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[Face-Time with the Director of the USPTO](#)

The Del Mar office of Sheppard Mullin recently had the rare honor and privilege of hosting an inventors forum with David Kappos, the Director of the United States Patent and Trademark Office, as the guest of honor. During the event, inventors from the general San Diego area had the unique opportunity to ask Mr. Kappos questions, in-person, regarding the patent office, and discuss issues relating to their dealings with the patent office.

Topics of discussion included a first-to-invent patent system, the grace period of 35 U.S.C. 102(b), the Ombudsmen Pilot Program, a newly proposed micro-entity fee category for specific entities, the possibility of regional offices, and the possibility of transferring patent matters from one examiner to another with good reason. Of the possible changes proposed during the discussion, some noteworthy suggestions included sending patent examiners to regional meetings and round-tables to meet independent inventors face-to-face, and hosting guest speakers at the USPTO in an effort to educate examiners on the state of the art.

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