

National Aeronautics and Space Administration
Headquarters
Washington, DC 20546-0001



December 19, 2013

Reply to Attn of: Office of Diversity and Equal Opportunity

Dr. Eric W. Kaler
President
University of Minnesota
202 Morrill Hall
100 Church Street S.E.
Minneapolis, MN 55455

Dear Dr. Kaler:

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) has completed its compliance review of the University of Minnesota Twin Cities (UMN), a recipient of NASA financial assistance. This limited scope review, focused on the Department of Aerospace Engineering and Mechanics (AEM), 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 UMN is in compliance with NASA's Title IX regulations; specifically, to ensure that the AEM 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 UMN and from on-site interviews and observations, NASA finds UMN to be in compliance with the procedural requirements regarding Title IX coordination, for example, dissemination of contact information, as well as self-evaluation efforts. NASA also finds that UMN is in compliance with requirements to provide for methods of administration that do not differently impact or otherwise limit program participation of beneficiaries based on gender.

However, insofar as UMN's Title IX policies and procedures relating to discrimination complaints, sexual harassment, and parental status, NASA recommends that the University engage in an institutional review to ensure conformity with relevant regulatory requirements and guidance. This applies especially to appropriate policy dissemination of administrative procedures. NASA notes that UMN has already begun such a review and has apprised us of its progress to date. NASA requests a further update on UMN's progress to be provided no later than 90 days (three months) from the date of this letter.

These and other recommendations in this report are designed to assist UMN and AEM in enhancing their efforts to ensure equal opportunities 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 UMN 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.

Finally, NASA observed a number of promising practices of both the University and the AEM program, particularly around tracking of its outreach and recruitment efforts and efforts to provide supportive networks for students. NASA has noted these in its report and plans to incorporate them into future MissionSTEM postings on promising practices for ensuring equal opportunities in STEM programs.

UMN was very helpful in facilitating NASA's review prior to, during, and after the on-site visit. NASA wishes to thank the Director, Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action, Kimberly Hewitt, as well as the faculty, staff, and students of the AEM 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 202-358-0953 or david.r.chambers@nasa.gov.

Sincerely,



Brenda R. Manuel
Associate Administrator for
Diversity and Equal Opportunity

Enclosures

cc: Dr. Steven L. Crouch, Dean, College of Science & Engineering
Dr. Perry Leo, Acting Head, Department of Aerospace Engineering and Mechanics
Ms. Kimberly D. Hewitt, Director, Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action