Chief Innovation Officer
The Texas A&M University System
College Station, Texas

THE SEARCH

Texas A&M Innovation (TI)–the System-wide centralized office supporting inventors and commercializing innovations across The Texas A&M University System (TAMUS or A&M System)–invites applications and nominations for the role of Chief Innovation Officer (CINO). The A&M System is a powerhouse of research and innovation, and the CINO will shape and operationalize a bold vision that delivers on the A&M System's aspirations for leadership in innovation and commercialization.

Few roles combine scale, momentum, and mission as powerfully as this one. As one of the largest systems of higher education in the nation, TAMUS operates on a level of impact that few institutions can match. Through a statewide network of 11 universities, a comprehensive health science center, eight state agencies, and two System-wide applied research campuses (Texas A&M-RELLIS and Texas A&M-Fort Worth), the System educates more than 157,000 students. Its $1.5 billion research enterprise fuels breakthroughs in engineering, agriculture, life sciences, energy, and national defense. With campuses and agencies stretching from the Gulf Coast to the Panhandle, the CINO can marshal a statewide network of investors, incubators, and corporate partners to turn breakthroughs—whether born in College Station, Corpus Christi, or Prairie View—into solutions that improve lives, create jobs, and strengthen Texas's innovation economy.

Reporting to the Vice Chancellor for Research for the A&M System, the CINO exercises leadership across all areas of the commercialization pathway, including invention disclosure, IP protection, licensing, startup formation, and industry and investor partnerships. The CINO will serve as a catalyst at a pivotal inflection point—Texas A&M Innovation has posted record patent output, a 25 percent surge in license agreements, and launched new and innovative funding mechanisms to advance early-stage technologies, yet this only scratches the surface of the A&M System's commercialization potential. The next leader will translate this momentum into a self-sustaining, best-in-class commercialization engine. The CINO will help broaden

inventor engagement, accelerate the path from lab to market, raise the A&M System's profile as a national innovation hub, provide visionary and data-driven leadership, and build a high-impact team.

The successful candidate will be a proven leader at the intersection of commercialization and academic research. They should bring 10-15 years of hands-on experience transforming early discoveries into commercial success. Experience in a large, complex institution, especially a research-intensive university, is advantageous. The CINO must pair strong business acumen with the ability to excel at forging and sustaining relationships with a wide range of stakeholders—from boards and investors to inventors, faculty, and researchers—and unite them behind a shared vision of innovation. As a persuasive communicator and strategic thinker, the CINO will be adept at outlining clear, data-driven business plans and measurable milestones, ensuring continuous progress towards innovation and commercialization goals.

The Texas A&M University System has retained Isaacson, Miller to assist in this search. All inquiries, nominations, and applications should be directed in strict confidence to the firm as indicated at the end of this document.

TEXAS A&M INNOVATION

In 2023, TAMUS consolidated five separate commercialization offices into Texas A&M Innovation (TI) with the goal of creating a national model for translating academic discovery into real-world impact. The unified office now provides a full suite of centralized commercialization services, including IP protection, a streamlined disclosure process, assistance with new-venture formation, and incentive programs for first-time inventors to name a few. Signature programs such as Innovation Forward, Texas A&M New Ventures Competition, Innovation Connect, and InnovationU, connect entrepreneurs, investors, and industry partners, while a new $1 million gap-funding program, alongside a $5 million Advancing Discovery to Market fund, and multiple market-focused advisory groups propel promising technologies through the most challenging parts of the commercialization pathway. With a focus on turning new ideas into market-ready products, TI guides projects from start to finish, making the commercialization journey smooth and efficient:

- **Inventors**: TI uses a comprehensive process to manage IP from across TAMUS, including engaging with IP creators, forming IP protection strategies, conducting market research, and implementing commercialization plans that result in technology licensing and/or the formation of new companies. TI also supports inventors with a variety of funding mechanisms to support commercialization.

- **Industry Partners:** TI's private sector engagement opens the door for industry partners to build collaborative relationships with TAMUS inventors, support the creation of new discoveries, further research and technology development, and gain access to institutional resources. This includes developing licensing and external partnership opportunities from TI's portfolio of available technologies.

- **Investors:** TI engages with early-stage investors seeking to fund existing university start-up companies or contribute to the formation of new ventures. TI brings inventors, entrepreneurs, and investors together by identifying funding options that include venture capital, angel investors, Texas investment networks, corporate funding streams, as well as state and federal programs that support bringing new technologies to market.

In 2023, TAMUS ranked #48 worldwide for utility patents. In 2024, the System logged 229 invention disclosures, 322 patent applications, 135 patent issues, 52 license & option agreements, and launched six new ventures. For detailed information on licensing, IP, and new venture metrics, please read TI's 2024 Annual Report.

THE TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

TAMUS is one of the largest systems of higher education in the nation, with a budget of $7.3 billion. Through a statewide network of 11 universities, a comprehensive health science center, eight state agencies, and two System-wide applied research campuses (Texas A&M-RELLIS and Texas A&M-Fort Worth), TAMUS educates more than 157,000 students and makes more than 21 million additional educational contacts through service and outreach programs each year. System-wide research and development expenditures exceed $1.5 billion and help drive the state's economy.

TI provides intellectual property and commercialization needs to all nineteen system members:

Texas A&M University
Prairie View A&M University
East Texas A&M University
Tarleton State University
West Texas A&M University
Texas A&M University-Kingsville
Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi
Texas A&M International University
Texas A&M University-Texarkana
Texas A&M University-Central Texas
Texas A&M University-San Antonio
Texas A&M AgriLife Research
Texas A&M AgriLife Extension
Texas A&M Forest Service
Texas A&M Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Laboratory
Texas A&M Engineering Experiment Station
Texas A&M Engineering Extension Service
Texas A&M Transportation Institute
Texas Division of Emergency Management

The flagship campus in College Station is within a three-hour drive of five of the nation's 20 largest cities. Opened in 1876 as the state's first public institution of higher learning, Texas A&M today is a research-intensive university, home to more than 79,000 students, making it the largest in the United States. It is a member of the Association of American Universities, holds R1 Carnegie classification, and ranks in the top 15 among public universities on annual research expenditures according to the NSF HERD Survey.

Leadership

Dr. Joe Elabd is the Vice Chancellor for Research for the Texas A&M University System. As the leader of the A&M System Office of Research, he is responsible for providing research leadership and services to support all system members and oversees numerous offices and initiatives, including Texas A&M Innovation, National Laboratories Office, Bush Combat Development Complex, Texas A&M Semiconductor Institute, Texas A&M Fort Worth, Research Security Office, Research Compliance Office, Research Administration Office, Research Development Office, and the Chancellor's Research Initiative. Dr. Elabd received his Ph.D. and B.S. in chemical engineering from Johns Hopkins University and University of Maryland, Baltimore County, respectively, and was a National Research Council Postdoctoral Fellow at the U.S. Army Research Laboratory.

ROLE OF THE CHIEF INNOVATION OFFICER

Reporting to the Vice Chancellor for Research of The Texas A&M University System, the CINO oversees a comprehensive intellectual property and commercialization program for the entire A&M System. The CINO will lead staff in establishing and implementing overall plans for intellectual property protection and commercialization strategies for disclosed innovations developed by TAMUS member institution/agency researchers. The CINO represents the System concerning various intellectual property and commercialization matters both internally and externally. The position is located at the Texas A&M main campus in College Station.

Essential Duties And Responsibilities

- Provide general operational oversight and supervise assigned TI staff.
- Propose and implement practices of intellectual property management and commercialization in compliance with TAMUS IP policy.
- Review, assign, and manage the process for incoming invention disclosures, including review of initial assessment results for ownership and third-party obligations.
- Propose and/or review and oversee intellectual property protection strategies and their implementation.
- Coordinate actions for intellectual property protection with outside counsel.
- Propose and/or review and oversee commercialization strategies and their implementation.
- Engage with potential industry partners to promote interest in TAMUS technologies for licensing and/or potential research opportunities.
- Propose and/or review and oversee negotiation of business terms for license, option and evaluation agreements.
- Ensure final agreement terms are reviewed and approved by the Office of General Counsel (OGC).
- Serve as primary contact for all TAMUS Members and OGC for IP management issues.
- Monitor accuracy of IP and agreement information in TI databases and records.
- Assist all faculty and researchers in disclosing their innovations.

- Provide educational activities to increase the general awareness of intellectual property matters among all faculty and staff.
- Assist the TAMUS Office of Research as a resource for intellectual property matters.
- Provide training and mentoring to licensing staff on compliance with TAMUS policies, requirements for IP developed with federal funding, and other relevant regulations for managing intellectual property.
- Other duties as assigned.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE CHIEF INNOVATION OFFICER

The CINO will play a lead role in addressing the following opportunities and challenges:

Ignite an Inventor-Centric Innovation Culture Across the A&M System

There is enormous untapped potential to expand the culture of innovation, discovery, and entrepreneurship across the entire A&M System. While TI has made notable strides—hosting regular outreach events, simplifying disclosure processes, and launching early-stage funding mechanisms—the number of invention disclosures, licenses, and new ventures still represents only a small portion of the A&M System's creative capacity. The next CINO will build on this foundation by proactively engaging with researchers and inventors, further reducing administrative barriers, and establishing targeted programs to encourage participation from first-time and early-career inventors. By strengthening relationships with faculty, graduate students, research leaders, and senior leadership—including regular communications with the Chancellor, Vice Chancellor for Research for the A&M System, and Board of Regents—the CINO will foster an environment in which innovation is consistently supported, recognized, and rewarded. Success in this area will ignite greater inventor engagement and ultimately strengthen the pipeline of ideas and opportunities that fuel the A&M System's commercialization success.

Accelerate Translation from Discovery to Market Value

Rapid and effective commercialization of innovations requires a deliberate focus on bridging the challenging gap between early discovery and market-ready solutions. The next CINO will strategically advance early-stage funding initiatives that move promising laboratory discoveries to commercially viable products. This includes scaling successful funding mechanisms and establishing specialized, market-focused advisory groups tailored to critical industry sectors. To improve internal decision-making, the CINO will also strengthen processes for evaluating commercialization readiness and developing a tailored approach to managing technologies based on market potential, technical maturity, and strategic fit. By cultivating deeper relationships with key partners, the CINO will significantly enhance the speed and efficiency of technology transfer. When successful, TAMUS inventions will reach the market faster, increasing licensing revenue, driving new venture creation, and positioning the A&M System as a recognized leader in swiftly translating groundbreaking research into real-world impact.

Amplify the Texas A&M Innovation Brand—Statewide and Beyond

Flagship programs and recent commercialization successes have begun to elevate the A&M System's reputation as a leader in innovation and discovery across Texas and nearby regions. However, TI's brand awareness and recognition still have significant room to grow, particularly at a national and global level. The next CINO will design and implement a comprehensive strategy that prominently showcases inventor success stories, highlights commercialization achievements, and clearly positions Texas A&M as a leading innovation hub. The CINO will activate extensive alumni networks, corporate partners, and state and national policymakers as key ambassadors. Success in this area will clearly position TI as a leader in the commercialization of new technologies, and increase the volume and quality of collaboration and partnership opportunities.

Provide Visionary, Data-Driven, and Innovative Leadership

TI's success hinges on leadership that is capable of developing and executing a strategic, data-driven roadmap for commercialization efforts. The CINO will establish clear, measurable key performance indicators to monitor and communicate progress toward commercialization goals, particularly in interactions with senior leadership, the Board of Regents, and other internal/external advisory groups. These metrics will not only guide internal decision-making but also instill confidence among key stakeholders—demonstrating clear progress, surfacing accomplishments, and aligning the innovation strategy with broader institutional goals. The CINO will embed performance metrics throughout the organization that incentivize ambition and reward progress towards commercialization goals. Embracing a client-centric approach, the CINO will ensure that TI remains responsive to the evolving needs of inventors, startups, and industry partners. Success in this area will position the office as a model of excellence, driving sustained innovation and commercialization outcomes.

Attract, Develop, and Empower a Best-in-Class Innovation Team

TI's effectiveness ultimately depends on the caliber, cohesion, and professional growth of its team. With ambitious commercialization goals and increasing complexity in managing a broad portfolio of technologies, the office must continue to attract top talent while simultaneously providing robust development and advancement opportunities. The CINO will build a team culture that emphasizes collaboration and accountability. Establishing clear career pathways and providing ongoing professional development and mentorship for all staff is also critical. The CINO will also be responsible for expanding a team that will be instrumental in managing the creation of new start-ups and spin-out companies based on TAMUS research. The CINO will ensure that the TI team's capabilities keep pace with the evolving demands of technology transfer and commercialization. Success in this area will result in higher staff engagement, improved team performance, and an empowered, high-performing workforce that drives Texas A&M Innovation's reputation as a best-in-class commercialization partner.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

While no single candidate may possess all the ideal qualifications, the committee seeks candidates with many of the following qualifications and abilities:

- **Education:** Bachelor's degree required; advanced degree preferred.
- **Innovative & Visionary Leadership:** Ideally 10–15 years of demonstrated strategic leadership within complex, matrixed organizations focused on research commercialization.
- **Strategic Planning and Metrics-Driven Execution:** Experience designing and implementing strategic, data-driven plans and roadmaps with measurable KPIs; ability to instill confidence in progress and performance through regular updates to senior leadership and governing boards.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Proven ability to build coalitions and communicate effectively with a wide range of internal and external stakeholders—including faculty, inventors, students, administrators, corporate partners, and public officials.
- **Academic & Collaborative Leadership:** Experience working in or with academic institutions and managing academic-industry collaborations.
- **Technology Transfer Expertise:** Deep knowledge of IP protection, licensing, and the capital cycle of high-technology and academic research-based ventures; ability to cultivate relationships with boards, technology-transfer networks, industry contacts, and venture investors.
- **Business Acumen:** Experience evaluating startup investment potential, creating marketing and business plans, and understanding financial models, valuation, and funding-needs analysis.
- **Interpersonal & Communication Skills:** Strong public-speaking, listening, and supervisory skills.
- **Entrepreneurial Experience:** Firsthand experience launching and managing technology-based ventures.

APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS

All inquiries, nominations/referrals, and applications (including resume and letters of interest responding to the requirements outlined in the position profile) should be submitted via Isaacson, Miller's website: https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/texas-am-university-system/chief-innovation-officer.

Andrew Lee, Managing Partner
Raul Bernal, Senior Associate
Madeline Fitzpatrick, Managing Search Coordinator
Isaacson, Miller

Electronic submission of application is required.