

National Aeronautics and Space Administration
Headquarters
Washington, DC 20546-001



November 7, 2016

Office of Diversity and Equal Opportunity

Return Receipt Requested

Reply to Attn of:

Dr. Wim Wiewel
President
Portland State University
P.O. Box 751—POF
Portland, OR 97207-0751

Dear President Wiewel:

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) has completed a compliance review of the Portland State University ("PSU" or "the University") and, in particular, its College of Liberal Arts and Sciences ("CLAS"), as a recipient of NASA financial assistance. This limited scope review was conducted pursuant to the Age Discrimination Act of 1975 (Age Act or the Act), as amended, 42 U.S.C. §§ 6101, *et seq.* and NASA's implementing regulations at 14 C.F.R. Part 1252, which prohibit discrimination on the basis of age in programs and activities receiving Federal financial assistance through NASA. The review was conducted to determine whether PSU was in compliance with NASA's Age Act regulations; specifically, to ensure that PSU and CLAS provide equal educational opportunity regardless of age. Please find, enclosed, a copy of NASA's report of the compliance review and the NASA Age Act regulations.

Based on an evaluation of the data provided by PSU and from onsite interviews and observations, we find PSU and CLAS to be in compliance with NASA Age Act regulations. More specifically, we find that PSU and CLAS are meeting Age Act legal obligations and are implementing policies and procedures appropriate to achieving equality of access for all students, regardless of age. In fact, there are many strengths in PSU's and CLAS's programs regarding Age Act compliance. For example, with respect to admissions, outreach, and retention, the University does not require transfer students, or students who have been out of school for more than one year, to submit SAT/ACT scores. In addition, the University attempts to show diversity of the student population through visual imagery on its website depicting the presence and participation of adult learners in both undergraduate and graduate studies. Importantly, the University appears to make efforts to help students succeed, regardless of age or other demographic category, by offering systems and programs to support recruitment and retention to students and prospective students. Finally, the University has shown a demonstrated commitment to nontraditionally aged learners through its University system of schools and programs, alternative schedules, online learning, and lifelong learning.

In terms of areas for improvement, NASA recommends that the University enhance its civil rights informational and training materials to make clear the existence of Age Act laws, clarify the application of the Age Discrimination Act, and provide practical examples of how the Act may affect the University. NASA also recommends that the University clarify and disseminate adequate information about its internal discrimination complaints policy and procedures, including rights, obligations, timelines, and other potential external remedies. To this end, appropriate language and links on relevant student and faculty webpages and in student and faculty handbooks is imperative.

In addition, PSU and CLAS may wish to consider broader changes to institutional policy that would expand access for nontraditionally aged learners to its programs and services through expanded nighttime and weekend course offerings, and alternative forms of program delivery (e.g., greater focus on online platforms and videotaping). While the Age Discrimination Act does not require affirmative efforts that may facilitate education for nontraditionally aged (and other) students, such efforts are entirely consistent with the purpose and intent of the Act and NASA's implementing regulations.

NASA has provided specific recommendations regarding these and other equal opportunity matters. We will contact PSU in one year to follow up on its progress in implementing these recommendations.

PSU has been very helpful in facilitating the review prior to, during, and after the onsite visit. NASA wishes to thank PSU's Dr. Carmen Suarez, Vice President, Global Diversity and Inclusion; Julie Caron, J.D., Associate Vice President, Title IX and 504/ADA Coordinator; and Christina James, J.D., Director of Affirmative Action and Equal Employment Opportunity (Deputy Title IX Coordinator), as well as the faculty, staff, and students of PSU and CLAS for their participation in the review.

Please be advised that, in the interest of transparency, ODEO posts its Title IX compliance reports on our public website. The report and related records also may be requested through the Freedom of Information Act. However, the reports are written, to the extent possible, without revealing personal information that could result in an unwarranted invasion of privacy.

If you have any questions regarding this correspondence, please contact David R. Chambers, Director, Program Planning and Evaluation Division, Office of Diversity and Equal Opportunity, on 202-358-2128 at david.r.chambers@nasa.gov.

Sincerely,



Brenda R. Manuel
Associate Administrator for
Diversity and Equal Opportunity

Enclosures

cc:

Dr. Carmen Suarez, Vice President, Global Diversity and Inclusion

**Julie Caron, J.D., Associate Vice President for Global Diversity and Inclusion, Title IX and
504/ADA Coordinator**

**Christina James, J.D., Director of Affirmative Action and Equal Employment Opportunity
(Deputy Title IX Coordinator)**