Dear Dr. Loftin:

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) has completed its compliance review of the Texas A&M University - College Station, a recipient of NASA financial assistance. This limited scope review focused on the Department of Atmospheric Sciences (ATMO), 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 Texas A&M is in compliance with NASA's Title IX regulations; specifically, to ensure that the ATMO Department 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 Texas A&M and from on-site interviews and observations, NASA finds Texas A&M to be in compliance with the Title IX procedural requirements regarding coordination, grievance procedures, and self-evaluation. NASA also found that the ATMO 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, the University should continue to enhance its coordination and self-evaluation efforts, and to review and revamp certain aspects of its Title IX policies and procedures, as well as their dissemination, to address NASA’s recommendations. The recommendations regarding both procedural requirements as well as program administration are designed to assist Texas A&M and ATMO in furthering their efforts to ensure equal educational opportunity regardless of gender.

We have also included a summary literature review on gender equity and STEM programs as an appendix to our compliance report, to further assist Texas A&M in its ongoing equal opportunity efforts in this area. 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.

Texas A&M is to be commended for the efforts it has already made in broadly disseminating information on Title IX, providing a wide range of education and awareness opportunities to the campus community, and seeking to both increase the number of women in STEM and to make its STEM environments more inclusive. NASA observed a number of promising practices of both the University and the ATMO program, particularly with regard to Title IX information dissemination, an arena in which Texas A&M is doing an excellent job. At the time of NASA’s visit, “Know Your Title IX” posters were everywhere in the ATMO program environment, from message boards to stall doors in both the men’s and women’s rest rooms. Since NASA’s visit, the University has created its own training video to inform its 130,000+ students of their Title IX rights and to convey other Title IX-related information in compliance with U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights guidance. These efforts show a strong commitment on the part of the University and its Title IX compliance officials to “get the word out” and NASA commends the university for its actions in this regard. Such efforts can truly help those protected by the law to learn more about the rights it affords, and make use of that information should the need arise.

Texas A&M was very helpful in facilitating NASA’s review prior to, during, and after the on-site visit. NASA wishes to thank Dr. Joni Baker, Director, Office of Diversity and Equal Opportunity, and compliance officials working with Dr. Baker, as well as the faculty, staff, and students of the ATMO program for their participation in the review.

Under the Freedom of Information Act, it may be necessary to release the report and related records upon 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, on 202-358-2128 or david.r.chambers@nasa.gov.

Sincerely,

Brenda R. Manuel
Associate Administrator for
Diversity and Equal Opportunity

Enclosures

cc:
Dr. Joni Baker, Director, Office of Diversity and Equal Opportunity
Dr. Kenneth Bowman, Chair Department of Atmospheric Sciences