Transitioning into Patent Law as a Scientist

Erin Heenan, Ph.D. J.D.
United States Patent
Marciani

VACCINE FORMULATIONS COMPRISING QUILLAJA DESACYLSAPONINS AND BETA AMYLOID PEPTIDES OR TAU PROTEIN TO INDUCE A TH2 IMMUNE RESPONSE

Applicant: Qantu Therapeutics, Inc., Lewisville, TX (US)

Inventor: Dante J. Marciani, Lewisville, TX (US)

Assignee: Qantu Therapeutics, Inc., Lewisville, TX (US)

Notice: Subject to any disclaimer, the term of this patent is extended or adjusted under 35 U.S.C. 154(b) by 0 days.

Appl. No.: 14/908,446

Date of Patent: Feb. 5, 2019

See application file for complete search history.

References Cited
U.S. PATENT DOCUMENTS

5,229,490 A 7/1993 Tam
5,958,980 A 9/1999 Rhodes
6,231,859 B1 5/2001 Kensil

(Continued)
My Career Path

• Graduated from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 2010 with a Ph.D. in Biochemistry and Biophysics
• Entered law school as a full-time student in Fall 2010 at George Mason University
• Started working at Sterne Kessler Goldstein & Fox in Fall 2011 as a student associate and switched to the part-time law school program
• Graduated law school Spring 2014 and began working as an associate at SKGF
Where do Scientists Work in the Legal Field?

- Law Firms
- Tech transfer offices within a University
- Government: NIH, FDA, USPTO
- Large drug companies, start-ups, and biotech companies
Careers in Law

• Technical Specialist: advanced degree required; a technical specialist can be someone who just graduated or someone who has worked in industry for years
• Patent Agent: advanced degree and passage of the “patent bar” required
• Student Associate: technical specialist or patent agent in law school: go to law school part-time while working and graduate with a job and less debt
• Attorney: Ph.D./M.S., J.D.
What Do Scientists Bring to the Table?

• Their scientific expertise!

• Scientific expertise is essential to every stage of the patent process. Scientists are the ones who help define the invention and perform data interpretation. Scientists are a good source of practical applications.

• Scientists bring detailed scientific knowledge to specific fields that a lawyer without a scientific degree would not be able to grasp easily.
How Common are Scientists in the Legal Field?

• Very Common!
• For example: SKGF currently employs 100+ people with advanced degrees (54 with PhDs)
  • SKGF hires 10 technical specialists and patent agents every year- both directly out of school and from industry
  • Technical specialists generally take the patent bar and become patent agents. Patent agents frequently go to law school and become attorneys
Making the Jump

• Think about if law is something you are interested in
• Go to career fairs and networking events
• Contact people in your graduate program who are in patent law
• Apply through linkedin or directly through a firm’s careers page
• For government jobs, check out uspto.gov or usajobs.gov
Questions??