

## **Testimony for Senate Bill SB 671 by Jamey Weichert, Jan 24, 2018**

My name is Jamey Weichert and I am currently an Associate Professor of Radiology, Medical Physics and Pharmaceutics at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. I came to Madison from the University of Michigan in 1998 in part due to the success of WARF and the unique entrepreneurial landscape that existed at UW and Madison. Believing that I could raise development capital for my cancer imaging and therapy technology much faster in a business setting, I started Celectar in 2002 which has since raised well over \$100M in private and public development funds, conducted 9 clinical cancer imaging and therapy trials in over 100 patients, and hired over 30 highly skilled scientist and management level employees over half of which were brought in from out of state. It became difficult to run clinical trials at UW, in part, due to the \$250K limitation that we are attempting to address with this important Bill. In one trial, for example, it cost \$81K per patient. The \$250K limitation and its 45 day approval requirement would severely limit (would only be able to include 3 patients at UW) the number of Wisconsin cancer patients that could be accrued thus making it necessary to establish other trial sites out of state. I left Celectar a year and a half ago to start a new biotech company in Madison called Archeus Technologies which has licensed 4 of our own UW patents from WARF dealing with unique molecules capable of enabling the body's own immune system to kill cancer cells in a vaccine memory sense whereby tumor cells injected months after initial tumors were completely eliminated in most mice, failed to grow. This work at UW involves 5 separate research groups in immunology, radiology, medical physics, cancer biology, and radiation oncology working together to attack cancer. After just a year and a half of working together, this group just recently completed submission of 4 major grants totaling over \$13M in federal funding. Having been at 3 major research universities, the highly collegial attitude at UW-Madison is extremely unique.

I feel that undergrad and grad students actually seek me out due to my entrepreneurial experience. We have many bright students at UW many of whom are capable of starting their own companies. I do consider fostering an entrepreneurial spirit as one of my key teaching missions and at least 3 of 5 recent graduate students of mine have gone on to start their own biotech companies in Madison. In fact, Celectar hired 6 UW-Madison PhD students right out of school and it is likely that none of them would have stayed in Wisconsin upon completing their advanced degrees.

With federal cancer research grants currently being funded at the 7<sup>th</sup> percentile level, relative to 20<sup>th</sup> percentile when I came to Madison, integration of biotech companies with our universities is critical if we are ever going to find a cure for cancer. Accordingly, 5 biotech start-up companies have been formed by investigators on my floor in the UWCCC alone. All UW investigators involved with companies have very robust conflict management plans. We need to be aggressive in our efforts to facilitate this integration and approving Bill SB 691 is a step in that direction.