

EJW

Talking Points

6/30/05 - Nanotechnology

Work Plan

As many of you who are joining us again this year know, this is the second year that JCOTS has created a nanotechnology advisory committee.

The advisory committee was continued this year at the recommendation of last year's advisory committee.

The committee did not propose any legislative changes; however, it still accomplished what it set out to do -- that is, foster discussion of the nanotechnology sector in the Commonwealth by bringing stakeholders together at one table. As you likely remember, we had some very interesting and thought-provoking discussions.

The committee identified several key issues that merit continued discussion - the role of a trained & educated workforce, the need for an increased emphasis on science education at an early stage, economic development opportunities that might the Commonwealth from other states in fostering the nano-community, federal involvement, and the "black hole" between research and commercialization. I hope that you will all find it beneficial to continue these discussions this year.

Last year we had a group with a most impressive resume -- academics involved in research and education, private sector entities involved in development and commercialization, government representatives from agencies and entities supportive of fostering nanotechnology. This year it appears that we have an equally impressive group - a lot of familiar faces, but some faces and perspectives as well.

As for our work plan this year, some interesting topics have been assigned to this committee:

- SB 1053 (Wagner): Intellectual Property Commercialization

This bill arose out of a joint subcommittee studying manufacturing needs in the Commonwealth, which is continuing this year, and on which Delegate Purkey serves.

The Senate Committee on Education and Health referred the bill to JCOTS for study. This bill, and intellectual property issues generally, will be the focus of the next Nanotechnology meeting scheduled for Wednesday, July 20. A copy of the bill is in your meeting packets, so that you might have an opportunity to review the bill before our next meeting.

The bill change the law as it relates to externally-sponsored research conducted at state-supported institutions of higher education.

Right now, there is some question as to whether state-supported universities in the Commonwealth have the ability to assign intellectual property rights to external sponsors. The end goal of the bill is to continue to facilitate cooperation between the state's excellent research institutions and outside researchers and developers.

Part of what is necessary to draw in nanotechnology development in the state is the need to attract entities to set up here in Virginia. Reviewing our existing intellectual property policies -- both in light of this bill as well as looking at how other states with a prospering technology development community address this issue -- might be an important part of that discussion.

Keep in mind that this bill addresses far more than just the nanotechnology population. However, it was referred to this particular committee because all of the relevant stakeholders are in place, and certainly this legislation would have a huge impact on nanotechnology, among other things. So this committee will review this bill to see (1) if it necessary and (2) if it is the direction that the committee thinks the Commonwealth needs to go or (3) if the committee has other suggestions for addressing intellectual property issues.

- Modeling and Simulation Industry

The advisory committee will also review this developing multi-million dollar industry.

The Hampton Roads area in particular has the potential to become a hub for this industry. This was fueled by Governor Warner's recent Virginia Modeling and Simulation Initiative, including a \$1.4 million budget item to initiative funding.

ODU is already involved in the industry with its existing Virginia Modeling and Simulation Center, and will benefit from this initiative. We will have a representative from VMASC join us at a meeting this year to discuss their work.

Furthermore, the NASA Langley Research Center in the Hampton Roads area is interested in collaborating with state and regional research involving modeling and simulation. They feel that they have a great deal of data and research that might prove to be a strong foundation for continuing modeling and simulation research and development. We are trying to secure a representative from NASA to speak to this committee about their initiatives in this area, and how the state might be able to partner with them.

- Financial Aspects of Nanotechnology

I anticipate that the advisory committee will want to continue its discussions from last year concerning financial growth opportunities, and what, if any, financial incentives might be developed to encourage growth in the Commonwealth.

- Other ideas

Certainly, additional topics might be added, time permitting. You all are the experts in this area, and can better tell us what a legislative committee like JCOTS should be studying and reviewing to help you all in this industry. Please feel free to provide suggestions, either today, or by contacting me -- or Delegate Purkey or Delegate Cosgrove -- at any time.