National Aeronautics and Space Administration

Headquarters
Washington, DC 20546-0001

December 8, 2008

Reply to Attn of: Office of Diversity and Equal Opportunity *Cert. Mail No. 7007 2680 0001 2215 7596*

Chancellor Virginia S. Hinshaw
Office of the Chancellor
University of Hawaii at Mānoa
2500 Campus Rd., Hawaii Hall 202
Honolulu, HI 96822

Dear Chancellor Hinshaw:

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) has completed a compliance review of three graduate programs at the University of Hawaii at Mānoa (UH), a recipient of NASA financial assistance. These programs are: the UH Department of Physics and Astronomy, the Institute for Astronomy (IfA), and the Hawaii Institute of Geophysics and Planetology (HIGP). This limited scope review 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. A copy of the regulations is enclosed. The review was conducted to determine whether UH was in compliance with NASA's Title IX regulations; specifically, to ensure that the Physics Department provides equal educational opportunity regardless of gender. Please also find enclosed a copy of NASA's report of the compliance review.

Based on an evaluation of data provided by UH and on-site interviews and observations, we find the three programs to be in compliance with NASA's Title IX regulations. While NASA's report includes recommendations to assist UH in continuing to ensure equal opportunity (EO) regardless of gender, overall we find that UH is meeting or exceeding EO requirements regarding its Title IX coordination, grievance procedures, policy dissemination, and self-evaluation efforts. In addition, both prior to and since NASA's on-site Title IX review, the HIGP, IfA and the Physics Department, have taken a variety of actions to advance gender equity in their programs. These actions demonstrate an effective partnership with the Title IX Coordinator's office, as well as a proven commitment to enhancing efforts to ensure equal opportunity regardless of gender and to creating a more gender diverse academic environment. Regarding the report's recommendations, NASA will contact UH in one year to follow up on UH's progress in continuing to enhance their equal opportunity efforts relating to Title IX.

The compliance report also identifies several promising practices at UH designed to ensure equal educational opportunity regardless of gender. For example, the UH Commission on the Status of Women, formed in 1972, advises the UH President on

issues concerning women faculty, staff and students on all UH campuses. Examples of issues addressed by the Commission include: child care, campus safety, equitable practices in hiring, pay, promotion and tenure, recourse for sexual harassment, and compliance with the mandates of affirmative action and equal opportunity. NASA plans to include the promising practices developed by these programs and other practices of UH in a forthcoming technical assistance document on promising practices.

UH has been very helpful in facilitating the review prior to, during, and after the on-site visit. NASA wishes to thank Ms. Mie Watanabe, Director, Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action and Title IX Coordinator; Dr. Michael W. Peters, Chair, Department of Physics and Astronomy; Dr. David B. Sanders, Chair, Astronomy Graduate Program; Dr. Rolf-Peter Kudritski, Director, IfA. Furthermore, NASA extends its appreciation to Dr. Peter Mouginis-Mark, Interim Director, HIGP, as well as the faculty, staff and students of the Department of Physics and Astronomy, the HIGP and IfA, for their participation in the review.

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. David Chambers, Senior Civil Rights Analyst, 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

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

Enclosures

cc:
Dr. Michael W. Peters, Chair, Department of Physics and Astronomy,
Dr. David B. Sanders, Chair, Astronomy Graduate Program
Dr. Rolf-Peter Kudritski, Director, Institute for Astronomy
Dr. Peter Mouginis-Mark, Interim Director, Hawaii
Institute of Geophysics and Planetology
Ms. Mie Watanabe, UH Title IX Coordinator