

## TIBBS Career Blitz - January 2012

### Career Profile of Patent Attorney: Nathan P. Letts, JD, PhD

#### **What is your current title and how long have you worked in your current job?**

Senior Counsel, 1½ years.

#### **Where did you get your PhD and what discipline was it in?**

I received my PhD from Department of Chemistry at Columbia University in Organic Chemistry.

#### **Did you do a postdoc?**

No.

#### **What are your main daily responsibilities?**

My primary daily responsibilities are (i) drafting life science patent applications; (ii) arguing with patent offices to get my clients broad patents; (iii) advising clients about (a) patentability (the ability to get a patent), (b) IP rights of others, and (c) commercialization strategies.

#### **What are the keys to success in your career field?**

The keys to success in patent law are (i) excellent written and oral communication skills; (ii) an ability to quickly understand new technologies; and (iii) attention to detail.

#### **What were the most important factors in choosing your career path?**

I enjoy translating scientific discoveries to legal documents and legal concepts to basic principles for scientists. I find helping a small client or university get an important patent much more satisfying than the basic research I did in graduate school.

#### **What 1 or 2 pieces of advice do you have for people who want to land a job like yours?**

My advice would be to (i) have many informational interviews with people working in the field (attorneys, agents, licensing/business development professionals); (ii) get an internship with a technology transfer office; (iii) take a law school patent class.