

# Tara A. Nealey, Ph.D.

BIOTECHNOLOGY & LIFE SCIENCES PATENT PROSECUTION  
CHAIR

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Dr. Tara Nealey chairs the Biotechnology and Life Sciences Patent Prosecution practice group. Bringing a background in academic physiology research, she focuses her practice on clients with intellectual property questions relating to the full range of life science technologies. Her experience encompasses over two decades of IP counsel to clients of all sizes, including individual inventors, public and private universities and research institutions, start-up companies, mid-size firms and Fortune 500 companies. Tara has extensive experience guiding clients through development of robust patent portfolios; guiding international patenting strategy; analyzing patent landscapes and key competitors' patents; preparing freedom-to-operate (non-infringement) and patent invalidity opinions; analyzing strengths and weaknesses of patent portfolios, and handling IP due diligence in mergers and acquisitions; and analyzing in- and out-licenses of patented technologies.

She routinely assists early stage companies with understanding the relevant patent landscape and securing the IP protection necessary for successful rounds of funding. Important aspects of Tara's practice also include advising on legal aspects of licensing and commercialization strategies, and reviewing technology and "know-how" licenses, confidentiality agreements, and material transfer agreements. She also counsels clients on trade secret protection and unfair competition, and related copyright and trademark issues.

Tara has worked on a range of cutting edge life science technologies, including:

- Cell-based therapies
- Pharmaceuticals and Medical Treatments
- Biosimilars
- Genome editing techniques including CRISPR systems, meganucleases, TALENs and ZFN's
- RNAi technologies
- Peptides and proteins
- Fusion (chimeric) proteins
- Recombinant expression systems
- Antibodies
- Vaccines

## Capabilities

- Biotechnology & Life Sciences Patent Prosecution
- Life Sciences
- Hatch-Waxman & Biologics
- Intellectual Property
- Intellectual Property Counseling & Opinions
- International
- Patent Preparation & Prosecution
- Consumer Products & Luxury Goods
- Agribusiness

- Vectors
- Cell membrane permeable molecules
- Molecular tools for agricultural pest control
- Cell culture systems
- Engineered tissues
- Protein-tagging methods and labels
- Genetically modified organisms
- Bioinformatics tools and methods
- Medical diagnostic devices
- Medical imaging compositions and techniques
- Neural therapies
- Brain-computer interfaces
- Smart catheters and stents
- Orthopedic devices
- Functionalized biocompatible nanoparticles
- Nano-engineered bioassay techniques

## Education

- Saint Louis University (J.D., *magna cum laude*, 2001)
  - Dean's Scholarship; Sigma Alpha Nu Honor Society; Order of the Woolsack; Law Review
- Harvard Medical School (Postdoctoral Fellowship, 1994)
  - Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary
- University of Rochester (Ph.D., 1992)
  - Physiology; Concentration in Neuroscience
- Brown University (A.B., 1984)
  - Biomedical Ethics

## Bar Admissions

- Missouri, 2001
- Admitted to practice before the United States Patent and Trademark Office

## Memberships

- The Bar Association of Metropolitan St. Louis
- The American Intellectual Property Law Association
- Intellectual Property Owners Association

## Recognition

- Named to *National Law Journal's* list of 2023 Emerging Therapies/Life Sciences Trailblazers
- Selected for inclusion in the IAM Patent 1000 list of the World's Leading Patent Practitioners, 2022-2026, Missouri - Recommended
- Selected for *Best Lawyers*® "Lawyer of the Year" in St. Louis for Patent Law, 2023
- Selected for inclusion in the Most Influential Business Women by *St. Louis Business Journal*, June 2022
- "Client Choice Award" winner for Patents in Missouri, 2017
- Selected for inclusion in *Best Lawyers in America*® for:
  - Biotechnology and Life Sciences Practice, 2025-2026
  - Patent Law, 2014-2026
- Named a Top Patent Attorney in St. Louis by *Small Business Monthly* magazine, February 2018

- Recipient of the Pro Bono Award from the *Missouri Lawyers Weekly's* annual Women's Justice Awards, 2018
- Leader of Distinction, YWCA Metro Saint Louis, 2017

## Matters

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- Drafted and filed a family of issued patents covering one of the client's core technologies.
- Researched and analyzed patents and patent applications held by key pioneers in technology, and counseled the client as to which to pursue for possible licensing.
- After a detailed analysis of a competitor's complex biotechnology patent, prepared and drafted opinion of counsel that client's proposed activity did not infringe the claims of the patent.
- Analyzed key patents and prepared and drafted opinion of counsel that a key patent is not valid and, thus, unenforceable against the client, after medical professionals in one of the client's hospitals received an indication that a pharmaceutical supplier might attempt to enforce a patent against them.
- Advised a Fortune 500 company in international patent procurement and the patent landscape relating to the ground-breaking CRISPR-Cas genome editing system.
- Provided patent counsel for a client with promising cell-based cancer therapy originating out of university, from start-up phase through successful acquisition by a big pharmaceutical company.
- Prepared patent analysis relating to branded biologics and guided IP strategy for Fortune 500 company contemplating production of biosimilars.
- Provided IP counsel for client in multi-billion dollar acquisition.
- Conducted patent due diligence for equity capital investors contemplating acquisition of a young agri-tech client with promising new technology for delivering RNAi molecules to food crops for pest control.

## Publications

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January 14, 2026

**Federal Circuit Strikes Life Sciences Patent Over Insufficient Disclosure of Particular Species**

October 7, 2025

**Patent Drafters Beware: Omitted Provisional Language Can Alter Claim Scope**

February 13, 2024

**Revisiting Government March-In Rights Under Bayh-Dole: The FTC Weighs In**

December 12, 2022

**Legal Education Series - Patent 101**

*Presenter, TRTCLE*

June 22, 2022

**St. Louis Business Journal's Most Influential Business Women for 2022**

*Mentioned, St. Louis Business Journal*