



ERIC MCGILL: Technology transfer contributions at Goddard that go above and beyond

National Aeronautics and Space Administration, Goddard Space Flight Center



Eric McGill

Though the 18 commercial licenses Eric McGill executed in the last year unquestionably contributed to new levels of technology transfer success at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) Goddard Space Flight Center, his creativity and team-building skills proved just as valuable.

As a Senior Technology Manager, McGill used self-developed direct marketing techniques that yielded more licenses in the past fiscal year alone than any previous year. Those licenses—many of which involved small businesses—were both numerous and varied, spanning a wide range of industries such as small satellite

technology, avionics, cybersecurity, climate analytics, fitness and wellness, and artificial intelligence.

McGill's in-depth knowledge, his skill in building relationships with industry and his professionalism have been invaluable for NASA's technology transfer program. Known for his team-based mentality, he readily shared knowledge, provided mentoring, and took on additional tasks for the greater good of the organization.

McGill also developed innovative and creative approaches to technology transfer. One of those approaches involved targeting the professional athlete community, where teamwork can be an effective driver of success.

One of the first athletes McGill worked with was retired National Football League (NFL) player Obafemi Ayanbadejo. In 2018, Ayanbadejo licensed a patented NASA technology and integrated it into HealthReel, a new personal health and wellness app. The NASA technology, developed at Goddard, calculates a "corrected" body mass index (BMI) that is more accurate than conventional BMI measures.

To better target entrepreneurial, business-minded

professional athletes with the drive and ambition to jump-start new companies, McGill created Commercialization Training Camp—a program that educates current and retired athletes about technology transfer and the commercialization of NASA technologies. Space Act agreements with the NFL Players Association, the National Basketball Players Association, and the National Basketball Retired Players Association helped facilitate coordination between NASA and prospective Training Camp attendees.

One of McGill's creative approaches to technology transfer involved creating a Commercialization Training Camp for current and former professional athletes.

"With a start-up, you can get that same kind of competitive team-building experience as you get in sports," Ayanbadejo said during a presentation at the 2019 Training Camp. "I understand how difficult it is to transition out of the game and into the real world. I hope to inspire the attendees of this workshop to become as passionate about tech as they are about athletics."

The program, now in its third year, has led to the formation of three start-ups and the licensing of three NASA technologies. In addition, given its success, the Training Camp concept spearheaded by McGill has been adopted by other NASA centers.✪