



UNITED STATES  
PATENT AND  
TRADEMARK OFFICE

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Commissioner for Trademarks  
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To: Trademark Examination Corps

From: Anne H. Chasser  
Commissioner for Trademarks

Date: April 25, 2002

Subject: Mid Year Review

As I discussed this morning at the legal lecture on Geographical Indications, I wanted to share with you the results of our midyear assessment regarding application filings and examiner staffing. Our situation remains essentially unchanged. We continue to have an examination staff that is larger than the current level of filings would require. No decision has been made at this time to take more permanent action to reduce the number of examiners.

Applications filings continue to be down by 20 percent. Through March, 122,127 classes for registration have been filed, compared to 152,549 filed a year ago. Filings are projected to be between 240,000 and 250,000 classes or approximately 20 percent less than we had planned for the year. The number of examining attorneys stands at 383 with 6 attritions in the past 6 months.

In conjunction with the “top to bottom” review that Under Secretary Rogan has undertaken at the USPTO, we have conducted our own assessment within the Trademark Organization to see where we need to redirect resources in support of improved quality and pendency. Our objective is to restore the balance of work throughout the trademark process, reduce the number of pending applications and work to regain pendency goals.

Although new application filings are below plan, we continue to have backlogs of unprocessed work due to the large inventory of pending applications and the record number of examiner actions that were taken in the past year. In order to meet the obligations we have to our customers, we plan to recall many examining attorneys that have been detailed to other organizations in the USPTO, with the exception of those on “career development” and reimbursable details such as those working in OLIA, the TTAB and PCT, to work projects and examination activities within the Trademark Organization.

Examining attorneys have recently been offered temporary reassignments on two work projects in Trademarks that will result in eliminating the backlog of petitions and the review of files approved for publication within the next 4 to 6 weeks. As backlogs are reduced and processing times are restored to goal, examining attorneys will be offered additional assignments in support of our transition to an e-government operation.

All examining attorneys will continue to have responsibility for meeting performance standards for managing files in their amended docket to reduce pendency. Examining attorneys who are not on work projects should also continue to work on new cases to keep pendency within goal and ensure that they have a continued supply of applications under examination.

I would like to thank you all for your cooperation in working with us to accept temporary assignments in other organizations and for continuing to work to support the delivery of high quality, timely products and services.