Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 24, 2013

The Honorable Gene L. Dodaro
Comptroller General of the United States
Government Accountability Office
441 G. Street N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20548

Dear Mr. Dodaro:

According to a recent study from researchers at Yale University, female undergraduates are considered less qualified for employment in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) fields than their male peers by both male and female science professors from universities across the United States. Researchers believe that this is most likely due to implicit biases people hold that lead them to believe that scientific fields are "meant" for men, while women should focus on the humanities. Furthermore, these biases translate into real action on behalf of those doing the hiring: a recent study by the National Science Foundation found that women continue to lag behind men in obtaining STEM jobs, despite earning an increasing number of STEM graduate degrees.

Given the importance of STEM related jobs, any biases limiting the progress of women in these fields threaten our country's position as the leader in innovation and technology. Research has also shown that girls who grow up in an atmosphere supportive of women in the sciences will often go on to participate and succeed in STEM.

We are highly concerned that gender bias is inhibiting women and girls from participating in STEM education and career fields. Given that federal money supports about 60 percent of the research performed at universities, at a cost of $36.6 billion in 2011, in addition to more than $40 billion in intramural research and research at federally funded research and development centers (FFRDCs), the government has a clear interest in addressing any bias or discrimination that exists in the agencies supporting the research and the universities and FFRDCs funded by such agencies. Therefore, we are asking the GAO to examine federal agency efforts to address gender discrimination, including agency policies and actions to enforce funded universities' compliance with Title IX of the *Education Amendments of 1972*. We also ask GAO to more directly examine funded universities' Title IX compliance.

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First, we request that the GAO update the 2004 GAO Report *Gender Issues: Women's Participation in the Sciences Has Increased, but Agencies Need to do More to Ensure Compliance with Title IX.* Specifically, we would like to know:

- What actions have agencies taken since 2004 to address the recommendations of the GAO Report?
- Have compliance reviews of grantees continued to be periodically conducted at the Department of Energy, NSF and NASA? If so, what are the results?
- Why was HHS, and particularly the NIH and their various research centers, excluded from the 2004 Report? Have compliance reviews been conducted at those agencies? If so, what are the results?
- Are there are any commonly used templates or other common practices utilized across agencies in carrying out Title IX compliance reviews?
- What, if any, actions have agencies taken to follow up on the information obtained from compliance reviews?

In addition, we would like a better understanding of the nature and results of the compliance reviews being conducted. Specifically, we would also like to know what, if any, information is gathered in the following areas, what the results of such reviews are, and what actions agencies and universities have taken to follow-up on any areas in which disparities have been identified:

- Pay equity at universities: What mechanisms currently exist to evaluate pay equity? Are there any model pay equity programs and how do they work? How are agencies currently monitoring pay equity?
- Gender equity in the tenure promotion system, particularly issues of length of time spent at the associate professor rank.
- Recruitment and retention activities being undertaken by universities for faculty, undergraduate students, and graduate students.
- Inclusion of women in leadership roles: How many women are included on committees, panels, advisory boards and other working groups, and how many in leadership roles within those structures? How many women are included in conferences, workshops and meetings funded by an agency?

We also seek to more fully understand what universities themselves are doing under Title IX to address gender disparities, and we ask that the GAO answer the following questions:

- Do all universities receiving federal funding have Title IX Coordinators in place?
- How are Title IX Coordinator responsibilities defined?
- How are Title IX Coordinators informed of/trained on these responsibilities?
- How are university employees informed of Title IX activities, including the existence of and role of a Title IX Coordinator?
- Are Title IX Coordinators actively considering issues of gender equity in faculty and student retention/recruitment, tenure promotion, and funding opportunities?
- What activities addressing gender disparity are select universities doing that could be a model for other universities?
- Are there common standards for enforcement of Title IX?

- How are universities responding to any gender disparities identified during federal agency reviews?

Finally, we seek to understand what agencies are doing and what data they are collecting beyond compliance reviews to address gender disparities in STEM, and would ask GAO to address the following questions:

- What are the policies of agencies on matters relating to the employment of women in STEM fields within their workforce, including FFRDCs? To what extent is compliance with these policies monitored?
- Federal grant funding differences in STEM fields between male and female investigators: What is the difference in the number of proposals submitted by women investigators vs. the number of women in the field; the number of grants awarded by gender compared to number of proposals received; size of grants awarded between male and female investigators; and the numbers of grants awarded across a career (i.e., how many men vs. women are getting second grants/additional funding)?
- Which agencies allow competitively funded researchers to apply for no-cost extensions to research grants or have similar policies to account for family and medical leave needs?
- Which agencies are providing training about gender bias?
- Which agencies are providing implicit bias training?
- Who are agencies training? When? How often? How is the impact measured?
- What data about disparities is collected and how is such data monitored?

Thank you for your careful attention on this matter. If you have any questions about this request, please contact Cheri Hoffman, Legislative Director for Congresswoman Louise M. Slaughter at (202) 225-3615.

Sincerely,

Louise M. Slaughter
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Eddie Bernice Johnson
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