

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

## **AURP President Leah Burton Releases Public Comments for USPTO's National Strategy for Expanding American Innovation**

**Tucson, AZ, February 11, 2021** – The Association of University Research Parks (AURP), a global nonprofit membership organization serving the university and institutional research parks community, today released the following public comment from Leah Burton, AURP President and Director of Partnerships at NC State University, in regard to the US Patent and Trademark Office's Request for Comments on development of its National Strategy for Expanding American Innovation:

“As the leading nonprofit association in the United States representing research parks and innovation districts sponsored by universities, hospital systems, federal labs, and communities across the country, we applaud the leadership of the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) in developing a National Strategy for Expanding American Innovation (NCEAI).

The objectives of our Association directly align with the goal of the NCEAI to help the USPTO develop a national strategy to build a more demographically, geographically, and economically inclusive innovation ecosystem.

Our Association of University Research Park (AURP) members include research universities, community colleges, hospitals, federal labs, and cities building communities of innovation through inclusive research parks and innovation districts. Many of our sponsoring institutions manage innovation programs to support development of minority entrepreneurs and increase STEM graduates among underrepresented populations.

For example, at North Carolina State University, new scholarship programs in minority entrepreneurship will be supported by private sector contributions from NC State technology alumni. At the University of Maryland, the Center for Minorities in Engineering is supporting Black engineering students interested in locating startup firms in the UMD Discovery District.

Adjacent to anchor higher education institutions, research parks and innovation districts can play important roles in providing space, resources and programming for minority and women entrepreneurs and innovators to explore new career pathways.



**35 Years Advancing Innovation & Economic Growth**

Our research parks and innovation districts house tech incubators, student makerspaces, and technology commercialization offices, which can provide broad support for minority and women entrepreneurs. Additionally, our parks offer community outreach space to create regional innovation ecosystems among nearby residents.

AURP reflects the important role of diversity, innovation and equity among our communities and members. The implementation of effective DEI practices is one of three strategic priorities for our organization. This spring we plan to hold a workshop to explore these topics, including how parks and innovation districts can increase the number of minority and women entrepreneurs.

AURP works closely with our colleagues at AUTM, iNBIA, FLC, SSTI, APLU and other technology-based and entrepreneurship-support organizations. We look forward to working with NCEIA and tech-based associations to help advance innovation and entrepreneurship among all populations, including those which have been historically underrepresented.”

For USPTO’s Request for Comments page, click here: <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2020-12-23/pdf/2020-28298.pdf>

**About AURP:**

AURP, a non-profit international organization with offices in Tucson, AZ at the University of Arizona Science & Technology Park (Tech Parks AZ) and in the Washington, DC area at the University of Maryland Discovery District, focuses on creating communities of innovation and education for research parks both operating and planned, plus innovation districts, incubators, accelerators and the businesses that support the research park industry. AURP and its global membership promote research, institute-industry relations and innovation districts to foster innovation and to facilitate the transfer of technology from such institutions to the private sector. Learn more: [www.aurp.net](http://www.aurp.net)

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