Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)

1. **Will FAMU assist me in commercializing my innovation?** Commercialization is one of the services provided by the Office of Technology Transfer, Licensing and Commercialization (TTLC). The decision to commercialize an invention is primarily based on the recommendation of an Intellectual Property Review Committee (IPRC). The inventor must convince the Review Committee of the development's commercial viability and resources available. For further consideration, the Committee might also require some or all of the following: a prior art search, drawings of the development, level and type of protection required, results of feasibility and/or market analyses and/or a commercialization plan.

2. **Will TTLC assist me in developing my business plan?** Individuals needing assistance in this area are often referred to service providers outside of the TTLC Office. The Office of TTLC has a reciprocal arrangement with the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) to assist clients with business plans. The SBDC is managed by Florida A&M University and is located in Innovation Park - (850)599-3407.

3. **Will TTLC conduct feasibility and market analyses and commercialization plans for me?** TTLC staff will assist with the development of feasibility and market analyses and/or commercialization plans for inventions by clients who meet the basic qualifications.

4. **What is a feasibility analysis and how can I get assistance in completing one?** A feasibility analysis is a study to determine whether further development of an invention is justified based on its perceived commercial value and potential return on investment.

5. **Am I expected to pay for services rendered by TTLC?** The Office of TTLC seeks to generate a return on the investment of University resources through the commercialization of the products resulting from the research of faculty, staff and students of Florida A&M University.

6. **How long will it take to get my innovation into the marketplace?** It depends on how developed the innovation is when presented to TTLC. Answers to the following questions must be provided before a definitive response can be provided: What is the nature of your innovation? Have you conducted a prior art search? Is it protected? Have you developed a prototype? Have you completed a market study and business plan, etc.?

7. **Is a patent required before TTLC will assist me with commercialization?** No. the form of protection will be determined at a later point.

8. **Am I allowed to produce and sell my product if something similar is already on the market?** If you market a product that is very similar to an existing patented product in the market, legal action may be taken against you. TTLC conducts a prior art or patent search to determine if your invention is truly innovative before initiating commercialization efforts.

9. **Does TTLC provide access to start-up capital?** No, but depending on the decision of the Intellectual Property Committee, the nature of the innovation and especially the commercial potential of the development, TTLC might identify start-up and/or venture capital.

10. **If I have an invention what should I do?** You should begin the process by calling the Technology Transfer Office at (850) 412-7232 and ask for an Invention Disclosure Form (IDF). The IDF is an instrument used to capture important information about the inventor and the invention.

11. **What happens after I complete the Invention Disclosure Form?** After the Invention
Disclosure Form has been completed, the Technology Transfer Office will contact you to discuss the invention in more detail and to explain FAMU's protection processes and procedures.

12. Can FAMU faculty, staff and students personally benefit from their inventions? Yes, FAMU will share the royalty proceeds with the inventor after the costs have been recovered. FAMU will share 40% of the proceeds with the Inventor and 10% of the University’s 60% will be provided to the Inventor's Department or unit.

13. What are the types of patent applications can be filed? There are two types of patent applications. One is called a provisional patent application and the other is the non-provisional patent application. The Provisional is an inexpensive application that lasts for one year. The non-provisional patent application is the final or full patent application and is the only application that can result in a validly issued U.S. Patent.

14. What types of patents does the U.S. Patent Office Issues? There are three types of patents issued by the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office: Utility Patents, Design Patents and Plant Patents. Utility Patents are the most common and are often referenced when talking about a patent.

15. What is a Provisional Patent Application? A Provisional Patent Application is an inexpensive patent application that can be filed at the United States Patent and Trademark Office that lasts for only one year. This type of application allows the inventor to market the invention and to seek licensing opportunities prior to committing substantial resources in to filing a non-provisional patent application. It will only last one year.

16. Can I use the words 'patent pending' once I file a provisional patent application? Yes, inventors can use the words patent pending once a provisional or a non-provisional patent application has been filed.

17. Which office at FAMU should I visit if I want to protect my invention? The Office of Technology Transfer, Licensing and Commercialization (TTLC) is the office that is responsible for assisting faculty, staff and students with obtaining patent protection. This Office is located at 1540 South Adams Street; Suite G; Tallahassee, FL 32307. The telephone number is (850) 412-7232.

18. How long does it take to get a patent or some other protection? Generally, it takes approximately 18 to 24 months to get a final decision on a patent. However, in recent years it has taken from 36 to 48 months for a final decision to be rendered on a patent. Once a patent is filed at the U.S. Patent Office, it usually takes about a year before the Examiner conducts the initial review. All responses, office actions, etc will be sent to the inventor and the University via the patent attorney. The inventor will have at least two opportunities to respond to the Examiner's correspondence. In most cases, each time the Examiner sends a letter, the inventor has up to six months to respond. If the inventor and the patent attorney work expeditiously the overall process can take less time.

19. Who pays for the protection expenses at FAMU? It depends. FAMU will pay patent expenses for inventions that have been approved by the Intellectual Property Review Committee.

20. Will the Office of TTLC assist authors with securing federal copyright protection for textbooks or other literary works created by the FAMU faculty, staff and students? Yes, the staff at TTLC will complete the paperwork required for authors to federally register their works with the United States Copyright Office.
The copyright registration is usually fast and inexpensive. The cost for each copyright registration is $45.