

National Aeronautics and Space Administration
Headquarters
Washington, DC 20546-0001



February 28, 2013

Reply to Attn of:

Office of Diversity and Equal Opportunity

Certified, Return Receipt Requested

Dr. H. Holden Thorp
Chancellor
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Office of the Chancellor
103 South Building
Campus Box 9100
Chapel Hill, NC 27599-9100

Dear Dr. Thorp:

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) has completed its compliance review of the Morehead Planetarium and Science Center (the MPSC) at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (the University). The review was conducted pursuant to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504), and its implementing regulations at 14 C.F.R. Part 1251, which prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability in programs receiving financial assistance through NASA. A copy of the regulations is enclosed.

NASA has determined that the MPSC and the University¹ are in overall compliance with NASA's Section 504 regulations at 14 C.F.R. 1251. This determination is based on an evaluation of data provided by the MPSC and UNC, on-site interviews, an architectural accessibility review, and MPSC's and the University's expressed commitment to NASA to implement required actions to meet Section 504 regulatory requirements. Specifically, while our review revealed that the MPSC and the University (in support of the MPSC) offer accessible programs, services and facilities, as well as a number of promising practices, NASA also found a number of compliance issues. With respect to these compliance concerns, NASA found that the University and MPSC acted to rectify several of them shortly after NASA's onsite visit and made commitments to NASA to rectify other outstanding compliance issues no later than September 1, 2013. NASA will monitor the University and MPSC in order to ensure that these commitments are met in a timely fashion.

The enclosed compliance review report identifies in detail those programs, services and facilities found in compliance by NASA, and those where compliance concerns were found. The report

¹ The University is a recipient of several NASA research and education grants that provide funding for programs beyond the MPSC. However, NASA limited the scope of this review to the MPSC's programs, services, activities and facilities under its control and the University's oversight and support of the MPSC and its Section 504 compliance efforts.

also identifies which concerns were addressed and remedies implemented since the start of this compliance review and the compliance concerns that will be addressed in the near future as detailed in the report's implementation plan. Further, this report also makes a number of recommendations to strengthen existing compliance efforts and to address potential risks of non-compliance. Lastly, this report highlights several promising practices that other NASA grant recipients providing informal educational and cultural opportunities can adopt in order to achieve or strengthen their Section 504 compliance posture.

For additional civil rights technical assistance, you may also wish to visit our MissionSTEM website at <http://missionstem.nasa.gov/>. The MissionSTEM Web site is designed to assist NASA grant recipients in meeting their compliance obligations under NASA's equal opportunity laws and regulations. To this end, the site provides a host of information and resources on compliance requirements as well as promising practices of our grant recipients.

NASA staff will contact the MPSC and the University in one year to follow up on the MPSC's and the University's progress in implementing NASA Section 504 compliance recommendations. NASA may require the MPSC and the University to take further action if progress is deemed insufficient.

Under the Freedom of Information Act, it may be necessary to release the report and related records on request. If NASA receives such a request, it will seek to protect, to the extent provided by law, personal information which, if released, could reasonably be expected to constitute an unwarranted invasion of privacy.

If you have any questions regarding this correspondence, please contact Mr. Robert Cosgrove, External Programs Manager, Program Planning and Evaluation Division, at 202-358-0446 or robert.cosgrove@nasa.gov.

Sincerely,



Brenda R. Manuel, Esq.
Associate Administrator for
Diversity and Equal Opportunity

Enclosures

cc: Mr. Todd Boyette
Director, Morehead Planetarium & Science Center

Ms. Neera Makwana Skurky, Ms. Anne Fox, Ms. Kara E. Simmons
Office of University Counsel

Ms. Ann Penn
University Equal Opportunity/504 Officer