

BU

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BOSTON UNIVERSITY

Apple, Amazon, Sony among 25 companies that will pay BU to settle patent lawsuit

Posted by Matt Rocheleau January 15, 2014 02:18 PM

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By Matt Rocheleau, Boston.com Staff

Twenty-five companies, including top technology firms Apple, Amazon and Sony, will pay Boston University to settle lawsuits filed by the school claiming the companies violated a BU professor's patent of technology used to make blue LEDs, which are common in electronics products.

The undisclosed settlements amounts were negotiated with RPX Corp., a San Francisco firm that obtains patent rights for companies to help them avoid lawsuits, according to the university's news website, [BU Today](#).

BU said the deal includes receiving licensing fees from RPX, which will make the patent available for RPX clients to use.

Another dozen non-RPX-member companies remain in litigation with the university over alleged infringement of the same patent, school officials said.

BU [sued](#) the collection of companies [last year](#) alleging that they used gallium nitride thin films, a technology patented in 1997 by BU electrical and computer engineering professor Theodore Moustakas, campus officials said.

The technology is used in the production of high-quality blue light-emitting diodes, or LEDs, which are popular in electronics products, including TVs and mobile devices such as iPhones, iPads and Kindles.

Vinit Nijhawan, managing director of BU's technology development office, said blue LEDs are an \$11-billion-a-year industry.


Moustakas said the lawsuit settlements are "recognition of the importance of my work in the development of this novel technology."

The university has said it sued the companies to protect the professor and his research.

"Ted Moustakas created a process that significantly improves the performance of these products," provost Jean Morrison said when the litigation was filed. "It's incredibly important for a university to defend its intellectual property."

The university said it first hired an intellectual property specialty law firm whose experts confirmed the school's suspicion that the companies were violating the patent.

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The university said it first tried to negotiating licensing fees, but several companies rejected, prompting the lawsuits.

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