

Research contract bill clears Assembly committee

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A bill to expedite the research contract review process at UW-Madison has cleared an Assembly committee with support from the Wisconsin Technology Council and university entrepreneurs.

The “Mark Cook Bill” was named after a UW-Madison animal sciences professor who headed the PROFS Entrepreneurial Work Group. His research spawned four companies, and led to 50 different patents. He died of cancer in late 2017.

“I knew Dr. Cook as a leading scientist at the UW-Madison, where his work included innovations in poultry and meat science as well as human and animal health,” Tech Council President Tom Still said last week in testimony before the Assembly Committee on Constitution and Ethics.

Still and Cook also served together on the board of directors for one of the companies he helped launch. According to Still, Cook’s work was often slowed by rules that “had either outlived their usefulness, stood at odds with processes at other major universities, or simply cost Wisconsin entrepreneurs time and money.”

The bill, which passed the Assembly committee on a unanimous vote, would eliminate a 45-day passive review process that’s required for any contract exceeding \$250,000 over two years and tied to a faculty or staff entrepreneur.

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