



National Aeronautics and Space Administration  
Office of the Administrator  
Washington, DC 20546-0001

As a leader in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), NASA endeavors to make our collaborations with our grant recipient institutions as productive and successful as possible in all facets of our shared objectives. This means that we seek not only the most innovative and cutting-edge scientific and technological research from our grant recipients, we also expect strong efforts to create and sustain welcoming and inclusive educational environments. We view such efforts not as "something nice to do" if the time can be spared, or something that human resources or the diversity and equity offices are responsible for, but rather as an integral and indeed necessary aspect of all educational program environments.

Let me be perfectly clear: NASA does not tolerate sexual harassment, nor should any organization seriously committed to workplace equality, diversity and inclusion. Science is for everyone, and any behavior that demeans or discourages people from fully participating is unacceptable.

NASA takes very seriously our obligations, both legal and ethical, to make sure that when we provide Federal dollars to a STEM educational program that the program is extending equal opportunity to all of its participants. We seek to help STEM programs nationwide in their efforts to achieve educational environments in which equality of opportunity and inclusion are not just buzzwords, but are internalized by all members of the community and institutionalized in fair and equitable policies and practices. We do so, in part, through program assessments under civil rights laws, such as Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits race, color, and national origin discrimination and harassment among federal funding recipients, and Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972, which prohibits educational funding recipients from engaging in sex discrimination, including sexual harassment and sexual violence. Accordingly, where a grantee's compliance is at issue, we work closely with the grant recipient institution and other stakeholders, such as the Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights, to bring that recipient into compliance. No grantee institution that allows impermissible harassment to go unaddressed can be deemed to be in compliance with civil rights law.

That being said, we must all remain vigilant about protecting the legal rights of those who pursue careers in STEM. I urge all of our NASA grantee institutions to examine closely their current policies and procedures for addressing allegations of misconduct such as harassment. It is critical for educational institutions to address these matters as promptly and equitably as possible. Beyond the law, we must seek to create the kinds of welcoming and supportive program environments in which all students can flourish.

For grantee institution officials or beneficiaries of NASA grants wishing to learn more about rights and responsibilities under the law, I would direct your attention to NASA's MissionSTEM Web site, accessible at <http://missionstem.nasa.gov/index.html>. MissionSTEM is designed as a civil rights technical assistance tool for STEM programs. It provides a wealth of written information and visual material on civil rights requirements, as well as promising practices for achieving greater diversity and creating more inclusive STEM program environments. I urge your institutions to make use of this powerful tool at your disposal. For those who wish to leave a comment or ask a question at MissionSTEM, they may do so at <http://missionstem.nasa.gov/comments-questions.html>.

We must lead the way by refusing to be silent in the face of conduct that is not only illegal but destroys the very fabric of our STEM community. I believe we can grow stronger as a community by arming ourselves with knowledge about the kinds of behavior that are unacceptable and won't be tolerated in our STEM workplaces and educational environments.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "C. Bolden, Jr.", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Charles F. Bolden, Jr.