

Georgia Tech PTRC Annual Activities Report 2015-2016

Atlanta, GA

Georgia Tech Library

Submitted by: Lisha Li

2016 marks the 70th anniversary of the Georgia Tech Library joining the Patent and Trademark Resource Center (PTRC) Program under the USPTO. The Georgia Tech PTRC is located at the Georgia Tech main library. Lisha Li serves as the current PTRC Representative and the patent librarian, in addition to her engineering subject liaison responsibilities.

The Georgia Tech Library's five year renewal project is ongoing. Beginning in January 2016, with the closing of the Crosland Tower (or the East Building), and the opening of the new Library Service Center (LSC), a high density storage and services facility as a result of the partnership between Georgia Tech and Emory University, the major collections of the Georgia Tech Library materials are being ingested into the LSC on a daily basis.

Despite all the changes, the Georgia Tech PTRC strived to provide the normal patent and trademark services to the campus and the community with the least interruption. Collaborating with the University Outreach Program at the USPTO, the Georgia Tech PTRC hosted intellectual property outreach activities in March 2015. Lorraine Spector, a Supervisory Patent Examiner with over 20 years patent examination and training experience, came to campus and talked to engineering design students about patents, trademarks, copyrights and trade secrets. We also organized an Open Forum in the library that attracted both engineering and business students and researchers from around the campus. The participants actively asked related questions and engaged in conversations. About 270 students and researchers attended several sessions on campus during Lorraine's two day visit. Students expressed great interest in these sessions through feedback surveys or conversations with us afterwards. They appreciated the opportunity to interact with a patent expert.

In the early part of 2015, with the Pro Bono Program operating in the state, we experienced a high volume increase of requests for patent search assistance. With many on-going projects in the library, we could not add any additional resources to accommodate such an increase in demand. Therefore, we collaborated with Georgia Lawyers for the Arts, the identified managing firm for the Georgia Pro Bon Program, and tried to seek a viable resolution for the situation so that inventors would get necessary patent search training before meeting their attorneys. As a result, Georgia Tech PTRC started offering weekend and evening patent search classes in the library for inventors in Fall 2015. Building upon the experience, we continued this effort in

Spring 2016 and offered patent search classes in two parts, one for inventors and the other for researchers, on multiple dates. An online registration system allowed people to choose a date/time they prefer and obtain free tickets for classes. The turnouts for these classes so far have been steady and the feedback has been quite positive. Using assessment tools, we are analyzing responses and will keep improving the classes to fit the diverse needs.

Collaborating with others, Lisha also offered a training session in the summer of 2015 to update other librarians with new patent information and systems. With the experimental Expert Consultation Center (ECC) operating in the library, several librarians felt more comfortable helping patrons with patent related questions while working shifts at ECC.

We continued to offer daily patent and trademark consultation and training to individual inventors, entrepreneurs, researchers and students. We worked with students who needed patent related information and assistance from engineering, sciences, interactive computing, economics, business, public policy, architecture, and technology history areas. Faculty and students were also referred to us from various invention and innovation related programs on campus, such as VentureLab, a nationally recognized program that helps researchers create startup companies based on their research results; InventurePrize, one of the largest undergraduate invention competitions; capstone design classes in several engineering schools such as ME, MSE, BME; and the Innovation & Design Collaborative, an interdisciplinary program that brings innovation and invention expertise from around the campus to multiple creative spaces. Some student groups walked in for immediate assistance, specifically in provisional application for patents, just one day before their showcase at an Invention Expo.

In May 2015, Lisha Li was invited by the Southeastern Inventors Association to give a talk to local inventors and entrepreneurs on patent searching and updating them with new information.

To celebrate the World Intellectual Property Day, Georgia Tech PTRC prepared a window display of Georgia Tech patent information in April, 2015, together with the distribution of patent quizzes and trivia for interested students.

Collaborating with the University Outreach program office at the USPTO, the Georgia Tech PTRC hosted Intellectual Property Education Webinars on campus in Feb. 2016. Michael Razavi, the Intellectual Property Outreach Educator and Senior Advisor from the Office of Innovation Development of the USPTO, offered seminars on overview of intellectual property and patent processes. Over 80 students participated in these webinars and students were eager to ask related questions.

It has been a year full of changes. As a PTRC we have experienced increasing demands and realize that more and more people are aware of intellectual property issues, showing strong interests in patents and trademarks.

Related photos:



Photo 1: Lorraine Spector, Supervisory Patent Examiner talks to engineering design students about intellectual property, March 2015



Photo 2: Library staff member Jerrold Mobley helped put together the patent quiz handouts during the World Intellectual Property Week celebration at the Georgia Tech PTRC, April 2015



Photo 3: An IP webinar for an engineering capstone design class, Feb. 2016