

NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION
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**OFFICE OF
DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION**

January 19, 2021

Via Electronic Mail Only

Dr. W. Kent Fuchs
President
226 Tigert Hall
P.O. Box 113150
University of Florida
Gainesville, FL 32611
president@ufl.edu

Dear President Fuchs:

The Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI) of the National Science Foundation (NSF) is pleased to issue the final version report (the Final Report) for the civil rights compliance review conducted of the University of Florida (UF). The Final Report is enclosed for your records.

ODI conducted a Title IX compliance review of the Research Experiences for Undergraduates (REU) programs at UF in July 2019. ODI conducted the review pursuant to Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), as amended, 20 U.S.C. Section 1681, et seq., and the NSF's Title IX implementing regulations, 45 C.F.R. Part 618. During the course of the compliance review, ODI requested and obtained data from UF and gathered data from UF's website. On July 23-24 2019, members of ODI's compliance review team held on-campus interviews with UF administrators, including the UF's Title IX Coordinator, faculty, staff, and students of UF's REU programs. The facts, findings, and recommendations contained in this report are based on a review and an analysis of all data gathered during this review. On September 16, 2020, ODI provided UF's Title IX Coordinator a draft compliance review report with an opportunity to comment on the facts and findings detailed in the report. On January 8, 2021, the UF Title IX Coordinator provided ODI UF's response to the draft report, which included UF's response to specific NSF recommendations. ODI has reviewed and accepted UF's responses to these recommendations and are included in the Final Report. We encourage UF to implement all the recommendations contained in the Final Report.

Based on all the information gathered during the review, including the information UF provided us in its January 8, 2021 response to the draft report, ODI has determined that UF is in compliance with Title IX with respect to issues within the scope of the compliance review as detailed above. With the issuance of the Final Report, ODI is closing this compliance review as of the date of this letter.

We wish to thank the students, faculty, and administrators of UF who took part in this compliance review for their assistance and cooperation. If you have any questions regarding the Final Report, please contact Mr. Robert (Bob) Cosgrove, NSF Awardee Compliance Program Manager, at 202-292-5310, or via email at rcosgrov@nsf.gov. You can also contact me at 703-292-8020 or at rjdavis@nsf.gov.

Sincerely,



Rhonda J. Davis
Office Head
Office of Diversity and Inclusion
National Science Foundation

Cc: Robert Cosgrove
Awardee Compliance Program Manger
NSF ODI

Russell Froman, J.D., Ed.D.
Assistant Vice President for Accessibility and Gender Equity
ADA Coordinator and Title IX Coordinator
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TITLE IX COMPLIANCE REVIEW REPORT

**University of Florida
Research Experience for Undergraduates Program**

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I. Introduction

The National Science Foundation (NSF) Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI) conducted a Title IX compliance review of the Research Experiences for Undergraduates program (REU) at the University of Florida (UF) in July 2019. ODI conducted the review pursuant to Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), as amended, 20 U.S.C. Section 1681, *et seq.*, and the NSF's Title IX implementing regulations, 45 C.F.R. Part 618.¹ During the course of the compliance review, NSF requested and obtained data from the University and gathered data from the University's website. On July 23-24 2019, members of the ODI's compliance review team held on-campus interviews with University administrators, including the University's Title IX Coordinator, faculty, staff, and students of UF's REU programs. The facts, findings, and recommendations contained in this report are based on a review and an analysis of the data obtained from the University, including the University's website, as well as information obtained from the interviews held with students, faculty, staff, and administrators.

NSF, a federal agency, provides federal funds to more than 1,900 colleges, universities, and non-profit institutions supporting approximately 300,000 researchers, postdoctoral fellows, trainees, teachers and students each year. NSF is the funding source for approximately 27 percent of the total federal budget for basic research conducted at U.S. colleges and universities.

NSF launched the Research Experiences for Undergraduates (REU) program in 1987. This program provides grants to universities and other research organizations to engage college and university students in authentic research experiences. The research experiences may focus on any field of research normally funded by NSF. The program offers two mechanisms for supporting research by students:

- (1) Organizations may submit a proposal for an *REU Site*, which engages a cohort of students (typically 8 to 12) in research, usually during the summer months. REU Sites may be based in a single discipline or academic department or may offer interdisciplinary or multi-department research opportunities with a coherent intellectual theme. NSF requires that most of the students in a particular REU Site come from colleges and universities outside the one that is hosting the REU Site.
- (2) An investigator who already has an NSF research grant may submit an *REU Supplement* request to add support for a small number of students (typically 1 or 2) to conduct a quasi-independent research project associated with the investigator's NSF-funded research.

The organizations that receive the funding for REU sites, design and run the research experiences. Students apply directly to those grantee organizations; NSF does not run the application process or select the students. NSF requires that undergraduate students who participate in REU Sites or REU Supplements be U.S. Citizens, U.S. Nationals, or U.S. Permanent Residents. NSF's most recent solicitation for REU proposals states:

¹ NSF Implementing regulations (45 CFR Part 618.605, incorporating by reference the NSF Title VI regulation at 45 C.F.R. 611.7 require that NSF conduct compliance reviews. NSF commits to conducting two Title IX compliance reviews annually of NSF awardee organizations.)

“REU projects offer an opportunity to tap the nation's diverse student talent pool and broaden participation in science and engineering. NSF is particularly interested in increasing the numbers of women, underrepresented minorities, and persons with disabilities in research. REU projects are strongly encouraged to involve students who are members of these groups. (Underrepresented minorities are African Americans, Hispanics, American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians or Other Pacific Islanders.) When designing recruitment plans, REU projects also are encouraged to consider students who are veterans of the U.S. Armed Services and first-generation college students.”

Every year, approximately 600 REU Sites operate at universities, field stations, observatories, museums, and other research facilities around the United States, and some are located abroad. These Sites engage approximately 6,000 undergraduate students in research. NSF expects the Sites to provide students with high-quality mentoring as they learn about research methods in the field. Often, especially at Sites in university settings, the undergraduates become part of a research group that involves not only faculty members but also graduate students and postdoctoral researchers. The graduate students and postdocs help to mentor the undergraduate students, as well as acquaint them with the university and the local area, since most of the undergraduates are from other places and are just visiting for the short term of the REU Site (typically eight to ten weeks in the summer).

In its statutory and regulatory responsibility to ensure that NSF-funded programs are conducted free of sex discrimination, including sexual misconduct, and because of the recent concern over sexual misconduct in academia, NSF regularly conducts Title IX compliance reviews of colleges and universities that receive NSF research and education program funding awards. These reviews typically focus on an academic department at a university that receives NSF funding awards and the academic and research environment in that department for faculty, graduate students and postdoctoral staff. NSF recognizes that not all of the programs it funds are structured in the same manner as education and research that results in the awarding of degrees at colleges and universities. The REU program is such a program. However, NSF is aware that the risk of incidents of sexual misconduct is the same in summer REU programs as semester-based, degree-granting educational and research experiences. Since REU program participant students may attend colleges and universities other than the host institution, and because of the short-term nature of REU programs, REU programs provide unique challenges to awardee organizations' efforts to keep their REU programs free of sexual misconduct and ensure compliance with Title IX.

NSF chose to review the University of Florida (UF) because the university hosts a relatively large number of REU Sites and there have been no active or prior complaints of discrimination, harassment, including sexual or sex-based harassment in these programs at UF. One of the intentions of this Title IX compliance review is to document promising practices that can be utilized in shaping future guidance for REU programs everywhere around sex and gender discrimination.

In 2019, UF received NSF funding awards to operate eight REU Sites. The following four UF REU Sites were operating during summer 2019 and participated in the NSF review:

Dir.	Division	NSF Award #	Project Title	Start Date	End Date	PI	\$ Awarded (Estimate)
CISE	CNS	1560243	REU Site: Undergraduate Research in Intelligent Multimodal Human-Computer Interaction	08/01/16	07/31/20	Kristy Boyer	\$368,618
ENG	EEC	1757128	REU Site: Engineering for Healthcare	09/15/18	08/31/21	Douglas Spearot	\$378,856
ENG	EEC	1852111	REU Site: Research Experiences for Undergraduates in Chemical Engineering at the University of Florida	05/01/19	04/30/22	Carlos Rinaldi	\$394,728
MPS	DMR	1852138	REU Site: Condensed Matter Physics and Applied Materials	04/01/19	03/31/22	Selman Hershfield	\$249,428

As part of its efforts to assist awardee organizations in their efforts to ensure that REU programs are free of sex discrimination and sexual misconduct, NSF has inserted the following language in the REU funding solicitation posted May 17, 2019 (for the funding of FY20 REU programs). This language may be referred to in applicable recommendations to UF in this report:

“NSF does not tolerate sexual harassment, or any kind of harassment, where NSF-funded activities take place. Proposers are required to have a policy or code of conduct that addresses sexual harassment, other forms of harassment, and sexual assault. Proposers should provide an orientation for all participants in the REU Site (REU students, faculty, postdocs, graduate students, other research mentors, etc.) to cover expectations of behavior to ensure a safe and respectful environment for all participants, and to review the organization's policy or code of conduct addressing sexual harassment, other forms of harassment, and sexual assault, including reporting and complaint procedures. For additional information, see the NSF policies at <https://www.nsf.gov/od/odi/harassment.jsp> and the 'Promising Practices' at https://www.nsf.gov/od/odi/promising_practices/index.jsp.”

A. Background

Title IX and NSF’s Title IX implementing regulations prohibit recipients of federal financial assistance, such as universities and colleges, from discriminating on the basis of sex in any of their educational programs or activities. 20 U.S.C. § 1681(a); 45 C.F.R. Part 618.

In July 2004, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) issued a report (GAO-04-639) entitled, “GENDER ISSUES: Women’s Participation in the Sciences has Increased, but Agencies Need to do More to Ensure Compliance with Title IX.” The purpose of the report was two-fold: (1) to report on the status of women in the sciences; and (2) to evaluate the Title IX compliance activities of the four federal science agencies—the Department of Energy, Department of Education, National Aeronautics and Space Administration, and National Science Foundation. With respect to the status of women in the sciences, the GAO reported that the participation of women in the sciences at the undergraduate and graduate levels had increased over the past 30 years; however, the GAO reported that “[w]omen continue to major in the sciences and earn degrees in the sciences to a lesser extent than men.” The GAO also noted that some studies suggest that sex discrimination may still affect women’s choices and professional

progress in the sciences. With respect to the Title IX compliance activities of the four federal science agencies, the GAO found that the agencies had taken steps, through the conduct of complaint investigations and the provision of technical assistance, to ensure that the institutions to which they provide financial assistance are in compliance with Title IX. However, the GAO noted that “[g]iven the general lack of knowledge and familiarity with the reach of Title IX and the disincentives for filing complaints against superiors,” the agencies needed to do more to judge whether sex discrimination exists in the sciences. To that end, the GAO made recommendations specific to each of the four federal science agencies. With respect to the National Science Foundation, the GAO recommended that NSF ensure that compliance reviews of grantees are periodically conducted.

B. Objective

The objective of the Title IX compliance review at UF was three-fold: (1) to determine whether male and female applicants and students had equal access to the opportunities and benefits offered by UF; (2) to determine whether the University was in compliance with the requirements of Title IX and NSF Title IX implementing regulations; and (3) to identify and report on any promising practices instituted by the University for promoting gender equity.

C. Scope

To determine whether REU participants, regardless of their sex, had equal access to the opportunities and benefits offered by UF, ODI evaluated the following areas and practices: (1) admissions policies to include application and selection processes; (2) the academic climate; (3) student safety. To determine whether the UF was in compliance with the requirements of Title IX, and NSF Title IX implementing regulations, ODI evaluated the following: (1) whether the University has designated a Title IX Coordinator; (2) whether the University has taken continuing steps to notify the campus community about its nondiscrimination policies related to Title IX; and (3) whether the University has adopted and published grievance procedures providing for the prompt and equitable resolution of Title IX-related complaints, including sex discrimination and sexual harassment complaints.

II. Title IX Regulation Compliance

NSF Title IX implementing regulations require awardee institutions: 1) designate at least one employee to coordinate its efforts to comply with and to carry out its responsibilities under Title IX and disseminate the Title IX Coordinator’s contact information to the recipient’s academic community ; 2) adopt and publish grievance procedures providing for prompt and equitable resolution of student and employee complaints alleging any action that would be prohibited by these regulations; 3) notification to the public that the recipient will not discriminate on the basis of sex. 45 C.F.R. § 618.135, § 618.140.

A. Title IX Coordinator Designation and Title IX Program Administration

Below is the name and contact information for UF’s current Title IX Coordinator.

Dr. Russell Froman, J.D., Ed.D.
Assistant Vice President for ADA and Title IX Compliance
ADA Coordinator and Title IX Coordinator
(352) 275-1242
inform@titleix.ufl.edu

Highlights: UF has a designated Title IX Coordinator with appropriate credentials and an adequate job description to fulfill all requirements under Title IX Rules and Regulations.

Findings: In Compliance

B. Dissemination of Contact Information

The recollection of whether or not REU students at UF receive the Title IX Coordinator and contact information was inconsistent across the REU programs. The Title IX Coordinator recognized the need for dissemination for future REU students as well as other students on campus during the summer. It is important to note that none of the REU students indicated a concern over access to Title IX information. When asked if they knew who to contact in the event of a Title IX concern, many students responded that information was available on-line.

Highlights: The UF Title IX Coordinator committed to the dissemination of his contact information for summer programs at UF.

Recommendation: As per the above-referenced language in the 2019 NSF solicitation for REU funding awards, UF should provide an orientation for all participants in the REU Site (REU students, faculty, postdocs, graduate students, other research mentors, etc.) to cover expectations of behavior to ensure a safe and respectful environment for all participants, and to review the organization's policy or code of conduct addressing sexual harassment, other forms of harassment, and sexual assault, including reporting and complaint procedures.

UF Response: We will provide an orientation for all future participants, (REU students, faculty, postdocs, graduate students, other research mentors, etc.), which will cover all areas of information outlined above.

Findings: In Compliance

C. University Policy Related to Title IX

The UF [sexual harassment policy](#) that was in effect during NSF's onsite visit states that "(UF)is committed to providing a safe, educational, working, and residential environment that is free from sexual harassment or misconduct directed towards any and all members of the community. To achieve this goal, UF will not tolerate behavior of this nature and, if discovered, the procedure for investigation and potential adjudication, as outlined in this policy, will be followed. Similarly, retaliation against an individual who has filed a complaint regarding alleged sexual harassment or misconduct is also against University policy and those involved will be subject to disciplinary action. The University encourages students, faculty, staff, contracted

workers, and visitors to promptly report any suspected behavior that is in violation of this policy.”

NSF found that UF has a [Gender Equity Policy](#) (currently in draft form), in order to comply with the U.S. Department of Education’s (ED’s) revised Title IX regulations (34 CFR 106) which went into effect on August 14, 2020. which provides Title IX, gender equity and sexual misconduct policies and complaint/compliance procedures (separate policies for students and employees) as well as available support and informational resources. This policy provides contact information for the UF Title IX Coordinator and offices for Federal civil rights agencies, although NSF and ODI contact information are not provided in this policy. During the time of the onsite visit, UF’s [Non-Discrimination/Harassment/Invasion of Privacy Policies](#) (1.006) were in effect and include a Title IX complaint procedure for students and employees.

Highlights: The University has a policy that prohibits sexual harassment, misconduct, and retaliation.

Recommendation: Provide contact information for NSF ODI in all media that lists Federal agencies that have Title IX authority and jurisdiction such as in the Gender Equity Policy.

UF Response: We will provide the contact information for NSF ODI in all of our resource media and information.

Findings: In Compliance

D. Title IX Policy Dissemination

UF’s website has a Title IX [webpage](#), which provides information on UF’s commitment to gender equity and “culture of care”. The webpage also provides information on UF’s gender discrimination reporting, investigative, adjudicative and support resources, as well as portals to file complaints and request services. Information on pregnancy and parenting and gender inclusion is also provided. The majority of the PIs, faculty, post docs, graduate students, and REU program participants stated they did not receive the UF Title IX Policy during the course of their participation in the REU program. Some faculty reported that undergraduates took training online regarding racial and sexual harassment. Others reported that REU students do not complete the online training previously mentioned. It should be noted that all faculty, staff, and post docs are required to take training on sexual harassment each year.

Highlights: While UF provided its university-wide dissemination of policy, UF needs to improve the dissemination of their Title IX related policies to summer program participants on their campus by providing it during orientation and providing training on sexual harassment.

Recommendation: See the recommendation for Section II B above

UF Response: We will provide an orientation for all future participants, (REU students, faculty, postdocs, graduate students, other research mentors, etc.), which will cover all areas of information outlined above.

Findings: In Compliance

E. Title IX Complaint Procedures

NSF found that UF's approach to comply with the U.S. Department of Education's revised Title IX regulations which went into effect on August 14, 2020 will result in the implementation of two complaint adjudication policies and procedures: 1) The University of Florida's Guidelines to Address Gender Inequity (UF's Guidelines) and 2) Guidelines dictated by ED's Title IX of the Education Amendments Act (Title IX Guidelines) NSF found that reporting mechanisms exist through the UF website, via email, in person or by telephone.

UF posts information on how to report sexual assault, such as this placard that is posted in the Reitz Student Union:



Highlights: NSF found that no complaints were filed by students, faculty or other participants in the REU programs under review and no students reported conditions, incidents or situations of sexual misconduct or sex-based harassment or discrimination that they believed would necessitate the filing of a complaint. When asked who to report acts of sex discrimination or sexual misconduct, REU program participants that were interviewed were mixed on who to report. Most interviewees indicated that they could contact the PIs of the REU programs or department chairs or REU graduate

student. Other interviewees stated they would contact REU faculty or graduate student mentors, while very few indicated they would contact the UF Title IX Coordinator or the UF Title IX Office.

Recommendation: See the recommendation for Section II B above.

UF Response: We will provide an orientation for all future participants, (REU students, faculty, postdocs, graduate students, other research mentors, etc.), which will cover all areas of information outlined above.

Finding: In Compliance

III. REU Site: Undergraduate Research in Intelligent Multimodal Human-Computer Interaction

This REU site trains students on research in Intelligent Multimodal Human-Computer Interaction. Human-computer interaction (HCI) is a growing field that is concerned with how to design and create computational artifacts that serve the needs of their users. Multimodal HCI enables users to interact through multiple modalities, such as speech, gesture, and touch, that tremendously increase the contexts and users that our software systems can serve. This project, which targets students who are historically underrepresented in computing, will help build a generation of computer science students whose research and development work directly benefits many facets of society.

A. Admissions

NSF Title IX implementing regulations prohibit recipients of financial assistance from discriminating on the basis of sex in the admission of applicants. 45 C.F.R. § 618.300. In determining whether a person satisfies a criterion for admission, or in making any offer of admission, recipients are prohibited from the following: giving preference to one person over another on the basis of sex; applying numerical limitations upon the number or proportion of persons of either sex who may be admitted; or otherwise treating one individual differently from another on the basis of sex. *Id.*

For this REU site, applications are submitted electronically. The selection criteria described during the interview with faculty varied depending on the person being interviewed. All stated that grade point average (GPA), personal essays, previous computer programming experience, interest in attending graduate school, and diversity are things taken into consideration during selection. Others added previous REU experience, professionalism, and extracurricular activities not related to Computer Science as additional admission criteria taken into consideration. Overall, the students are matched with where they are the best fit for their skillset according to program administration.

Highlights: Admissions criteria appear to be fair, neutral, and valid predictors of success. NSF recommends the use of a standardized rubric when evaluating each candidate, especially during interviews and personal essays to reduce the risk of gender bias.

Findings: In Compliance

B. Academic Climate

Most of the administrators, faculty, and participants agreed that this REU site is inclusive, welcoming, and collaborative regardless of race, gender, and disability. There is equal access to lab equipment and participation in labs. There are no reports of offensive jokes or inappropriate gender-related remarks in the lab or classroom. There were no instances of unfair evaluation of research projects based on gender brought to the attention of NSF at that time.

One of the standout elements of this REU program is the orientation put on by the PI, faculty, and student mentors. The orientation included research ethics, lab safety, lab tour, academic standards, as well as UF and City of Gainesville transportation systems.

Many of the administrators, faculty, and participants could not identify childcare options for REU participants but did identify the ways in which they could facilitate a request for accommodation through the Disability Resource Centers.

Highlights: NSF recognizes UF's use of a thorough orientation to help REU students acclimate to the campus as a best practice. NSF recommends that UF create a list of resources for students that need childcare to participate in the REU program and distribute it to all potential applicants to reduce or eliminate the barrier of childcare access.

Finding: In Compliance

IV. REU Site: Engineering for Healthcare

This REU site focuses on the cross-disciplinary impact of engineering research on the healthcare field. The research to be conducted by REU participants falls into three categories: engineered and manufactured surfaces and devices for health applications, engineering advances for medical treatment, and modeling of healthcare relevant materials and processes. REU participants will gain foundational skills through training workshops on the scientific method, and hands-on research activities. REU participants will improve their oral and written communication skills through symposium-style presentations and written project reports. Because of this REU program, participants will be better prepared to succeed in their current undergraduate curriculum and be better prepared to make a positive impact upon entering industry or graduate school.

A. Admissions

NSF Title IX implementing regulations prohibit recipients of financial assistance from discriminating on the basis of sex in the admission of applicants. 45 C.F.R. § 618.300. In determining whether a person satisfies a criterion for admission, or in making any offer of admission, recipients are prohibited from the following: giving preference to one person over another on the basis of sex; applying numerical limitations upon the number or proportion of persons of either sex who may be admitted; or otherwise treating one individual differently from another on the basis of sex. *Id.*

For this REU program, applicants must be a U.S. Citizen, U.S. National, or permanent resident of the United States; be enrolled as an undergraduate student leading to a bachelor's degree in a STEM field; have an undergraduate GPA of greater than 3.0. Undergraduate students from underrepresented backgrounds in STEM are strongly encouraged to apply. Undergraduate students from academic institutions where opportunities for research are limited are strongly encouraged to apply.

To apply for this REU program, a student must submit an online application which includes transcripts, two letters of recommendation, and an optional personal statement. Next, applicants are matched with faculty based on common research interests. Applicants are filtered out of the selection process if they have below a 3.0 GPA, are in their junior year, or are not in a major that matches this REU program. According to one administrator, there are no hard and fast criteria for selection but students with higher GPAs make a higher impression. An administrator stated that they keep an eye on balance and will shift the acceptance rate percentages for special groups if they notice underrepresentation.

Highlights: Admissions criteria appear to be fair, neutral, and valid predictors of success. The admissions criteria and selection process also appear to comport with NSF's goal for REU programs as a vehicle for increasing the numbers of women, minorities, and persons with disabilities in research.

Findings: In Compliance

B. Academic Environment

All interviewees reported that the environment is diversity-friendly and collaborative. There is equal access to lab equipment and participation in labs. There are no reports of offensive jokes or inappropriate gender-related remarks in the lab or classroom. There were no instances of unfair evaluation of research projects based on gender brought to the attention of NSF at that time.

Interviewees identified a gap in resources for childcare for REU participants. Interviewees reported that they knew how to locate the process for filing a Title IX related complaint online.

Highlights: NSF recommends that UF create a list of resources for students that need childcare to participate in the REU program and distribute it to all potential applicants to reduce the barrier of childcare access.

Findings: In Compliance

V. REU Site: Research Experiences for Undergraduates in Chemical Engineering

Participants in this REU program will conduct research in a broad range of areas representative of current Chemical Engineering research, including catalysis and reaction engineering, nanomanufacturing and nanoscale engineering, complex flows and interfacial phenomena, and biomedical applications of chemical engineering. The goals of this REU program are to provide meaningful research experiences to undergraduates interested in chemical engineering research, provide formal and informal education on how to conduct research, and motivate students to pursue advanced studies in chemical engineering. Participants will be mentored by a group of sixteen faculty with a distinguished track record of mentoring undergraduates. Weekly seminars will introduce participants to many of the skills needed to be successful in research. These seminars will be led by UF Chemical Engineering faculty, promoting interactions with potential role models.

A. Admissions

NSF Title IX implementing regulations prohibit recipients of financial assistance from discriminating on the basis of sex in the admission of applicants. 45 C.F.R. § 618.300. In determining whether a person satisfies a criterion for admission, or in making any offer of admission, recipients are prohibited from the following: giving preference to one person over another on the basis of sex; applying numerical limitations upon the number or proportion of persons of either sex who may be admitted; or otherwise treating one individual differently from another on the basis of sex. *Id.*

To qualify for this REU program, applicants must 18 years or older and a U.S. citizen or permanent resident, as well as currently enrolled in a two-year or four-year college pursuing degrees in chemical engineering and related disciplines. Students from underrepresented minority groups, women, and individuals with disabilities are strongly encouraged to apply.

For this summer, applications came from the Summer Undergraduate Research at Florida (SURF) program because NSF notified the PI for this REU program that the funding was approved much later than is customary. In the future, the PI hopes to have their own online application separate from the SURF program.

For selection, many of the faculty and PI spoke to the importance of diversity when making admissions decisions. They look at the best candidates, discuss the pros and cons, look at the gaps in diversity profile of group, and revisit applications to see if anything was missed. However, one faculty member stated that they develop a diverse applicant pool and select the best applicants, noting they do not just select people who check a particular diversity box.

Highlights: Admissions criteria appear to be fair, neutral, and valid predictors of success. The admissions criteria and selection process also appear to comport with NSF's goal for REU programs as a vehicle for increasing the numbers of women, minorities, and persons with disabilities in research.

Finding: In Compliance

B. Academic Environment

The PI for this REU program stated that orientation for his program was provided by the SURF program. At this orientation, the students received on-boarding from the PI about program specific items but there was no set training on sexual harassment. The PI did note that he regularly meets with the REU students as a group to share any problems they are having.

All interviewees for this REU program claimed there is equal access to lab equipment and participation in labs and there were no reports of offensive jokes or inappropriate gender-related remarks in the lab or classroom. Additionally, there were no instances of unfair evaluation of research projects based on gender brought to the attention of NSF at that time.

Highlights: NSF recognizes UF's efforts to list NSF as a funder on the Department of Chemical Engineering website as a best practice for all REU programs funded by NSF.

Finding: In Compliance

VI. REU Site: Condensed Matter Physics and Applied Materials

This project brings undergraduates to the University of Florida to conduct research on the physics of materials and their applications. The research topics include: measuring the electronic, magnetic, thermal, and optical properties of nanometer scale materials, growing new materials including superconductors and those with topological properties, and computational modeling of electronic and biomaterials. The research conducted lays the foundation for applications of new materials. At the end of the program, participants write a 10 to 20-page paper and give a presentation on their research. Many participants also present their results at scientific meetings and/or publish their results.

A. Admissions

NSF Title IX implementing regulations prohibit recipients of financial assistance from discriminating on the basis of sex in the admission of applicants. 45 C.F.R. § 618.300. In determining whether a person satisfies a criterion for admission, or in making any offer of admission, recipients are prohibited from the following: giving preference to one person over another on the basis of sex; applying numerical limitations upon the number or proportion of persons of either sex who may be admitted; or otherwise treating one individual differently from another on the basis of sex. *Id.*

REU participants for this program must be undergraduate students and must be citizens or legal permanent residents of the United States or its possessions. This program especially encourages applications from members of groups under-represented in science and engineering, and from students enrolled at institutions where research opportunities are limited.

To apply to this REU program, an application form must be submitted along with a one-page personal statement of career objectives, a copy (official or unofficial) of the applicant's college transcripts, and recommendation letters from two college professors in the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math fields.

Highlights: Admissions criteria appear to be fair, neutral, and valid predictors of success. The admissions criteria and selection process also appear to comport with NSF's goal for REU programs as a vehicle for increasing the numbers of women, minorities, and persons with disabilities in research.

Finding: In Compliance

B. Academic Environment

REU students for this program reported participating in an orientation where they were provided detailed information regarding key logistical issues (transportation, housing, etc.).

All interviewees reported equal access to lab equipment and participation in labs. Additionally, there were no instances of unfair evaluation of research projects based on gender brought to the attention of NSF at that time. A student disclosed concern about openly identifying an LGBTQ individual due to comments the student overheard from other REU students.

Faculty and students at this REU expressed dissatisfaction with REU participants being considered neither “students” nor “employees” of UF. In fact, one PI indicated that he believed REU students were classified as “consultants” while assigned to the REU. This lack of clarity appears to cause confusion on the requirements for providing Title IX related information that a student would receive.

Highlights: See the recommendation for Section II B above.

UF Response: We will provide an orientation for all future participants, (REU students, faculty, postdocs, graduate students, other research mentors, etc.), which will cover all areas of information outlined above.

Finding: In Compliance

VIII. Conclusion

The National Science Foundation recognizes the effort that UF has put forth in order to comply with Title IX of the Education Amendment of 1972 and NSF regulations. The Title IX compliance review team acknowledges the following best practices at UF:

- List NSF as a funder on the UF Department of Chemical Engineering website.
- Orientation to help REU students acclimate to the campus.

While in overall compliance, NSF has identified some areas in which further action could yield an even stronger level of compliance. NSF recommends the following:

- Ensure the dissemination of the Title IX Coordinator’s contact information as well as UF Title IX related policies to all REU program participants, mentors, faculty, and PIs.
- As per the [2019 NSF solicitation](#) for REU funding awards, UF should provide an orientation for all participants in the REU Site (REU students, faculty, postdocs, graduate students, other research mentors, etc.) to cover expectations of behavior to ensure a safe and respectful environment for all participants, and to review the organization's policy or code of conduct addressing sexual harassment, other forms of harassment, and sexual assault, including reporting and complaint procedures.
- Create a list of resources for summer students that need childcare to participate in the REU program and distribute it to all potential applicants.