received \$350,000 as part of the settlement, which will total \$700,000 plus royalties now being calculated.

Royalty payments in 1986-87 came from 116 separate technologies. The University also earned \$100,000 on emblematic rights to the Stanford emblems and insignia.

Reimers told the board that three technology disclosures are received every working day on average.

"After review with the inventors and evaluation, typically one in four cases survives to the patent application filing or other proprietary protection stage. This process ranges from a few days to months.

"Of the survivors, one in two is licensed, and the other is eventually written off as unlicensable. Licensing can occur within a few months to a few years from disclosure. A major case will produce significant income only after five to 10 years from disclosure."

Other profitable patents and their fields include phycobiliproteins in structural biology, tomography in physics and electrical engineering, a cell analysis instrument in genetics, and computer software in operations research.