

National Aeronautics and Space Administration

Headquarters

Washington, DC 20546-0001

September 30, 2011



Reply to Attn of:

Office of Diversity and Equal Opportunity Cert. Mail No.: 70072680000122158401

Dr. David J. Schmidly
President
University of New Mexico
MSC05 3300
Scholes Hall Suite 140
Albuquerque, NM 87131

Dear Dr. Schmidly:

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) has completed its compliance review of the University of New Mexico (UNM), a recipient of NASA financial assistance. This limited scope review focused on the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering (ECE) and was conducted pursuant to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. § 2000d and NASA's Title VI implementing regulations at 14 C.F.R. Part 1250 (enclosed), which prohibit discrimination on the bases of race, color, or national origin in programs receiving Federal financial assistance through NASA. The review was conducted to determine whether UNM was in compliance with NASA's Title VI regulations; specifically, to ensure that the ECE program provides equal educational opportunity regardless of race, color, or national origin. (Please find enclosed a copy of NASA's report of the compliance review and the NASA Title VI regulations.)

Based on an evaluation of the data provided by UNM and from on-site interviews and observations, NASA finds UNM to be in compliance with the Title VI procedural requirements for signed civil rights assurances and access to compliance information. NASA also finds UNM is not engaging in disparate treatment based on race, color, or national origin, and is providing for methods of administration that do not differently impact or otherwise limit program participation of beneficiaries based on race, color, or national origin. However, there is room for improvement, specifically regarding the need to broaden ECE recruitment efforts. In this regard, NASA's review showed that while ECE is undertaking diversity recruitment efforts and is on par with national averages for most minority groups, this is not the case for African Americans. The recommendations in this report are therefore designed to assist ECE in more effective targeted recruitment strategies, among other suggested enhancements to UNM's and ECE's equal opportunity related efforts.

NASA also observed promising practices in ECE, particularly a commitment to a program environment in which the racial and ethnic diversity of the student body is both highly

valued and fully embraced by program leadership. In addition, ECE supports many undergraduate students through its Lottery Success Scholarship Program. The goal of the program is to attract outstanding students, regardless of race, to ECE. This award is renewable for up to eight semesters, requires students to maintain a 3.0/4.0 GPA, and that students make continual progress towards a degree in one of the ECE programs. Under the leadership of the former Chair of ECE, Dr. Chaouki Abdullah, who is now serving as UNM's Interim Provost, the University is undertaking a campus-wide initiative on diversity and excellence to advance UNM's academic climate. We commend UNM for this effort and will contact the University one year from now to learn more about its progress on this initiative and our compliance recommendations.

UNM has been very helpful in facilitating the review prior to, during, and after the on-site visit. NASA wishes to thank UNM's Title IX Coordinator, Ms. Theresa Ramos, as well as Dr. Abdullah, the faculty, staff, and students of the ECE program, 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 R. Chambers, Senior Civil Rights Analyst, on 202-358-2128 at david.r.chambers@nasa.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brenda R. Manuel", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Brenda R. Manuel
Associate Administrator for
Diversity and Equal Opportunity

Enclosures

cc:

Dr. Chaouki Adbullah, Interim Provost
Dr. Joze De Leon, Vice President for Equity and Inclusion
Theresa Ramos, Senior EEO Specialist, Office of Equal Opportunity
Dr. Luke Lester, Interim Chair, ECE Department