July 17, 2007

Dr. Mary Sue Coleman  
President  
University of Michigan  
2074 Fleming Administrative  
1009 Greene Street - Box 1340  
Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1340

Dear Dr. Coleman:

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) has completed its compliance review of the Aerospace Engineering Department at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor (the University), a recipient of NASA financial assistance. This review was conducted pursuant to Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), and the NASA 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 was in compliance with NASA Title IX regulations and specifically, to ensure that the Aerospace Engineering Department was providing equal educational opportunity regardless of gender. The compliance review included extensive analyses of documentation received from the University, including statistical and anecdotal information, as well as interviews of students, faculty, and administrators. An evaluation was conducted of the University’s compliance with regulatory procedural requirements, such as adoption of grievance procedures for resolving Title IX complaints, and elements of program administration such as admissions, recruitment and outreach practices and students’ access to and participation in research and classroom experiences. Finally, NASA identified promising practices the University, and specifically the Aerospace Engineering Department, is engaging in regarding these areas.

Based on a thorough evaluation of the data provided by the University and from on-site interviews and observations, NASA found no evidence of non-compliance with the NASA Title IX regulations. Furthermore, NASA finds that the University of Michigan has many promising practices that may serve as models for increasing women’s
participation in science and engineering and ensuring equal educational opportunity regardless of gender.

While NASA did not find non-compliance, there are areas of the AE Program NASA believes can be strengthened with regards to equal opportunity. Based on data provided by the University, the number of women in the undergraduate AE Program did not increase during the five year period reviewed by NASA, despite the extent and variety of the University’s efforts. Also, based on anecdotal information provided during some of the interviews, NASA is concerned that certain aspects of the climate within the AE Department may be undermining the University’s progressive efforts. In the interests of assisting the University to enhance equal opportunity in its AE Program, NASA provided a number of recommendations in its report of the compliance review, including several to address climate concerns. NASA will contact the University in one year to follow up on the University’s progress in implementing these recommendations.

NASA found the University to be very responsive in facilitating the review, especially during the two on-site visits. NASA wishes to thank Dr. Wei Shyy, Chair of the Aerospace Engineering Department, and his staff for their cooperation, as well as Mr. Anthony Walesby, the University’s Senior Director for Institutional Equity, who served as the liaison with NASA throughout 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.

Enclosed please find a copy of NASA’s report of the compliance review. If you have any questions regarding this correspondence, please contact Mr. Miguel A. Torres, Acting Director, Program Planning and Evaluation Division, Office of Diversity and Equal Opportunity, at 202-358-0937.

Sincerely,

Brenda R. Manuel
Assistant Administrator for
Diversity and Equal Opportunity

Enclosure

cc: Dr. Wei Shyy
Dr. A.W. England
Anthony Walesby
Maya Kobersy