

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



October 17, 2016

Reply to Attn of:

Office of Diversity and Equal Opportunity

Dr. John C. Hitt
President
University of Central Florida
Office of the President
P.O. Box 160002
Orlando, FL 32816-0002

Dear President Hitt:

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) has completed its compliance review of the University of Central Florida (UCF), a recipient of NASA financial assistance. This limited scope review focused on the Department of Physics, and was conducted pursuant to Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX) and NASA's Title IX implementing regulations at 14 C.F.R. Part 1253, which prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex in educational programs receiving Federal financial assistance through NASA. The review was conducted to determine whether the University of Central Florida is in compliance with NASA's Title IX regulations; specifically, to ensure that the Department of Physics provides equal educational opportunity regardless of gender. Please find enclosed a copy of NASA's report of the compliance review and the NASA Title IX regulations.

Based on an evaluation of the data provided by UCF and from on-site interviews and observations, NASA finds UCF to be in compliance with the Title IX procedural requirements regarding coordination and self-evaluation. NASA found that UCF's procedures as written generally conform to OCR requirements and considerations. UCF's implementation of the procedures within the Physics Department also appears to be conform to requirements insofar as appropriate response to allegations of behaviors inconsistent with Title IX, such as harassing conduct, when they have arisen.

NASA also found that the Physics program is in compliance with Title IX in that we did not find methods of administration that were having an adverse impact or otherwise limiting program participation based on gender. However, Physics should conduct a Title IX self-evaluation and engage other assessment efforts, such as a site visit from the American Physical Society Committee on the Status of Women, to more strategically address climate issues that can negatively impact the program environment. UCF Physics should focus in particular on the potential for harassing conduct to create a hostile educational environment and on the need for creating and disseminating appropriate flexibilities for pregnant and parenting students. In addition, the Title IX Coordinator's office should continue to work closely with Physics and other academic departments to ensure that all faculty, staff and students are aware of their rights and responsibilities

under Title IX, especially reporting and resolving allegations of harassing conduct and assault.

NASA observed promising practices of both the University and the Department. For example, NASA commends the Physics department for its Studio Model/Learning Assistants Program, an excellent way to address the need for a more welcoming environment in the undergraduate Physics classroom, based on a collaborative, peer learning model. The performance evaluation for the program includes analysis of outcomes by gender.

The recommendations in NASA's compliance review report are designed to assist the University of Central Florida and the Department of Physics in furthering their efforts to ensure equal educational opportunity regardless of gender. NASA will contact the University one year after the issuance of this letter and our compliance report to learn about the progress made toward addressing our recommendations. For additional civil rights technical assistance, visit our MissionSTEM website, designed to assist NASA grant recipients in meeting their compliance obligations under NASA's equal opportunity laws and regulations (<http://missionstem.nasa.gov/>). The site provides information and resources on compliance requirements as well as promising practices of our grant recipients.

The University was extremely helpful in facilitating NASA's review prior to, during, and after the onsite visit. NASA wishes to thank Ms. Maria Beckman, University's Director, Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action, as well as the faculty, staff, and students of the Physics program 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 Mr. David Chambers on 202-358-2218 or david.r.chambers@nasa.gov.

Sincerely,



Brenda R. Manuel
Associate Administrator for
Diversity and Equal Opportunity

Enclosures

cc:

Ms. Maria Beckman, Director, Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action

Dr. Eduardo Mucciolo, Chair, Physics Department